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shira@shirlala.com

An Interactive Pesach Story Script **by Shira Kline**

Notes for the Narrator:

- This is a completely interactive experiential re-telling of the Pesach story for an early childhood audience and their parents.
- When you see a word all in caps, this is a word you wait for the audience to say with you. They know these answers because they understand the implied clues. They may also recognize the answers as lyrics from a song or are familiar with the story.
- Ideal room set up with ample open space, parents and children sitting together on the floor, so that you can move in and out of the group, and so that you can all boogie (of course).
- Children and adults are called on to play different roles. At times you will narrate the dialogue and other times you will cue the storytellers to say lines. Throughout the story, I address the audience as "you," "we," "storytellers," and/or I "role" them in a character and call them by this name.
- Musical accompaniment on the guitar is very helpful as it layers the story with a soundscape, creating a soundtrack for the story. Try a range of strumming styles from dramatic loud tremolo to light and gentle picking.
- Songs that I use to tell the story are highlighted in blue with sources when I have them.
- "Stage directions" are in italics, these are often meant to be adlibbed. Use your whole body to tell this story!

SONG:

Everybody Has a Story (Craig Taubman, www.craignco.com)

NARRATOR:

A long long long long long... Storytellers, help me out with the "long long longs" (*gesture to audience, play sounds effect on guitar*) "...long time... AGO! Our great great great great... We need a LOT more of these "greats!" (*elicit more "greats"*) Our great grandmas and grandpas were living in Egypt, smooshed together in a narrow place where they could barely look this way or that. They didn't get to go to playgrounds, they didn't get to eat ice cream, they didn't get to play with their friends and buy new clothes, they're were stuck in this place. (*This is my way of inserting the translation of "Mitzrayim," the Hebrew word for Egypt, which means "Narrow Place."*)

They had to work all day and all...NIGHT! When it was dark and when it was ...LIGHT! Whooooo it's hot out here in theDESERT. Well, we got a lot of work to do so everyone take out a big heavy hammer (*mime taking out a giant hammer and swinging over your*



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head, quickly moving back to the guitar to emphasize each bang with a loud strum in the key of the song) and...BANG! BANG! 3 bangs... BANG BANG BANG! (act out this entire song)

SONG:

[Building Cities \(CD: ShirLaLa Pesach, Song by Shirley Cohen\)](#)

We were slaves and it was hard!!

But there was one young man (*Identify a child who is paying close attention*) probably just a bit older than you (*addressing this child*) who says, 'No. I can't take this. I know this is my family and I'm gonna miss them, but I just can't do it. (*at this point, I'm not expecting this child to repeat these lines, rather I'm narrating the story and engaging each audience member personally*) This is awful. I gotta get outa here.'

And he left! (*guitar accompaniment takes on "mysterious" sound, minor chords perhaps, to introduce this new, strange character and foreshadow his upcoming bravery.*)

He went up into the hills. (*Gesture with the neck of guitar, eyes and arms guiding everyone's imagination into the hills of Midian.*) And here, he stayed. He became a.... SHEPHERD! He took care of..... SHEEP! Storytellers, we need lots of sheep now. "Baa baa baa!" And there he was tending to his sheep one fine day (*Gesture for more "baa baa." Guitar accompaniment switches to light gentle picking for us to imagine a calm and peaceful life up there in those hills*) when suddenly... (*guitar chords change to reflect something new, a question coming*)...

(*Point directly towards a spot in the center of the room*) What's that over there? (*Elicit these answers from the audience.*)

AUDIENCE:

(*You may hear answers like...*) A fire! The bush is on fire! It's the burning bush! etc.

NARRATOR:

What should we do?

(*You may hear answers OR you can ask further detailed questions like...*) Should we run away? Should we try to put it out? What does it look like?

You know, something funny is happening here. The more I look at this bush on fire, the more I can see that it's not exactly burning up... just burning. Hmmmm, let's sit here for a moment and pay close attention. (*Gather everyone close to each other and gaze into our imaginary burning bush in the center of the room. Give it a moment of total quiet to make space for this experience. Then, gentle finger picking in the key of the next song to prepare*)



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SONG:

[Moses, Moses Take Off Your Shoes \(Song by Emily Friedman\)](#)

NARRATOR:

(Sung as "the Voice") Moses, Moses *(Look up as if to say, what in the world was that???)*
(As Moses) Did you hear that? Am I crazy? Did someone just call out my name?

AUDIENCE:

You may hear answers like: Yes, that was God calling out!!

NARRATOR:

(Sung as "the Voice") Moses, Moses
(As Moses) That's so funny, I can hear it with my ears and I can also kind of feel it, *(hand on heart)* here in my... HEART.
(Sung as "the Voice") Moses, Moses take off your shoes for this is holy ground.

And then, Moses knew that God was in this place. And Moses took off his shoes and he sat and listened with all of his heart. What did God want to tell him? *You may hear things having to do with talking to the Pharaoh and 'let my people go.'* Yes, that's right! God told Moses to go down to Egypt Land and tell ol' Pharaoh... LET MY PEOPLE GO!

SONG:

[Let My People Go \(CD: ShirLaLa Pesach\)](#)

Sing first chorus, then as Moses: Me?? Me?? You want me to go and talk to the Pharaoh?? But, but I am just a shepherd! I couldn't possibly. *(Adlib)*

(Sing chorus again and continue to end of song.)

NARRATOR:

Well, I don't know how convinced Moses was that he was the right guy for the job, but he took a deep breath *(take a deep breath with audience)*, stood up tall and went to speak with the Pharaoh. By the time he got down the hills to the palace gates, I think Moses was feeling kind of nervous. Are you feeling a little bit nervous about talking to King Pharaoh?

Yeah, Moses was probably really nervous. So he did the best he could. He sang in his nicest voice! He put on his biggest smile.

(as Moses) Oh Hi King Pharaoh! Hey, I've got a question for you.
(Ask the audience, Do we have a King Pharaoh here today? Take any and all volunteers, bring them to the front, stand them on a chair if possible or have everyone else sit before them.



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“Role” them as King Pharaoh, have them cross their arms in front of their chest, stand up tall, chin up, NO SMILING OR LAUGHING!!)

SONG:

[Listen King Pharaoh \(CD: ShirLaLa Pesach, Song by Shirley Cohen\)](#)

In small quiet voices sing Moses’s part of the song once through up to “King Pharaoh, King Pharaoh what do you say?”

If the Pharaoh actors do not know the song already, cue them with “And the Pharaoh said...”

PHARAOH:

NO! NO! NO! I will not let you go! NO! NO! NO! I will not let you go!

NARRATOR:

And then the Pharaoh laughed.

PHARAOH:

Hahahahahahaha!

NARRATOR:

An evil laugh!

PHARAOH:

Hahahahahahaha!

NARRATOR:

Well what do you suppose we do now? Should we just give up and go home to our sheep? No? OK, Let’s try again! This time with bigger voices, more confidence, more breath, more volume!!! Let’s be brave. *(With bigger, more confident voices, sing the song a 2nd time, repeating the Pharaoh response and the laughter.)*

NARRATOR:

(Guitar accompaniment is a loud dramatic tremelo.) What are we gonna do? Give up? No way! So the story goes something like this. Moses and God have a little meeting on the side. They decide there’s gonna be some really yucky things coming to King Pharaoh. Anyone know how many yucky things?

AUDIENCE:

10!

NARRATOR:



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We need a dastardly yucky name for these 10 yucky things. What should we call them?

AUDIENCE:

The Plagues!

NARRATOR:

(The guitar strumming turns dastardly as you enunciate "plagues" in a dastardly kind of a yucky way.) Like what, can you think of some of these yucky things? *(You may hear all sorts of answers here. Echo anything you hear that is one of the 10 Plagues.)*

If you have time, this is a perfect place for Peter and Ellen Allard's song "10 Plagues." If not, skip to the plague of frogs.

You know which one was the grossest, the craziest, the wildest of them all?

(spoken in rhythm accompanied by guitar chords to the song) One morning when Pharaoh woke in his bed there were frogs in his bed and frogs on his...HEAD! We need frogs NOW! *(Gesture to audience to jump up and down and "Rrrabbit!" as frogs. Be sure to involve the Pharaoh actors, how do they feel about these frogs all around them?)*

SONG:

Frogs (CD: ShirLaLa Pesach, Song by Shirley Cohen) *(Sing a few times through, end with lots and lots of rrribbits which you can interrupt with your next Narrator line.)*

NARRATOR:

This was just toooooo much for the Pharaoh. If there was one thing he couldn't stand it was frogs in his bed!! Finally the Pharaoh said, "Get outta here I never wanna see you again!!" *(Feed these lines to the Pharaoh actors. Have them repeat after you.)*

(pick up here if you are using Peter and Ellen Allard's "The 10 Plagues")

Come on everyone, let's get outta here before Pharaoh changes his mind! Pack as fast as you can! We're going out into the desert, it's gonna be hot for sure. What do we need? *(Solicit answers from audience. Echo the answers, be sure to include some fun thing like underpants and sunglasses. Dramatize super fast, rushed packing. Keep adding fun things in your bag. Someone will probably shout out, "food!")*

Yup we're definitely going to need food! But we really don't have any time! Let's just make some quick bread. Everyone, throw together some flour and water. Knead knead knead the dough! *(dramatize this)* Ok.... Flatten it together between your hands *(like a tortilla)* and we don't have time for it to rise, so just slap it on your back and it'll have to bake in the sun as we walk. Come on, let's go!!



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SONG:

Hallelu (CD: ShirLaLa Pesach), original melody by Nusrat Ali Fateh Kahn, arranged by Debbie Friedman

NARRATOR:

(Begin playing "Hallelu Hallelu Hallelu." Let the tone of the melody reflect the tentative yet excited exodus as everyone begins to make their way out of Egypt.)

Come on everyone, Come on!! Let's go! *(Get everyone up on their feet, following you as you lead the group round and round the room singing.)*

Hallelu hallelu hallelu... Guess we don't know exactly where it is we're going to and I know this is a big change but it's gotta be better than Egypt!" *(This is a reference to a Midrash on Ex 13:18 that only 1/5th of the Israelites actually left Egypt. It was hard to leave this place they knew so well!)*

Wait!! Wait!! Wait!! Did you hear that? It sounds like thunder! *(Motion to the adults in the background to slap their hands on their knees to make the sound of horses galloping)* Can't be thunder... it must be...

AUDIENCE:

You will most likely hear something like: The Egyptian Army!!

NARRATOR:

They are chasing after us!! What should we do? Should we go back??

AUDIENCE:

NO!!

NARRATOR:

Let's go faster, let's run!! Hallelu hallelu hallelu... *(Lead the group running around the room now, singing Hallelu at a much faster tempo.)*

Hold UP! We've much got a bigger problem in front of us now. Do you see what I see? It's the Sea of Reeds! Well, we don't know how to swim, we've been slaves our entire lives! We have to make a decision. Some people wanted to turn around and fight the Egyptians, some wanted to hide, some wanted to return to Egypt. *(based on Pseudo Jonathan Aramaic Targum, Ex. 14)* But there was this one person, *(identify an enthusiastic child in the*



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audience) probably just a bit older than you, who was feeling very brave. (S)He said “We’re going in.” And (s)he took a step into the water. *(based on the Midrash of Nachshon ben Amindav, Midrash Mechilta Beshalach 5)*

(Everyone should be standing in a circle now. Bringing the audience with you, take one step towards the center of the room. The guitar chords reflect a single step into the water.)

And the water goes up to our (gesture to your knees)... KNEES!

“Get out of the water you can’t swim!!!!” Screamed the people watching. They were very nervous but our friend here said, “No! I know God is going to help us!” And (s)he took another step into the water. *(Guitar chords continue to reflect each step and the tension in between.)*

This time the water went up to our *(gesture to your belly button)*... BELLY BUTTON!
“Get out of the water you can’t swim!!!!” Screamed the people watching. But our friend here said, “No! I know God is going to help us!” And (s)he took another step into the water.

(take another step toward the center of the room)

This time the water went up to our *(gesture to your chin)*... CHIN!

One more step in and the water is in our mouths.. what do we do? We pray! And the people called out “Halleluyah!!” *(singing the B section of Hallelu)*

Just then, when we didn’t think we could take another breath, the waters of the sea... PART!
One half of the waters go to this side, and the other half go to this side and in between... is ... DRY LAND! And the children of Israel did not just walk, they did not just run, they danced all the way to the other side.

(sing one more round of the B section of Hallelu, then transition directly into Debbie Friedman’s “Miriam’s Song,” altering the lyrics (with Debbie’s permission) to sing, “And the children dancing with their timbrels...”)

SONG:

[Miriam’s Song \(CD: ShirLaLa Pesach, Song by Debbie Friedman\)](#)

NARRATOR:

They say that when the waters of the sea parted, all of creation danced from the birds in the nests to the babies in their mommy’s tummies. *(Based on Midrash, source unkown.)* This, of course, is our first recorded Discotech Dance Party.



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(From Miriam's Song, you can play several more dance songs, asking the parents to show their children their best moves and the children to show them how it's done.)
We dance, we play, we make it from a narrow place to an open space, open minds, open hearts.

Happy Pesach everyone! For talking points on the story and plenty of activities, printables and recipes please visit [ShirLaLa's Blog Sameach](#).