

Kids' Chronicle

Moses guides the Israelites

BY JOE SARNICOLA

After escaping from the slavery of Egypt, the Israelites stopped at a place called Rephidim. They thought they would find plenty of fresh water there, but there was none. Since Moses was their leader the people went to him and demanded that he provide water.

"Why do you bring your complaints to me?" Moses asked. "Are you trying to test the patience of the Lord?"

Moses prayed that God would give him the right answer. God listened to Moses and told him to have faith and to strike a rock in front of the people with his staff. When Moses called the people together, he struck the rock and fresh water flowed from it, enough for everyone.

But even though there was now water, there was still trouble in Rephidim. An army of warriors known as the Amalekites attacked the Israelites without warning or provocation. Once again, the people came to Moses for help. And once again Moses prayed for guidance.

Moses called Joshua, a man he knew to be loyal to God and trustworthy in his duties.

"Choose the best men you can find, and in the morning take them out to defend yourselves against our enemies who prey upon a people who have never known war," Moses said. "I will be watching from the hill over there, and I will be holding the staff that God has given to me."

Joshua followed the instructions Moses had given him and Moses climbed the hill with his brother Aaron. A curious miracle occurred. As long as Moses held



Illustration by Linda Jeanne Rivers

his hands in the air, the Israelites would be winning the battle. But if he lowered his arms to rest, the Amalekites would begin to overpower the Israelites.

"I can't hold my arms up any longer," Moses said. "They feel like they are about to fall off. Yet I know if I let my arms down, my people will die. What am I going to do?"

Aaron called some of the other men who were with him. They brought a rock for Moses to sit on, so he would not have to stand as well as hold his arms up. Then Aaron held one of Moses' arms and Hur held the other. They did this until the sun went down. And then there was no question as to who was the victor.

Joshua and his men killed Amalek and his soldiers. The Israelites were once more at peace.

Then, following God's instructions, Moses built an altar and named the battlefield "Yahweh-nissi," which means the banner of the Lord.

READ MORE ABOUT IT:

Exodus 17

Q&A

1. How did the Israelites find fresh water?
2. What happened when Moses lowered his arms?

Bible Accent

The biblical account of the exodus of the people of Israel is a story of faith, a story of miracles, a story of God's love.

The Israelites had been slaves in Egypt. God delivered his people from their lives of hard labor and gave them a promised land, Canaan, the "land of milk and honey." But the road to Canaan was full of trials for the Israelites. Their faith in God was tested many times and many times they failed. But God never failed them.

A shy man named Moses, who had difficulty speaking in public, appeared before Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and demanded that his people be released from their slavery. God later used Moses to part the Red Sea and to lead the Israelites to victory over the Amalekites by merely holding his hands in the air.

St. Denis

St. Denis was Italian by birth, but is more well known by his work in France, and is sometimes called St. Denis (or also St. Dionysius) of Paris.

According to legends, around the year 250 he became the first bishop of Paris. St. Denis was very enthusiastic in his preaching and was successful in bringing Christianity to a predominantly pagan land. Unfortunately, as a result of his success, he developed powerful enemies. He was arrested and sentenced to death by beheading. A chapel was later built over his grave site. Eventually the Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Denis was erected around the chapel.

St. Denis is now the patron saint of Paris and France. We honor him on Oct. 9.

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Kids' Club

You can win a \$50 savings bond by writing an essay (100 or fewer words) answering this question:

Why do you think Moses was a good choice as the person to lead the Israelites out of Egypt?

Send your essay — including name, home address, telephone number, school and grade — to Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Deadline for entries is Oct. 15, 1998. The winner will be notified by phone and receive the savings bond by mail. In addition, the winner's essay will be published in an upcoming issue of *Kids' Chronicle*.

Last month's winner was Courtney Kingston, a fourth-grade student at Geneseo Central School. In response to the question, *Why is it good to read the Bible?* she wrote:

You should read the Bible at least once a day because you can learn a lot of things from it about how to live your life. You only hear one Bible story a week if you just go to church on Sunday. If you didn't read the Bible on your own, you would only hear 52 stories each year from the Bible. There are a lot more good Bible stories to read than just the 52 that you hear on Sundays. That is why it is good to read the Bible.

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Puzzle

Using your Bible, match the events from the Book of Exodus with the chapter in which they are written. Answers on page 8

- | EVENT | CHAPTER |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| ___ 1. Moses is born | a. 3 |
| ___ 2. Ten Commandments | b. 2 |
| ___ 3. Manna from heaven | c. 12 |
| ___ 4. Passover | d. 7 |
| ___ 5. Across the Red Sea | e. 16 |
| ___ 6. The plagues begin | f. 14 |
| ___ 7. Battle with the Amalekites | g. 20 |
| ___ 8. The burning bush | h. 17 |

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