

## BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

### 25 MOSES IS BORN

Bible Base: Exodus 1 - 2

Key Christian Belief: In a broken world, God hears our prayers.

Aim: To help children understand that God hears the prayers of those who are suffering.

#### You will need

- the attached PowerPoint Presentation
- an Egyptian (Pharaoh) headdress or eye mask\*

*\*This could be purchased from Amazon or made from card, using a template found by searching on Google. Or is there a member of your congregation who could make one?*

#### Introduction

Show the first three pictures from the PowerPoint and ask children if they know who these characters are. (Cruella De Vil from 101 Dalmatians; Sid from Toy Story; Lady Tremaine, the wicked stepmother from Cinderella.) Now ask what they have in common? Help the children to see that they are all cruel to others. (Cruella de Vil is cruel to the Dalmatian puppies, Sid is cruel to his toys and Lady Tremaine is cruel to Cinderella.)

Introduce the fourth character and ask if the children know who it is. It is King Pharaoh and today we are going to hear how cruel he was to the people of Israel.

#### Bible Story

The people of Israel were living in Egypt. Many years ago, Joseph had helped King Pharaoh save his people from a terrible famine and he had invited Joseph along with his father, Jacob, his eleven brothers and their families to come and live in a part of Egypt called Goshen. At that time there were around seventy in all who came to live there.

Fast-forward 200\* years or so and things have changed. Joseph and his brothers have died long ago but their children stayed on in Egypt, got married and had children of their own. Then their children grew up, got married and had children and so on...until now there are more than 20,000\* of Jacob's family, the Hebrews, living in Egypt.

By now there is a new king in Egypt and he is also called Pharaoh. (All the kings in Egypt at that time were known as Pharaohs.) This king doesn't remember anything about Joseph and the famine - and he is getting worried. He spends every day pacing up and down in his palace.

*Turn your back to the children and put on your Egyptian headdress or eye mask. Present the monologue below, pacing up and down as if you are king Pharaoh. Encourage the children to boo as indicated in the script.*

“There are twenty thousand of them now...TWENTY THOUSAND! Who on earth invited them to live here? What were they thinking of? There will soon be more of them living here than there are of us! What happens if they decide to take over - and take our land away from us? I've seen those Hebrew people. They are always up to something, I'm sure of it...plotting to get a big army together and fight against us, no doubt.

“Well - they won’t succeed. I won’t let them. For a start, I have made those Hebrew people our slaves. We’ve got two big cities to build so a long time ago now I put them all to work making bricks all day, every day so they wouldn’t have time to think about anything else. With all that hard work to do, I thought they’d have no strength left to fight to us and they certainly wouldn’t have time to have any more babies. I thought that would put a stop to them! (Cruel laughter.) What do you think of that?” (Boo! Hiss!)

“But it didn’t work, did it? Next time we counted them there were even more of them than there were before. Obviously my plan wasn’t working. It wasn’t going to be as easy as I thought. So I decided to double the number of bricks they had to make each day and told them that if they couldn’t make that many, I would tell their masters to have them whipped and beaten. (Cruel laughter.) What do you think of that?” (Boo! Hiss!)

“But even that didn’t work. Next time we counted there were even more of them - they seem to have more babies being born all the time. So this time I called in the two nurses that help the Hebrew women when it comes time for them to have their babies.”

“ ‘Now listen you two.’ I said. ‘I’ve had just about enough of these Hebrew people. There are far too many of them so here is what I want you to do. When one of their women is going to have a baby and you see that it is a girl - let her live. But if you see that it is a boy, make sure he has a little accident and dies before his mother has a chance to see him.’ (Cruel laugh.) Good plan, eh?” (Boo! Hiss!)

“But it still didn’t work. Those two nurses let me down badly. They told me that the Hebrew women were too strong for them. Most of them had already had their babies by the time they arrived and it was too late for them to do anything about it.”

“Well this time I was furious. ‘I don’t want any more of those boys growing up in my country.’ I yelled. ‘From now on all the Hebrew boys that are born are to be thrown into the River Nile!’ So there won’t be any more of them now. That should finally put an end to any plans they have to take over our land - don’t you think?” (Boo! Hiss!)

“Only trouble is - my daughter, the princess, claims she found a little Hebrew baby boy the other day. He was hidden in a basket floating among the reeds at the edge of the river where she went bathing. She wants to keep him and bring him up in the palace as her son. I said ‘no’ at first - but she is my daughter, the princess. After all, what harm can this one little boy do? If he’s brought up in the palace, he’ll be one of us - probably end up fighting on our side against his own people if they ever try anything. But they won’t, will they? How could they? We’ve made sure of that, haven’t we?” (Boo! Hiss!)

*Turn your back to the children again and remove your headdress or eye mask.*

The people of Israel are having a hard time, aren’t they? Ask them if they can remind you of some of the cruel things King Pharaoh did to try to stop them growing any bigger.

This story is found in the book of Exodus chapters one and two. Listen to what it says at the end of chapter two:

‘A long time passed and that king of Egypt died. But the Israelites were still forced to work very hard. They cried for help, and God heard them.’ Exodus 2: 23 (ERV)

Isn't that interesting? God knew all about the suffering and hardship his people were facing and he heard their cries for help. Actually, the people of Israel didn't know it yet but God already had a plan to rescue them. The little baby, hidden among the reeds by his parents and now being brought up in the palace would have a big part to play in His plan. So next time, we will hear more about God's plan to rescue His people.

*\*There is some dispute about how many years the people of Israel had been living in Egypt since the time of Joseph and also about how many of them there were when they left Egypt. See the discussion in the relevant Bible commentaries and substitute your own figures if you take a different view!*

### Exploring Christian Belief

When God's people were suffering, God knew all about it. He heard their cries for help and although they didn't know it yet, He already had a plan to help them.

In our world there are many people who suffer and who cry out to God to help them. There are those who are suffering because they don't have enough to eat. There are those who are suffering because others are cruel and unkind to them. There are those who are suffering because they have been put in prison just for believing in Jesus. There are those who are suffering because they are all alone and have no one to help them.

It is good to know that the God of the Bible is always on the side of those who are suffering and never on the side of those who treat others cruelly or who cause them to suffer. He hears the cries of those who suffer. He knows what they are going through and is always ready to help them. God is on their side and expects us to be on their side too. Christians believe that one of the most important things we can do is to pray for those we know as well as for others around the world who are suffering. We can cry out to God for them. We can add our voices to theirs knowing that God hears and is ready to answer our prayers.

### Reflection and Prayer

Invite the children to reflect on the way they have behaved towards others in the past week. Whose side have they been on? Have they been on the side of those who suffer - have they spoken up for them and taken every opportunity they have had to help them? Or have they themselves caused others to suffer by the way they have treated them?

Lead the children in a prayer asking that God will forgive them for any ways in which they have been unfair and unkind to others and to help them in future to speak up for and do all they can for others who need their help. Then take a few moments to pray specifically for one or two folk known to the children and others they may have heard about in the news who are going through a hard time at present.