

Kids' Chronicle

God gives the Israelites water

By Joe Sarnicola

A long time had passed since the Israelites had escaped from the slavery of Egypt. Life in Egypt had been hard and the people had asked God to deliver them and bring them to freedom. But they couldn't understand why they still had to wander, not knowing where they were going, or when they were going to get there. So when they stopped to set up camp at Rephadim, they complained to Moses.

"There is no water at this campsite," they cried. "We are thirsty. Give us water."

"Why do you take this up with me?" Moses answered. "Why are you trying to test God? He has always taken care of us."

An old man who found the long days of traveling difficult shouted, "Why did you make us leave Egypt? Did we leave what had been our home to die out here in the desert? And what of our children and our cattle?"

"I will bring your complaints to the Lord," Moses replied. "When I have received an answer from him, I will call you together again."

The people of Israel went back to their work and Moses sought out a quiet place where he could pray to the Lord.

"Oh God," he said. "The people are angry. If I try to stall them, they may want to kill me. There is no water. What should I do?"

"Listen to me, Moses," the Lord said. "Tell my children to gather in front of the



Illustration by Linda Jeanne Rivers

rocky cliffs. Be sure the elders are close to you. Bring your staff and strike the rock in front of everyone. I will be there with you."

Once again the Israelites stood before Moses. They were very curious as to what Moses was about to tell them.

"The Lord has told me that he will perform a miracle before us this day," Moses declared.

"But will we have our water?" someone asked.

Moses held up his staff for everyone to see. Then he prayed, "My God, the God of all Israel. Show your people the power that is as mighty as a river that roars through a valley."

Moses swung his staff with all his

might against the face of the cliff. Immediately water flowed out of the rock. The people were soaked as a river formed in front of them. They rejoiced and said, "Our God is great. Our God is good."

But Moses named the place where the miracle happened Massah and Meribah, which means the place of the test and the quarrel.

READ MORE ABOUT IT
Exodus 17

Q&A

1. Why were the Israelites angry?
2. What was the miracle that happened?

Bible Trivia

Exodus is one of the five books called the Pentateuch. Can you name the other four?

Send Answer to: *Catholic Courier Bible Trivia*, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Please include your name, address and school name.

All entries must be received by March 4, 1999. A prize will be awarded to a winner selected at random from all the correct entries submitted.

Last month's winner was **Christina DeLeon**, a student at Nazareth Hall Middle School. She correctly identified the three Gospels besides Matthew as Mark, Luke and John.

Puzzle

Which of the following people might you see on the altar during Mass?

- a) priest b) lineman c) cantor d) soldier
e) eucharistic minister f) altar server g) curator
h) lector i) magi j) geologist

Bible Accent

Due to the antiquity of the event and the scarcity of any type of documentation or archaeological evidence, there is some disagreement among scholars as to the actual route taken by the Israelites after their departure from Egypt, or even whether there was a single departure or a migration that extended over a number of years. There is a general consensus that the pharaoh with whom Moses had frequent encounters was Ramses II, at approximately 1,300 years before the birth of Jesus.

The first five books of the Old Testament, which includes Exodus, were based on writings from several different sources. Scholars have given the writings letter names in order to identify these sources. They are J, which stands for "Yahwist," from Yahweh, a Hebrew name for God; next is E, for "Elohist," from Elohim, which was another Hebrew name for God; D is the deuteronomist, or a historical source; and P, for a priestly source.

St. Polycarp

St. Polycarp was a follower of St. John the Evangelist, and he in turn served as a teacher to other Christians and became the Bishop of Smyrna. He was also a friend of St. Ignatius, who asked him to write to the early churches in Asia on his behalf. St. Polycarp even visited Rome and was granted an audience with the pope.

During a time of Christian persecution in Asia, St. Polycarp was arrested and taken before the proconsul. Because he would not denounce his faith, he was sentenced to death. He was tied to a wooden stake and burned alive around the year 155. His body was completely destroyed, because his enemies did not want it to be given back to the Christians.

A document that was written by someone who had been present at St. Polycarp's death is called *Martyrium Polycarpi* and is considered one of the earliest written accounts of a martyr's death. We honor St. Polycarp on Feb. 23.

Traditional Latin Mass

*** TRIDENTINE RITE ***

Celebrated at Beautiful St. Stanislaus Church
corner of Hudson Ave. and Norton St.

EVERY SUNDAY AT 1:30 PM

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