



3. The plagues

Age range: Primary

Theme: We gather as a community for collective worship that is **inspiring, invitational and inclusive**, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community. This term, we are reflecting on the story of Moses and journeying with him as he leads God’s people from Egypt and to the Promised Land. At the beginning of a new school year, it is always good to be back together as a community, and so we are using the story of Moses to help us to reflect on some important ideas from this story about being community together and about God, who looked after them. These stories can be found in the Bible, the Torah and the Qur’an, recognising Moses as a prophet and leader in all three of these Abrahamic traditions: these stories often generate some challenging questions about judgement and justice (especially from older pupils), so in these collective worship resources, we choose to emphasise the positive messages and outcomes e.g. God seeing and responding to the cruel treatment of the people, and being *with* his people. We are very grateful to FreeBibleImages for the use of their PowerPoint slides and images for many of the assemblies this term.

This week, the focus is on how God saw the injustice of how Pharaoh treated the Israelites and acted to rescue them and bring them to freedom. This is a tricky story, and so we have handled the plagues in a lighthearted way, using the nursery rhyme of Old Macdonald in a sing-along version. This version places the emphasis on Pharaoh’s hard heart as being the cause of the plagues more than God creating them, so we hope this helps you to navigate this story in your own school.



How does this link to your school’s Christian vision & values?

This collective worship focuses on how God saw the injustice in how the Israelites were being treated and acted to put things right. So, dig into courageous advocacy!

Resources:

- The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in **bold** show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation. There are slides to go with today’s script, but you could quite easily use this collective worship without the PowerPoint if you preferred.
- **The leader of the story needs to be someone who is happy to sing with children; it’s a familiar tune, but new words. Do create your own actions if you’d like to!**
- There are suggestions for following up the theme of the collective worship in your classroom, in your reflective area, so do use the ideas if you would find them helpful.

Gathering:

Slides 1&2 Use this two-step gathering words for this term, or your usual greeting if you prefer. Why not invent some actions to make them extra memorable?!



- **Leader:** On the journey of life....
- **Children:** ...we are glad to be together in our school community.
- **Leader:** As we gather together....
- **Children:** ...may we learn from each other and hear from God.

Engaging:

- **Slide 3:** When we left Moses last week, God had given him a very important – and difficult! – job to do, to go to Pharaoh and ask him to let the Israelites leave Egypt and journey to the Promised Land.



We’re going to pick the story up in a few moments but first.....there are some things about this next part of the story that you should know before we start. As we heard last week, the Pharaoh in Joseph’s time had given his family the land of Goshen to live in, but after he died the new Pharaoh king treated the Israelites badly and now they were his slaves.

- **Slide 4:** He made them work hard for hardly any money, he ordered his men to whip them, for hardly any reason and worst of all he gave them a nearly impossible job to do.



Their work was to make bricks that would be used to build Egypt's mighty **pyramids**, but Pharaoh wouldn't give them any straw to put into the bricks – he told them that they had to go and find it for themselves.

Pharaoh was a cruel, unkind ruler – and it's no wonder that God, who had called Moses in the burning bush, saw what Pharaoh was doing and decided he could stand it no longer. And so, God chose Moses to face Pharaoh, to ask him to let the slaves go free and then to lead the people to the Promised Land. But if Pharaoh chose to be stubborn, and not release the people, there would be consequences – and these come in the form of ten very strange things, in the Bible they are called 'plagues'.

- So that's where we'll pick up the story in a moment, but first, for something almost completely different!

- **Slide 5: Old Macdonald had a farm....**

I wonder if you know this nursery rhyme? [*Have a quick sing-along if you need to, to remind yourselves...*]

We are going to use the tune of Old Macdonald to tell the next part of Moses' story, about Pharaoh and the plagues, but before we do, let me teach you how the words will go!

- **Slide 6:** To the part of the tune that goes 'Old Macdonald had a farm', we are going to sing these words, which are Pharaoh's words: '**Stop the plague and you can go!**'
- To the part of the tune that goes 'E-I-E-I-O!' we are going to sing these words, 'But then he changed his mind.....**NO!** (which he does, every time!)
- And then to the bit that goes 'And on that farm there was a', I will tell you what happens because of Pharaoh's choice – and then you can join me with the join-in part! It's very easy and you'll soon get the hang of it.
- So let's begin.....[*use script on p4-5, slides 7-26*]

- **Slide 27:** So at the end of a very long story, which we've been a part of, we're going to pause and think about what's happened – and what we might learn from it about God, and about being a community.
- What I didn't say in the story is that all the strange and challenging things that happened, the plagues, only happened to the Egyptians – the people of God were all kept safe, which is what he had promised Moses last week. '**I will be with you...**'
- And each time Pharaoh said he'd let the people go, if God took the plague away (which he did!) – then he changed his mind and refused to let the people leave.

Slide 28: Responding (words for worship):

We also heard at the beginning, but might have forgotten in all the activity of telling it, is the message that God noticed what was happening to his people: he says '**I have seen....**' God noticed – and acted to put things right.

This is a message that we often hear in the Bible when people are being treated unfairly by cruel leaders.

We're going to be quiet and still and wonder together now....

....I wonder why Pharaoh was so stubborn and wouldn't let God's people go?....

...I wonder how God's people felt, knowing that God had seen?....

...I wonder why justice – fairness – is so important to God?...

....I wonder what you might want God to notice – or act on?....or how we might play our part?...

There are many things that happen to people across the world, and in our own communities, that are every bit as unfair as how the Egyptians treated the Israelites. [*If you have older pupils, you may wish to pause here and talk about some of them e.g. homelessness, refugees, war in Ukraine etc.*]

And in our own lives and our own community, it might bring you comfort to know that whatever you face, God sees.....

Bring all these thoughts quietly before God now, if you'd like to, as I pray



Slide 29: Prayer

I am going to use some words to help us to pray now...which you can use to help you to pray if this is something that you're comfortable with. If not, then just continue to be still with your own thoughts.

God who sees all

We bring our thoughts to you now as we think about things that are unfair in our world...

...things that we see, you see too.

May we, like you, notice what's going on around us, act justly and treat others fairly.

Slide 30: Amen

Sending: Slide 31

Remind children of today's key message – that God sees us and things that are unfair, and will act. We can each help to make our school community a fair place in the way we treat each other



Leader: As we leave this place and time and go into the day ahead...

All: May today's words help us to become a stronger community!

To listen to / sing:

[Every step](#) (NBD)

Slide 17: Reflective / prayer idea, using glass pebbles or plastic gemstones



'We are all seen...'

Our theme this week reminds us that each of us is precious and seen by God – and the things that matter to us, that we think are unfair, God sees too.

Take a 'gemstone' and hold it in your hand while you think.

When you are ready, place it in the bowl and remember that God sees.

You might also want to pray.



The ten plagues (to the tune 'Old Macdonald had a farm')

Slide 6: The refrain is the same each time: teach this first

To the part of the tune that goes 'Old Macdonald had a farm', we will sing these words, which are Pharaoh's words:

'Stop the plague and you can go!'

To the part of the tune that goes 'E-I-E-I-O!' we are going to sing these words, 'But then he changed his mind....NO!'

And then to the bit that goes 'And on that farm there was a', I will tell you what happens because of Pharaoh's choice – and then you can join me with the join-in part! It's very easy and you'll soon get the hang of it. (NB There are some suggested actions in the script, but you could just as easily make up your own]

So we start all over again!

I'm going to start the song, with Moses: [to this same tune]

REFRAIN: Pharaoh, let God's people go!

'But Pharaoh just said: 'NO!'

And so God sent a river of blood, cos Pharaoh just said **'NO!'**
With a 'Yuck! Yuck!' [hold nose] here and a 'Yuck! Yuck!' there
Here a 'Yuck!', there a 'Yuck!' everywhere a 'Yuck! Yuck!'

REFRAIN: 'Stop the plague and you can go!'

But then he changed his mind.... NO!

So next there were some jumping frogs, cos Pharaoh just said **'NO!'**
With a 'Ribbit! Ribbit!' [small jump] here and a 'Ribbit! Ribbit!' there
Here a 'Ribbit!', there a 'Ribbit!' everywhere a 'Ribbit! Ribbit!'

REFRAIN: 'Stop the plague and you can go!'

But then he changed his mind.... NO!

So next there were some biting gnats, cos Pharaoh just said **'NO!'**
With a 'Scritch! Scratch!' [pretend to scratch] here and a 'Scritch! Scratch!' there
Here a 'Scritch!', there a 'Scratch!' everywhere a "Scritch! Scratch!'

REFRAIN: 'Stop the plague and you can go!'

But then he changed his mind.... NO!

So next there were some buzzing flies, cos Pharaoh just said **'NO!'**
With a 'Buzz! Buzz!' [small wings] here and a 'Buzz! Buzz!' there
Here a 'Buzz!', there a 'Buzz!' everywhere a 'Buzz! Buzz!'



REFRAIN: 'Stop the plague and you can go!'
But then he changed his mind.... NO!

And so God sent a big hail storm, cos Pharoah just said '**NO!**'
With a 'Ping! Pong!' [*duck down as if avoiding hailstones*] here and a 'Ping! Pong!' there
Here a 'Ping!' there a 'Pong!', everywhere a 'Ping! Pong!'

REFRAIN: 'Stop the plague and you can go!'
But then he changed his mind.... NO!

And then the animals got quite sick cos Pharoah just said '**NO!**'
With a 'Bluh! Bluh!' here [*tongue out*] and a 'Bluh! Bluh!' there
Here a 'Bluh!' there a 'Bluh!' everywhere a 'Bluh! Bluh!'

REFRAIN: 'Stop the plague and you can go!'
But then he changed his mind.... NO!

So next there were some big fat spots cos Pharoah just said '**NO!**'
With an 'Ouch! Ouch!' [*hold arm*] here and an 'Ouch! Ouch!' there
Here an 'Ouch!' there an 'Ouch!' everywhere an 'Ouch! Ouch!'

REFRAIN: 'Stop the plague and you can go!'
But then he changed his mind.... NO!

So next there came some greedy locusts, cos Pharoah just said '**NO!**'
With a 'Nibble! Nibble!' here and a 'Nibble! Nibble!' there
Here a 'Nibble!' there a 'Nibble!' everywhere a 'Nibble! Nibble!'

REFRAIN: 'Stop the plague and you can go!'
But then he changed his mind.

So then there was a DARK DARK day. cos Pharoah just said '**NO!**'
With an 'Oh-Oh!' [*hands out like you're feeling in the dark*] here and an 'Oh-Oh!' there
Here an 'Oh-Oh!' there an 'Oh-Oh!' everywhere an 'Oh-Oh! Oh-Oh!'

REFRAIN: 'Stop the plague and you can go!'
But then he changed his mind.... NO!

And so God sent one final plague...
I'll tell you all next week!.....
[add your own cliffhanger sound effects here!!!]





“We are all seen....”



Our theme this week reminds us that each of us is precious and seen by God – and the things that matter to us, that we think are unfair, God sees too.



Talk together about things that you think are unfair in the world.



Take a ‘gemstone’ and hold it in your hand while you think. When you are ready, place it in the bowl and remember that God sees. You might also want to pray.

