



STORY BACKGROUND AND APPLICATION

The purpose of these files is to give teachers additional story background information that will assist them in their lesson preparations. Also included are applications that should be presented for each of the accounts. Simply teaching an interesting Bible story will have little benefit for the children unless it is applied to their lives. Without good application the Bible will become like all other storybooks the children have in their collections at home. God's accounts come with lessons that affect our lives. An equal amount of time and concentration should be put into the application as well as presenting the story account.



STORY BACKGROUNDS AND APPLICATIONS

OPENING NOTE: GIFTS or TALENTS

Since this course is built on teaching our children, youth, and adults the need to use our talents for the service of the Lord, perhaps we should begin with a brief comment on the differences between Spirit-given gifts and personal talents. Certainly the children will not be aware of the subtle comparison; however, it is good that the teachers realize the differences.

God has given everyone talents. Unbelievers as well as believers have talents in all sorts of areas, such as music, art, caring for those in need, leadership, education, and so on. As Scripture says, God makes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust.

Gifts, on the other hand, are special blessings that God gives only to believers. Every Christian is granted special gifts to be used as a working part of the body of Christ. These are extraordinary blessings bestowed by the Holy Spirit for use in service to God's church. Among the five stories in this series, two mention people who were given a special gift over and above their natural talents. Bezalel was given a special gift by the Holy Spirit that enhanced his already talented nature. Isaiah was granted a special gift of preaching when the Lord called him to serve as his prophet. The talents he already had in that area were enhanced with this extra-special gift.

That is not to say that Miriam, Ruth, and Tabitha were not given special Spirit-granted gifts. Certainly they were, and they used them to God's glory. However, Scripture makes a special point of telling us that Bezalel and Isaiah were given extra-special gifts to be used in service to God's people.

There is often a direct relationship between talents and the special gifts of the Holy Spirit. For a non-Christian, teaching may be a talent. But when a person becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit may intensify that talent with special power to reinforce and strengthen it for the edification of the saints.

Throughout this course the terms *talents* and *gifts* are used interchangeably. Here we are most concerned in teaching the students that each of us have talents that can be used in daily living. In these stories, the talents include caring for the poor, telling others of Jesus, befriending those in need, and serving the Lord with hands and voices. We want to teach the children that all the members of the body are necessary to function as a whole, and so *children should be made aware that they too are important to the Lord and his ministry*. Although they may not be missionaries to foreign lands, donors of millions of dollars, doctors in operating rooms, or congressmen, they are not insignificant to the Lord. They can still use their talents to serve God in their church and school, in their homes, and in their communities.

INTRODUCTION

Talents! That's something our televisions seem to be zeroing in on lately. There are many programs that stress Americans with talents: dancers, singers, cheerleaders, and lots more. Perhaps, if nothing else, we are discovering that there is a lot of talent out there. It's great to see people make good use of their talents, even if some of them seem rather bizarre at first. It's certainly a fact that some people have been given special gifts in certain areas. And this is not only speaking of adults, but children as well. There are 9-year-old piano virtuosos, 13-year-old university students, and 7-year-old drummers who could knock your socks off!

A Tiny Bit-O-Talent is designed to show children that they have been given talents also. However, this course takes a look not at the type of talent they possess, but where it came from and how it can be used for the Lord's work. The great evangelist Paul had a very special student in young Timothy. St. Paul really took a liking to this teenager and invited Timothy to join him on his mission trips. Paul later wrote Timothy two letters about his work in the church. Paul wrote, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers" (1 Timothy 4:12). In other words, "Timothy, use your God-given talents and you will be respected by your fellow Christians." Two verses later Paul went on to say, "Do not neglect your gift" (1 Timothy 4:14).

This course is based on Colossians 3:23, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord." ("And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." KJV) When Jesus gave us the command to spread his Word and tell all nations about his love and mercy, he gave each of us, whether age 4, 14, 40, or 104, special talents that we can use to be an active part of his ministry. Some will be singers, some teachers. Some will work on computers, and others will serve meals to the poor. Each has a gift that is to be nurtured and used for kingdom work. Our prayer is that through studying the stories presented here, our children will discover that they too have been blessed with talents that they can use to bring others to the truth that Jesus is the Way and the Truth and the Life.

It should also be important to every teacher that the children properly understand the truth that we are all sinners (law) and that Jesus rescued us from that sin by dying on a cross (gospel). They should be fully aware that by believing in Jesus as our Savior, we will be given the joy of eternal life in heaven. We cannot effectively use our talents for the Lord until we realize who it is we are serving. As Scripture so aptly says, "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

MIRIAM LOVED TO SING

Exodus 15:1-21

BACKGROUND

The writer of Psalm 66 put in his lyrics the words, “Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man’s behalf! He turned the sea into dry land, they passed through the waters on foot—come, let us rejoice in him” (verses 5, 6). (“Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men. He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.” KJV)

We first meet Miriam in Exodus 2. Pharaoh had ordered the death of all Hebrew boys by drowning them in the Nile River. Moses was born at the time of this death sentence; however, his mother protected him by making a small basket of reeds. She had Moses’ older sister, Miriam, keep watch over the basket while it floated on the Nile River. Of course, we know that this caused Moses eventually to be taken into the home of Pharaoh himself.

Years later God chose Moses to lead his oppressed people out of Egypt to the Promised Land of Canaan. This happened following the plagues and the celebration of the first Passover. Exodus 14 describes the Israelites camped at the edge of the Red Sea. The scene was tragic: to the front of them was the uncrossable Red Sea; behind them and to the right of them were mountains; to the left of them came the Egyptian army with six hundred chariots. The people were in a panic and begged Moses to take them back to Egypt so they could once again be slaves in that heathen country. Perhaps you could draw a picture for the children depicting the predicament.

The Lord commanded Moses to raise up his staff and stretch his hand over the waters of the Red Sea so that there formed high walls of water to the left and the right as the people passed through. The area where they crossed was perhaps 5 miles wide—a considerable distance. As the people passed, the Angel of God (the Son of God himself) moved between the Israelites and the Egyptian army, blocking off all sight of the Israelites. The miracle became greater as it turned totally dark on the Egyptian side and as bright as day on the Israelite side. Then a dry, hot wind quickly dried up the seabed. Hebrews 11:29 tells us that it was by faith that the people crossed the Red Sea. As the Egyptians and their chariots finally reached the sea and began to pursue the Israelites, the children of Israel completed their crossing. When the Egyptian chariots were all on the seabed, the Lord caused the wheels fall off to slow their progress. A short time later, the waters roared back together, drowning all of the Egyptian soldiers.

Exodus 15:1-18

This was an extraordinary miracle that saved God’s people in an awesome way. Moses felt it was a great moment for a song of praise to the God who had delivered them. Perhaps you could read his song (Exodus 15:1-18). This hymn shows the greatness of the Lord.

Exodus 15:19-21

Miriam, who is here called a prophetess, took a tambourine in her hand and led the women in a chorus of praise as well. Rupprecht writes: “It was a sort of antiphonal singing, of which we often hear in the Old Testament. Miriam and a number of Israelite women, all joyfully leaping; dancing, striking the timbrels with their hands, and singing the praise of the Lord, formed one group, while another band formed the other. Both groups would alternately move toward one another, and again retreat, dancing, striking their instruments, and singing, the first chorus intoning a phrase and the second responding” (*Bible History References*, Vol. 1, page 170).

APPLICATION

First, it should be pointed out to the children that it took a great amount of faith for God's people to pass through on the dry bed of the Red Sea. It is difficult for us to imagine what that trip was like, looking up at high walls of water on either side, wondering how long they would stay up. (Reference the opening of the Red Sea in the movie *The Ten Commandments*.)

However, this course is about using our talents to serve the Lord. Here we direct our attention to Moses and especially Miriam, both of whom used their leadership and musical talents to write and perform songs of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. Both Moses and Miriam knew that it was the Lord who saved them, the same Lord who would rescue them from the curse of their sins.

Here the children can begin to see what we mean by using our talents. In the music world alone, Christians can use special talents in singing, writing lyrics and melodies, playing instruments, accompanying hymn singing, etc. Music plays a major part in the life of every Christian—from Sunday morning worship services to daily life.

When Jesus ascended into heaven, he commanded us to go and tell everyone about his love. This can be done in countless ways. We must teach our children to discover their talents and use them for the work of the Lord.

WHO CAN HOLD THE LONGEST NOTE?



Let's talk about talents once again. In the last story, we learned that being a good friend also takes talent. Can you tell me about family members or friends of yours who have special talents? Today we will once again try to see who has a special talent. This one involves your voice. Let's see who can hold the longest note. I will ask each of you to come up front. When I say "GO", I want you to take a deep breath and then begin holding a long note, like this. Hold it as long as you possibly can. I will time each of you to see who can hold it the longest. The one who wins certainly has talent in holding long notes! Today we will meet another Bible person whose talent was using his voice, but he didn't hold a long note. He used his voice to tell people something.

ISAIAH LOVED TO TELL OTHERS

Isaiah 6:1-8

Many years ago the Israelites were ruled by kings. Some of the kings were wicked men who did not love God. They wanted to worship false gods instead. God was very angry with his people. He loved them very much, yet he saw the people following false gods.

God chose a man named Isaiah to tell the people about his love for them. God wanted Isaiah to go throughout the land, preaching about God's love and telling the people that he wanted them to come back and worship him again.

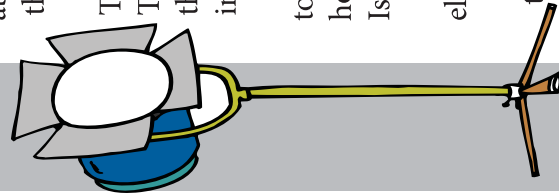
One day God showed Isaiah a very unusual vision. A vision is like a dream that actually happens. In the vision Isaiah saw God seated on a huge throne. The throne was lifted high up above Isaiah. God was seated on the throne chair. He was wearing a long, long robe that filled the entire room.

There were angels called seraphs flying above the Lord. Each had six wings. They used two wings to cover their faces, two to cover their feet, and two for flying. They were calling to one another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord!" They were so loud that the walls shook. Isaiah was very frightened. He was a sinful man who was standing right in front of the holy God.

One angel took a burning-hot coal from a fire. It flew toward Isaiah and touched his mouth, but the coal did not burn Isaiah. The angel told Isaiah that the hot coal was a sign that God had forgiven all of Isaiah's sins. Then the Lord spoke to Isaiah, "Who can I send to go and teach the people?"

Isaiah answered the Lord, "Here I am. You can send me!" From that day on, Isaiah traveled throughout the land, telling the people about the coming Savior.

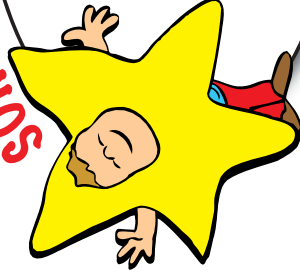
We can use our talents to tell our friends and families about Jesus too. We can tell others that Jesus died on a cross for them and if they believe in Jesus, they will go to heaven. That's a great message for each of us to share.



SOMETHING TO REMEMBER

**"Go into all
the world and
preach the good
news to all
creation."**

Mark 16:15 (NIV)



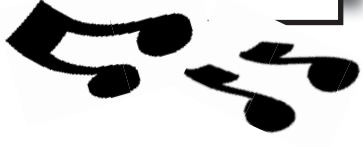
Isaiah saw angels in his vision. You can make an angel today.

Materials:

- Scissors (teacher may help)
- Paper plate
- Paper fastener
- White glue
- Silver or gold Glitter

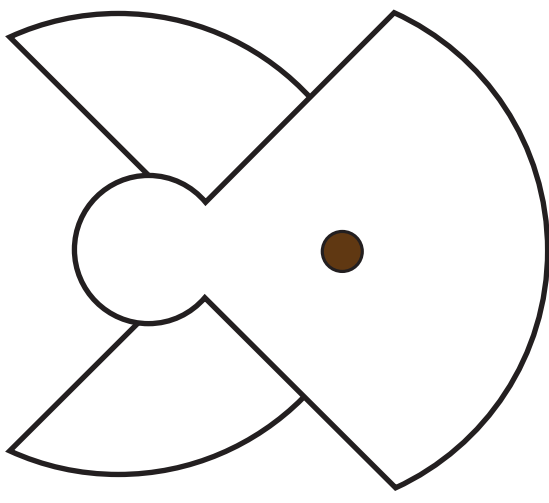
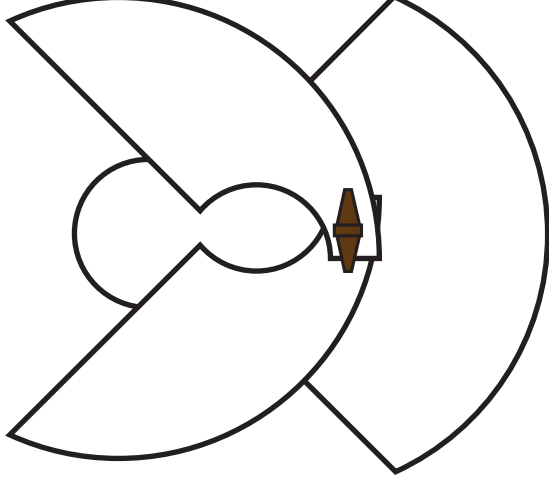
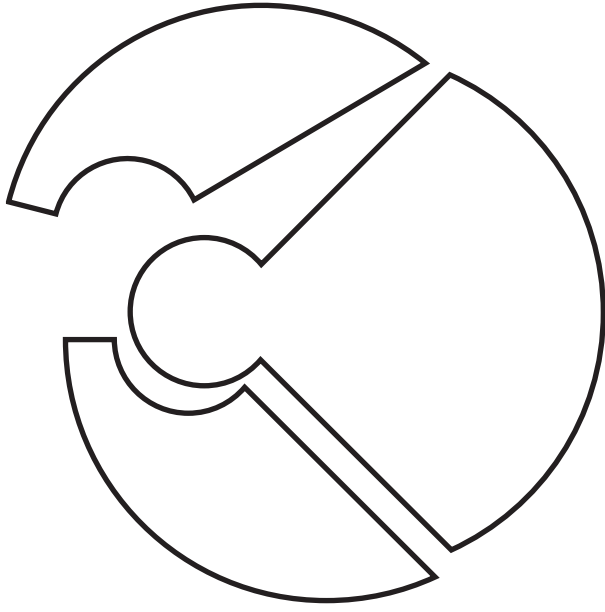
Directions:

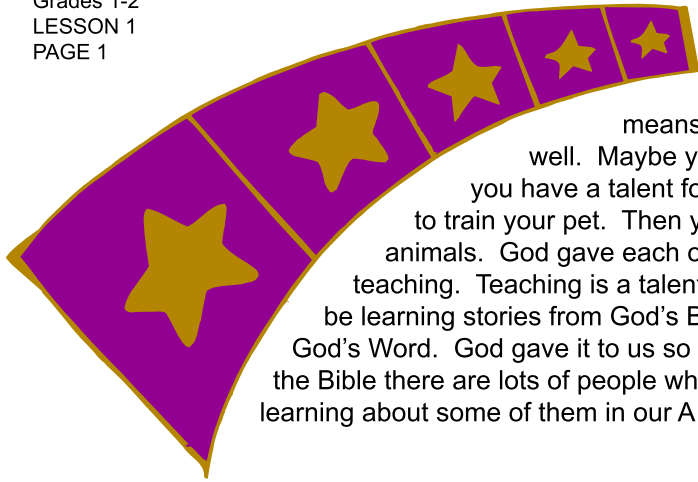
- Cut out the angel and wings.
- Glue glitter on wings and robe.
- Attach wings to angel with brass fastener.
- Move wings up and down.



SING (*To the tune of The Farmer in the Dell*)

**The Bible is God's Word.
The Bible is God's Word.
It will show the way to heaven,
The Bible is God's Word.**





Do you have talent? Talent means that you can do something well. Maybe you can sing well. Then we say you have a talent for singing. Perhaps you like to train your pet. Then you have a talent for teaching animals. God gave each of us special talents. I enjoy teaching. Teaching is a talent that God gave to me. We will be learning stories from God's Bible about talent. The Bible is God's Word. God gave it to us so we can learn about Jesus. In the Bible there are lots of people who used their talents. We will be learning about some of them in our A Tiny Bit-O-Talent Bible school.

MIRIAM LOVED TO SING

Exodus 15:1-21

Miriam and Moses grew to be adults. One day God came to Moses and told him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. God was going to take them to a new land.

One night all the Israelites packed up their belongings and marched out of Egypt. They were on their way to the Promised Land. The wicked Egyptian king sent an army of soldiers with horses and chariots to capture the Israelites and bring them back to Egypt. Soon the Israelites ran into a big problem and had to stop their travels. In front of them was a great sea. Behind them came the rushing Egyptian chariots. What were they to do?

God told Moses to stretch out his hand over the waters. Soon the waters parted to the left and to the right so the Israelites could walk across the sea on dry ground. The Egyptian chariots came quickly after them. When all the Israelites had walked through the sea, Moses held up his hand again and the waters came crashing down on all the Egyptian chariots. All the soldiers drowned in the rushing water.

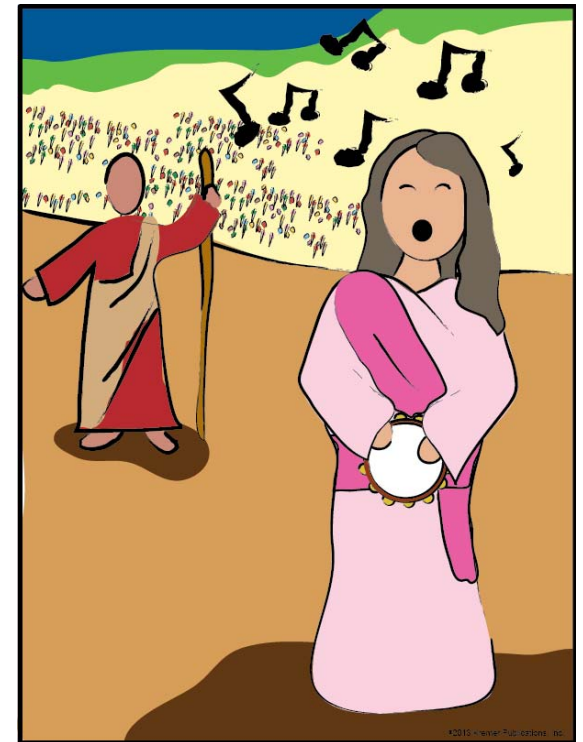
Moses was so happy that God had delivered them that he began to sing a song to the Lord. He sang about how great God is. Soon his sister, Miriam, decided she would also like



CHILDREN WHO USED THEIR TALENTS!

YOUNG MIRIAM HELPED HER PARENTS

Miriam was a girl who lived many years ago in the land of Egypt. She was an Israelite girl. The children of Israel were God's special people. The Egyptians hated the Israelites and made them work like slaves. The king of the Egyptians even tried to kill all the Israelite boys. Miriam had a baby brother born into her family. His name was Moses. How could her mother save baby Moses? She made a basket of reeds and placed the baby inside. Then she told little Miriam to take her baby brother down to the river and place him in the water. She was to carefully watch over her brother to see that he was safe. Miriam used her talents to babysit her baby brother. Moses was saved, and he grew to be a young man loved the Lord.



MIRIAM LOVED TO SING *CONT.*

to sing her own song. She sang, "The Lord gave us the victory. He saved us from the horse and the rider." While she sang she tapped on a tambourine and danced a happy dance. Soon all the women joined Miriam in her song.

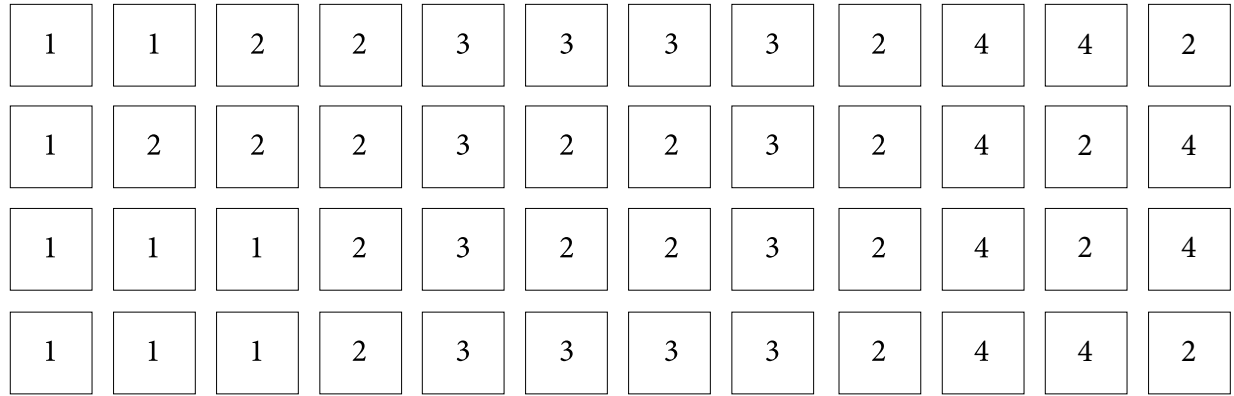
Miriam was talented in music and in leading others to join in. Miriam used her singing talent to lead the people in a song to God. We use our talents for the Lord too. There are lots of talents we can use. Maybe we can sing like Miriam did. Maybe we can bake cookies and give them to friends. Maybe we can weed the flower beds or spend time with a sick friend. Whatever talents we have, we use them for Jesus.

words from the BIBLE

**"Sing and make
music in your heart
to the Lord."**

Ephesians 5:19 (NIV)

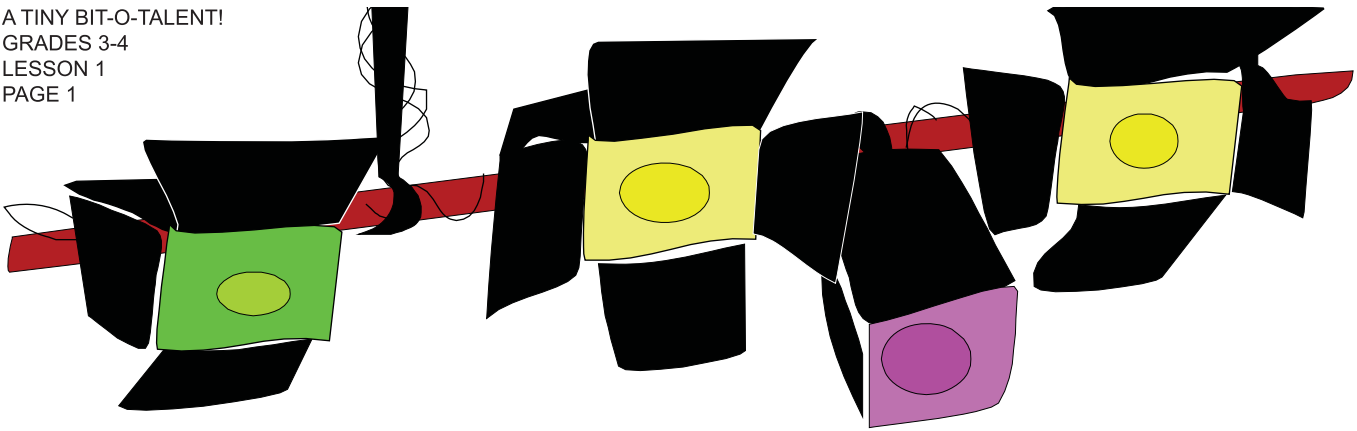
The Children of Israel needed help when they reached the Red Sea. Who came to their rescue? Color the boxes as follows: 1=RED; 2=BLACK; 3=BLUE; 4=GREEN.



What does it spell? _____

Color the picture of Moses and the Children of Israel walking through the Red Sea.





MIRIAM USES HER TALENT TO WORSHIP GOD

Exodus 15:1-21

Some Talented Kids

In Elgin, Illinois, more than 150 kids built a world record scale model of Noah's ark out of 34,900 LEGOs. The boat measured 12 feet long, 2 feet wide, and 18 inches tall. One side of the ark remained open to display the three inner decks. Now that took talent!



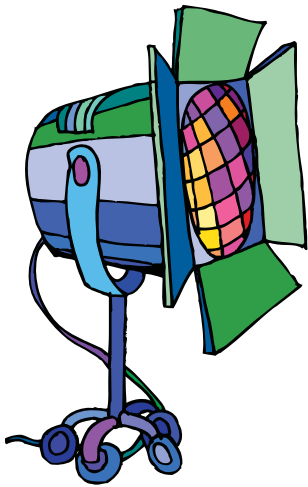
MIRIAM COULD SING

For many years the children of Israel lived as slaves in Egypt, building temples for the wicked pharaohs. Finally, the time came for God to rescue his people and bring them into a new land he called the Promised Land. God chose Moses to be the leader of the Israelites. He went to Pharaoh and demanded that the Egyptians let the Israelites go. Pharaoh refused again and again. Each time he refused, God sent a plague to show the Egyptians that he is the true and all-powerful God. Finally God sent an angel of death to kill the oldest son in every Egyptian home. Then Pharaoh gave in and told the Israelites to leave Egypt. God's people gathered their belongings and headed into the wilderness for a long journey to the land that God would show them.

After the Israelites were in the wilderness for a short time, Pharaoh realized he had made a mistake. He decided he would send his army to capture God's people and bring them back to Egypt once again. Pharaoh took six hundred of the best and fastest chariots along with a huge army. Meanwhile, the Israelites' trip took them to the Red Sea. It was a huge body of water that they could never hope to cross. To their right and left were mountains, and when they looked behind them, they saw the dust from Pharaoh's chariots coming toward them. The people became very frightened and begged Moses to let them go back to Egypt. They figured it was better to be a slave for Pharaoh than to die in the wilderness. They had quickly forgotten that it was God who rescued them. Moses told them not to be afraid. He said that the Lord would fight for them and save them.

Then the Lord told Moses to raise his staff and stretch out his hand toward the Red Sea. When he did, the waters began to divide to the right and to the left. They miraculously parted as a great wind dried up the muddy seabed. God wanted to prove to the Egyptians that he is the true God and he alone should receive all the glory.

As the Israelites began to march through the Red Sea on the dry path, God's angel moved between them and the Egyptian army. When night came, God kept the path well lit for his people while the Egyptians were in total darkness. When morning came, the children of Israel were safe on the other side. As the Egyptians followed between the huge walls of water, the wheels began to fall off their chariots. The soldiers tried to repair the chariots, but Moses again held up his hand over the Red Sea and the waters rushed back together. All of the soldiers drowned at the bottom of the Red Sea. That day the Lord rescued his people with a tremendous miracle.

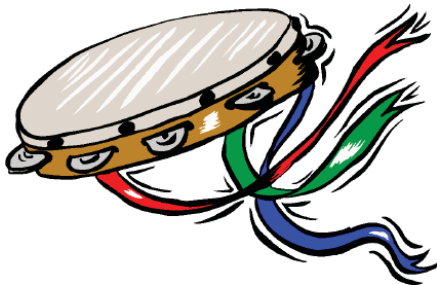


MIRIAM COULD SING

After Moses saw what had happened, he decided it was time to sing a song of praise to God for saving his people. In his song he thanked God for rescuing them from their enemy. After Moses began to sing, his sister, Miriam, gathered all the women together. Do you remember Miriam? She had helped watch over her baby brother Moses when he was in a basket in the Nile River. Miriam also wanted to use her talents to sing a special song to the Lord. Miriam grabbed her tambourine and sang her own song. “Sing to the Lord, for he has given us the victory. The horse and the rider he has thrown into the sea.” Her song was a beautiful tribute to God. What a magnificent sight and sound that must have been. The air was filled with the music of praise to God.

CAN YOU BE A MIRIAM?

All of us have been given the talent to sing. Perhaps some can sing better than others, but we all can open our mouths and praise God for all the wonderful things he has done, especially for the love his Son showed us by dying on a cross to forgive our sins. Not only does God enjoy hearing our praises, but we enjoy hearing one another sing to God. You can learn songs about Jesus and sing them for your family and friends. Maybe someday you might even learn to play an instrument so you can praise God in another musical way. Think about it! What a wonderful way to use your talents, just as Miriam did!



A TALENT
MESSAGE FROM
THE BIBLE

*“Sing and make
music in your
heart to the Lord.”*

Ephesians 5:19 (NIV)

YOU WERE THERE

Answer these questions as if you were with Moses and the Israelites.

1. What was it like seeing Moses standing before the mighty Pharaoh?
2. What did it feel like knowing you were finally leaving Egypt?
3. How did it feel when you looked back and saw Pharaoh’s chariots racing toward you?
4. Why did the Israelites begin to complain? What did that say of the faith of those complainers?
5. How did Moses get the waters of the Red Sea to open for you?
6. How did the people react when the waters opened and became walls of water on either side?
7. Were you afraid that when you were walking through the Red Sea that the walls of water might come down? Why or why not?
8. What was the sight like when the waters came back together again on top of the Egyptians? Did you feel God was unfair to them? Why or why not?
9. Why do you think the people felt like singing after it was all over? Did you join them?
10. What did Miriam do then?

BEZALEL USES HIS TALENT TO CREATE

Exodus 31:1-11; 35:30-35; 36:1-38

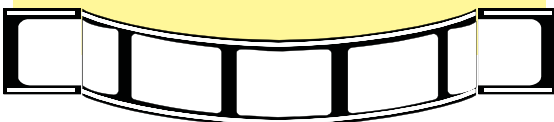


TALENT GALORE



Johannes Gutenberg was a man who loved to think of things to make with his hands. Born in Germany in 1398, Gutenberg spent much of his time working with gold and copper. One day he wondered if

it would be possible to mold individual die cast letters of the alphabet. Those letters could then be placed in a frame to spell words and paragraphs. The frames were then placed in a large machine that would ink the plates and press the letters down onto a sheet of paper. Today we know that Johannes Gutenberg invented the first printing press that used movable type. And what did Gutenberg print? His greatest success was the printing of the entire Bible into the German language. Because of Gutenberg's invention, people all over Germany could read the Bible. Before Gutenberg's moveable type, that was not possible. Now the Bible could be printed in large numbers, making the price affordable to everyone. What a blessing Gutenberg's invention turned out to be. Using just one man's talent, the Word of God spread to many, many people.



A TINY BIT-O-BACKGROUND

After the Children of Israel crossed the Red Sea and were safe from the Egyptians, they began their long journey through the wilderness to the Promised Land. The trip would be dangerous, uncomfortable, and difficult. God provided manna and quail for the people to eat so they would be well fed. They came to a stop at Mount Sinai. Here God invited Moses to come up the mountain so he could give him the Ten Commandments and many other laws that God wanted the people to follow. Here God also told Moses to build a place of worship that they could take with them on their travels. This church was called the tabernacle, or "tent church." God told Moses exactly how it was to be built. He gave all the instructions right down to the tiniest detail. It was to be a beautiful tent with fancy embroidered curtains, beautiful furniture, and a golden ark of the covenant. But the people were in a wilderness. Where would they find all the materials? And who would be in charge?

While the Israelites were on their journey, the Lord instructed them to build a huge tent that could be set up, taken down, and moved from place to place. God told Moses that the people were to provide the materials for making this beautiful house of worship. He told Moses that the people needed to donate gold, silver, bronze, blue, purple and scarlet yarn, fine linen, goat's hair, ram skins, acacia wood, and gemstones. Moses also told the people that everyone who was skilled in arts and crafts should donate their time in making the tabernacle. This included women who were skilled at dyeing and spinning wool, craftsmen who could mold beautiful dishes and other furnishings of gold and silver, wood-workers who could cut and overlay the wood with fine gold, and embroiderers who could make beautiful pictures on the tent walls. What a project this would be!

The people obeyed God. First they began bringing their jewelry and yarn. The Bible says the people brought necklaces, earrings, and rings. They brought their goat and ram skins and yards and yards of colorful fabric and fine linen. They even donated their best gemstones that would be worn by the high



priest. Some people donated oil for anointing the priests and fine-smelling incense that would be burned in the tabernacle.

Do you think they received enough donations? The Bible tells us Moses finally had to tell the people to stop bringing their gifts because they had far more than they could use. It was a beautiful example of people giving their time, talents, and gifts for the work of the Lord.

But they still needed someone to be in charge of the enormous project. That man was specially chosen by the Lord. He said to Moses, "I've chosen Bezalel and filled him with my Holy Spirit so he will be gifted with special skills in all kinds of crafts and artwork. Bezalel will know how to design the beautiful cherubim angels to be embroidered on the side curtains. He will know how to work in gold, silver, and bronze. He will also know how to cut and set gemstones, and he will be gifted in wood-working. Plus, he will be a great teacher who is able to train others to do these wonderful tasks." So Moses gave all of God's instructions for the tabernacle to Bezalel, who would work hard at making God's house a wonderful place of worship.

When the tabernacle was finished and everything was in place, the Lord covered the tent with a cloud during the daylight and a fire by night so that all of the Israelites could see the presence of God in their house of worship. When the cloud lifted and began to move, it was a sign to break camp and move on to another place. What a wonderful thing it is when God's people use their talents to work together for the Lord!



USING YOUR SPECIAL TALENT

Do you have special talents you can use for the Lord? In our story there were many people who used their talents to make beautiful things for the Lord. Do you like making things? Our talents can be used in many different ways. Maybe you can help make beautiful things. Maybe you can help someone with a painting job or help a neighbor cut the lawn or weed his garden. Maybe you are good at fixing things, or you might even have the talent of cleaning up after a big project. All these are ways you can use your talents to serve the Lord, just like Bezalel.

A TINY BIT-O-THE-BIBLE TO REMEMBER

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others."

1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)

HOW WELL DO YOU REMEMBER?

1. Who was the German man that used his talent to invent moveable type?
2. Why was moveable type so important to the spread of God's Word?
3. What did God give to the people while at Mt. Sinai?
4. What instructions did God also give?
5. What does the word "tabernacle" mean?
6. Where did the people find all the materials to build the tabernacle?
7. Why do we build churches?
8. How much was donated?
9. Why did God choose Bezalel?
10. What was Bezalel's job?

NOW THINK IT THROUGH!

1. Can we worship God if we are not in a church? Explain.
2. Does God ever ask us to give precious things to him? Explain.
3. We know that God specially placed his Spirit in Bezalel. Does he do that today to anyone?
4. Do you think Bezalel was the type of man who took the honor for having completed the tabernacle? Explain.
5. Ask your teacher to explain what came after the tabernacle several years later in the Promised Land.

USING YOUR BIBLE

Each of these passages mentions a particular craft in the Bible. What is it?

Jeremiah 37:21 _____

Romans 9:21 _____

Matthew 13:55 _____

John 20:15 _____

Acts 9:43 _____

Isaiah 19:9 _____

Ezekiel 5:1 _____

MIME IT

Have each student think of a way to use their hands (or bodies) to serve the Lord (such as painting a house). When called upon, get up and mime it to the class. See if they can guess this special talent.

DRAW IT

God gave Bezalel special instructions for the Art of the Covenant, a special box that would stand in the Most Holy Place where God would meet the High Priest. It also held the 10 Commandments and a pot of Mannah food. Read Exodus 37:1-9 and draw what you think this Ark looked like. (Teacher can read it aloud if there are not enough Bibles for the entire class.)

DAVID GREEN: A True Christian Friend Who Built an Empire

The name David Green may mean little to most people. It's a simple, common name. But if we mention Hobby Lobby, perhaps more might begin to make the connection. David Green is the extremely successful creator of the Hobby Lobby empire. His story is both fascinating and educational. Although a billionaire today (listed in the top 150 wealthiest Americans), he started his business in the living room of a humble Oklahoma City home with \$600 of borrowed money. He once wrote that his family lived in a small two-bedroom house. His parents got one bedroom, his three sisters the other, and his brother and he slept on roll-away beds in the kitchen. He remembered that in order to go to the bathroom at night, he would have to first walk through his



mom's and dad's bedroom, where he often found them on their knees praying. Like many kids, David wanted to do something for the Lord, but he couldn't think of what to do. He couldn't be a preacher or teacher. He wasn't good in school either, having to repeat seventh grade.

Finally, in high school he was able to land a part-time job at a local five-and-dime store sweeping floors. One day he was asked to clean the toilets, which he did as quickly as possible. The store owner called him back and told David to get down on his hands and knees and scrub the toilets until they shone. Finally David knew what his father meant when he said, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might."

By his high school senior year he was working 40 hours a week, which gave him more money to add to his mother's mission project box. He said, "I discovered what I could do for the Lord—work at the calling he had given me with all my might." *

Today, with over 20,000 employees at over 450 stores in nearly every state, Green has seen his faith grow, as well as his reliance on the Lord. His entire journey from humble beginnings to overwhelming wealth has always been viewed as his ministry for the Lord.

David Green has befriended many with his generous offerings to Christian colleges across the country. Today he is working with a national Bible museum in purchasing artifacts and rare Bibles. But he has also been a friend to his employees. The company pays its full-time workers nearly 50% over the federal minimum wage. He has also designed his store hours with employees in mind. Monday through Saturday his stores close at 8 P.M., and they remain closed all day on Sunday, which is claimed to be the best retail day of the week for most large box stores. Green also strives to meet the spiritual needs of his employees by staffing chaplains to minister to his workers. He has said that his legacy should not be about his success at Hobby Lobby. Rather, he wants to be remembered as a man who shared the gospel with others. "As long as there's someone on this earth that doesn't know Jesus Christ, we have a job to do."**

* guideposts.org
** cbn.com

RUTH: TALENT FOR BEFRIENDING

Ruth 1:1-22

Today we will meet a woman who certainly lacked the wealth of David Green, yet she showed her love for those around her, especially for her mother-in-law. Known especially as a direct ancestor of our Savior, Ruth displayed some characteristics of love and friendship that we might all make our own.

BACKGROUND

It is not too difficult to place where the story of Ruth falls chronologically in Scripture. We can simplify the approximate time of this book if we remember that after the Israelites moved into the Promised Land the Lord chose judges at periodic intervals to lead his erring people. The time of the judges lasted about 450 years. After the judges, the kings began to reign, with Saul, David, and Solomon being the first three, each ruling for 40 years. This story likely takes place in the latter time of the judges, about 60 years before David was born. The story unfolds in two places: first, the familiar city of Bethlehem, and second, the heathen country of Moab, about 75 miles to the east of Bethlehem. We meet a couple from the tribe of Judah by the name of Elimelech (*"My God is King"*) and Naomi (*"Jehovah is pleased"*). The author of this book is not certain, although it may have been Samuel.

Ruth 1:1-5

1. What plagued the people at this time?
2. What were the names of the four people in this family?
3. What had been their hometown and where did they go to live?
4. Who were the Moabites? (See Genesis 19:34-38 and Deuteronomy 2:9)
5. What happened to Naomi's family and in what span of time?
6. Discuss the mixed marriage between Naomi's sons and the two Moabite women?

Ruth 1:6-14

1. What news did Naomi hear regarding Judah?
2. After traveling a short distance, what did Naomi decide?
3. What did she tell her two daughters-in-law? Parental blessings were very important in those days. Children placed much significance on the words of blessing given by a mother or father.
4. How can you tell that these women truly cared for one another?
5. What did both daughters-in-law first tell Naomi?
6. What was Naomi's line of thinking if the two Moabite women returned with her to Bethlehem? Why would it be difficult for these two women to find a husband among the Jews?
7. What did Naomi mean by saying that the Lord's hand had gone against her? Was God punishing her?
8. What did the women do a second time? Who left?
9. What did Ruth do?

Ruth 1:15-18

1. Read these words and list the ways Ruth wanted to mirror Naomi.
2. Which of the statements was indeed the anchor to the rest?
3. Ruth's friendship with Naomi went far deeper than just natural friendliness. What can we say that Ruth and Naomi now shared in common?
4. What can now be said about Ruth, a young woman from a heathen land?
5. What was Ruth's decision?

Ruth 1:19-22

1. What created excitement in Bethlehem? (What greater excitement was in store for that town many years later?)
2. Why did Naomi feel she should be called "Mara," or "bitter"?
3. What did she mean when she said she had left Bethlehem full and had now returned empty?
4. How does verse 22 set the stage for the rest of the book?
5. If time allows, read chapters 2-4 also.

LET'S DISCUSS

List other famines mentioned in the Bible.

See Genesis 12:10; 26:1; 2 Samuel 21:1; 1 Kings 17:7; and 2 Kings 25:3.

Who oversees the famines? (See Amos 4.)

What is it like living during a severe famine? Why must we in the United States be very thankful?

What else happened in Bethlehem? (See Genesis 35:19 and Micah 5:2.)

FRIENDS

Solomon made short comments about many subjects in his books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. What did he have to say about the importance of real friends?

Proverbs 18:24

Proverbs 27:10

Proverbs 27:17

Ecclesiastes 4:9

Ecclesiastes 4:10

Why can we call God our truest friend?

Joshua 1:5

Isaiah 54:10

John 14:18

John 15:14,15

Hebrews 13:5

TIME TO DISCUSS

How important is it to have Christian friends?

In what ways can we be friends of unbelievers?

Someone once wrote that there are three things that make good friendships:

1. Friends think alike.
2. Friends are loyal and dependable.
3. Friends are able to confide in one another.

Knowing this, can we be friends with Jesus?