

Crossing the Red Sea

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: God fights for His people, so we can trust Him and obey Him even when we are afraid and can't see a way out.

Bible passage: Exodus 13:17–14:31 and 15:1, 15:20–21. Read it before class.

Memory verse: "The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." *Exodus 14:14 (KJV)*

You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.

Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Leave space beside it for the opening game drawing.

1. Opening game: Which Way Out? (5–10 minutes)

On the board, draw a simple map: a camp in the middle, a sea in front of it, rough wilderness on the sides, and an army coming from behind. Ask: "You are in this camp. How do you escape?" Let kids suggest ideas: swim, build boats, run into the wilderness, fight the army. For each idea, explain why it would not work for a huge crowd of families with children and animals. Say: "Pharaoh thought the same thing. He said God's people were 'entangled in the land' (Exodus 14:3), which means trapped. But God had a way nobody could think of."

2. Bible story: God Fights for Israel (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Exodus 13. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

God leads the way. Pharaoh had finally let the Israelites go. God did not lead them the short way through the land of the Philistines, because they might see war and want to go back to Egypt (Exodus 13:17). He led them the long way, through the wilderness by the Red Sea (13:18). Moses took the bones of Joseph with them, just as Joseph had asked long before (13:19). **Look up Exodus 13:21.** The LORD went before them in a pillar of a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, and He never took it away (13:22). God told Moses to camp by the sea, near a place called Pi-hahiroth (14:1–2).

Trapped. Pharaoh and his servants changed their minds: "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" (14:5). Pharaoh took six hundred chosen chariots and all the chariots of Egypt, with captains over every one of them (14:7). The horses, chariots, horsemen and army caught up with Israel camping by the sea (14:9). The Israelites were **sore afraid**, which means very afraid. They cried out to the LORD, and they complained to Moses that it would have been better to stay slaves in Egypt (14:10–12).

Look up Exodus 14:13. Moses said, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD." **Look up Exodus 14:14.** That is our memory verse!



The sea divides. Look up Exodus 14:15–16. God told Moses to tell the people to go forward, and to lift up his rod and stretch out his hand over the sea to divide it. The angel of God and the pillar of cloud moved behind Israel. The cloud was darkness to the Egyptians but gave light to Israel, so the two camps did not come near each other all night (14:19–20). **Look up Exodus 14:21–22.** The LORD pushed the sea back with a strong east wind all that night, and the Israelites walked through the middle of the sea on dry ground, with the water like a wall on their right and on their left.

God fights for Israel. The Egyptians chased them into the middle of the sea (14:23). In the **morning watch**, the last part of the night, the LORD troubled the Egyptian army and took off their chariot wheels, so they drove **heavily**, slowly and with a lot of trouble (14:24–25). The Egyptians said, "the LORD fighteth for them" (14:25). Moses stretched out his hand again, and when morning came the sea returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen and all of Pharaoh's army that had followed them in (14:26–28). **Look up Exodus 14:30–31.** The LORD saved Israel that day, and the people feared the LORD and believed Him.

Praise. Moses and the Israelites sang a song to the LORD (15:1). Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a **timbrel** (a small hand drum), and all the women went out after her. She sang, "Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously" (15:20–21).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. The Israelites had just seen God set them free, but they still panicked (14:10–12). Why do we forget what God has already done for us?
2. Moses said "stand still" (14:13), and then God said "go forward" (14:15). When do we need to wait on God, and when do we need to obey right away?
3. Even the Egyptians said, "The LORD fighteth for them" (14:25). What does it mean that God fights for His people?
4. The wind blew all night (14:21). What do you think the people did while they waited?
5. The first thing the people did on the other side was sing (15:1). How can you thank God after He helps you?

Recall questions

1. How many chosen chariots did Pharaoh take? (*Six hundred, Exodus 14:7*)
2. What moved behind Israel to stand between the two camps? (*The angel of God and the pillar of the cloud, 14:19*)
3. What did God take off the Egyptians' chariots? (*Their wheels, 14:25*)

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **ye** means you, and **hold your peace** means stay calm and quiet and let God work. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.



5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Israel was trapped, and only God could save them. We are trapped by sin, and only God can save us. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: when something makes you afraid, pray first instead of complaining. Then do the next right thing God asks of you, like the Israelites going forward.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Exodus 13:17: Why didn't God lead them through the land of the Philistines? *(They might see war and go back to Egypt)*
2. Exodus 13:19: Whose bones did Moses take with him? *(Joseph's)*
3. Exodus 13:20: Where did they camp, in the edge of the wilderness? *(Etham)*
4. Exodus 14:7: How many chosen chariots did Pharaoh take? *(Six hundred)*
5. Exodus 14:16: What was Moses to lift up? *(His rod)*
6. Exodus 14:21: What kind of wind did the LORD send? *(A strong east wind, all that night)*
7. Exodus 14:31: Who did the people believe? *(The LORD, and His servant Moses)*
8. Exodus 15:20: What did Miriam take in her hand? *(A timbrel)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You fight for Your people. When we are afraid and can't see a way out, help us pray first, trust You and obey You. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks why the Egyptian soldiers died: answer simply and gently. Pharaoh's army was chasing God's people to make them slaves again (Exodus 14:5), and even the Egyptians saw that God was fighting for Israel (14:25). God is always good and fair, and He wants everyone to come to Him.

