

Key Elements to Include in your Telling of the Passover Story

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Source: Isaac Zones

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- o Context: Joseph sold to slavery by brothers and heads to Egypt. Interprets Pharaoh's dreams and helps Egypt stock up on food before predicted famine. Joseph rescues rest of family and brings them to Egypt when they are starving. Jews begin living in Egypt.
- o Centuries later the new Pharaoh fears the power of the many Jews and enslaves them before they can rise up against him. He also orders the death of the first born sons.
- o Moses is the first born son in his family. He is sent out in a basket on the Nile river and sister Miriam follows. He is adopted by the Pharaoh's daughter and becomes a "Prince of Egypt."
- o At an older age he fights an Egyptian slave master who is beating a Jewish slave and Moses kills the slave master. He then flees the palace and becomes a shepherd and marries.
- o While tending his flock Moses comes across G-d disguised as a burning bush and G-d tells Moses to instruct Pharaoh to "let his people go." Moses brings his brother Aaron because he's got a stutter and is timid.
- o Moses' plea is denied and G-d sends a plague: turning water to blood. After each plague Moses returns to pharaoh to demand he let his people go. Each time he is denied. G-d sends 10 plagues: Blood, Frogs, Lice, Beasts, Pestilence, Boils, Hail, Locusts, Darkness and finally the death of the first born son.
- o At the sight of his firstborn son's death, Pharaoh instructs Moses to take the Jews away. The Jews had marked their doors with lamb's blood so that the angel of death would "pass-over" their homes and not kill their first born.
- o The Jews fled quickly with only enough time to make matzah instead of bread.
- o Pharaoh's army chased them and soon they were stuck when they approached the Red Sea.
- o Nachshon entered the water and only when he had gone in past his nose did the sea part and allow the Jews to cross safely. The waters crashed down on the Egyptians when they tried to cross and the army drowned.
- o Jews celebrated on the other side with Moses's sister Miriam leading the way. G-d reminded the Jews not to celebrate the death of the Egyptians – for they were also his children.
- o This began a 40 year journey through the desert where they searched for the promised land. Over this time they receive the torah and 10 commandments at Mt. Sinai and learned who they were as a people. No Jew from Egypt lived to see the promised land and the Jews entered the land of milk and honey as a people who had been born free.