



LET MY PEOPLE GO!

Written by Tilda Balsley

Illustrated by Ilene Richard

The text of this book, which describes the ten plagues leading up to the freedom of the Israelites from Egypt, could easily be adapted as the script to a holiday play through the color-coded text.

Let *My People Go!* explores the ten plagues visited upon Egypt as a result of Pharaoh's hardened heart and intransigence. One might reasonably ask how the "great" king of Egypt could have allowed his citizens to be the subject of these calamities, one after another, until his own child's death finally convinced him to release his long-held slaves. This story, taking place just prior to the Passover and God's deliverance of the Hebrew people, introduces weighty concepts: the cruelty and narrow-mindedness of a sovereign, the question of avenging wrongs, and the tenacity often required to achieve justice.

This book makes serious, sometimes disturbing material more relatable for youngsters. Consider creating rhyming phrases with your children for the ten plagues; suggest they then make illustrations and share them with others, perhaps at the seder table. Talk with your children about the days leading up to the Israelites' departure from Egypt, a time that was difficult for both the slaves and the Egyptians. Discuss why, once they reached the desert, some newly free Israelites might have wanted desperately to return to Egypt.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Children are often very concrete in their thinking about and understanding of life. To have representative objects

to associate with stories helps children not only to comprehend but also to remember. A common pre-Passover activity is to create or purchase objects for use at the seder which bring to mind each of the plagues. Ping-pong balls become hail, while water dyed with red food coloring can symbolize the Nile River stained by blood. Get creative with your children by putting together your own set of "plague memorabilia." Use clay to create frogs or cattle; let a colorful flyswatter remind you of swarming insects. Some families allow children to paint their faces with washable colors to symbolize boils. Use the imagination of each family member, and you'll enliven any seder you attend! Pj

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