

PREPARING AT HOME

September 11-17, 2017

Focus reading: Exodus 14:19–31 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=369898025>).

Other lectionary readings: Psalm 114; Matthew 18:21–25; Romans 14:1–2

Theme: Road to Freedom

The story of the Exodus, which we read this week, is central to the Jewish and Christian faiths alike. It tells the story of a God who hears the cries of an oppressed people and acts in mighty ways to rescue them. Seeing God's actions on their behalf, the people believe and journey in freedom as they learn what it means to be God's people. It is a story that has provided inspiration to many who have struggled to travel the road to freedom, including early Protestant settlers who fled persecution in Europe and African Americans who fought for civil rights. God led the Hebrew people on their journey to freedom. The daytime cloud and nighttime pillar of fire affirmed God's guiding presence. When the Hebrews found themselves trapped between a body of water and the army of Pharaoh, God intervened. A wall of water allowed safe passage for the Hebrews but finally destroyed their pursuers. Questions that we might ask about the enemy's violent destruction at the hands of God were not a concern in the worldview of those who told the story. They simply knew that God delivered them through the water, a symbol of God's creative, transformative, saving acts. The waters of baptism bring this story to remembrance and provide the passage to our own road to freedom and transformation.

GUIDES FOR THE JOURNEY

God guided the Hebrew people on their journey to freedom by way of a cloud during the day and a fire at night. What or who offers guidance to you when you need to know God's way? Make thank you cards for the people who help you to know where God is guiding you.

ROLE PLAY

Put yourself in the role of the Hebrew people. Pharaoh's army is chasing you when you come to the edge of the water. The waters part. Are you ready to run across the dry land? Are you afraid? What are you thinking and feeling? What does it feel like when you get to the other side but the Egyptian army does not?

SONGS OF RESCUE AND FREEDOM

Many of our hymns are about this theme. See "Lift Every Voice and Sing." Look for other hymns about the Exodus, water, and deliverance.

PRAYER

Loving and powerful God,
We give thanks for brave people who
have made the journey so that they and others might be free.
May we trust that you guide our steps and rescue us when we cry to you.
Amen.

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