

# Baby Moses Is Kept Safe

Baby Moses Is Kept Safe .....	1
Scene Summary .....	1
Scripture .....	1
Players .....	2
Special Props .....	2
Script – Baby Moses Is Kept Safe .....	3
Supplemental Information .....	6
Bible Time Toys .....	7

## **Scene Summary**

Baby Moses is kept safe presents the tender story of God’s care for a tiny infant. Scenes include: Pharaoh’s decision to enslave the Hebrews...orders to the midwives (nurses) to kill boy babies...Jochebed’s love for her tiny son...hiding the baby...making a basket boat...placing the baby and basket to float in the river...Miriam’s watchfulness...the Egyptian princess finds the baby...Miriam gets a Hebrew nurse for the baby...Jochebed takes her son home.

## **Scripture**

(Exo 1:7-17 NIV) but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them. {8} Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. {9} "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become much too numerous for us. {10} Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country." {11} So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. {12} But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites {13} and worked them ruthlessly. {14} They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly. {15} The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, {16} "When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live." {17} The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live.

(Exo 1:22 NIV) Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live."

(Exo 2:1-9 NIV) Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, {2} and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. {3} But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of

the Nile. {4} His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him. {5} Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the river bank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it. {6} She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said. {7} Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" {8} "Yes, go," she answered. And the girl went and got the baby's mother. {9} Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him.

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### ***Players***

- **Narrator** – The play's "catechist" or teacher should be a good reader with a clear voice.
- **Pharaoh** – King of Egypt, with great authority.
- **Jochebed** – Moses' mother, a very loving person.
- **Miriam** – Moses' big sister, excited and careful with the baby.
- **Princes** – Pharaoh's daughter, elegant and with grace.

### ***Special Props***

- Normal items from the prop box such as cloaks, veils, robes and headdresses.
- A basket.
- A small doll for baby Moses.

## ***Script – Baby Moses Is Kept Safe***

**Narrator:** The new Pharaoh called his leaders together.

**Pharaoh:** [concerned] Did you know that there are more Hebrews in our country than our own people? If they go to war against us, they might win. Lets make them our slaves.

**Narrator:** The leaders agreed. Pharaoh talked to the nurses also.

**Pharaoh:** [sternly] There are too many Hebrews in Egypt. I want you to kill every boy Hebrew baby as soon as it is born. You may let every girl baby live.

**Narrator:** The nurses did not like this evil plan. Secretly, they decided not to obey the king's evil plan. Later, a Hebrew woman named Jochebed gave birth to a tiny baby boy. She smiled as she held him in her arms.

**Jochebed:** [speaking to baby] We will hide you from Pharaoh's soldiers. Your sister Miriam and you brother Aaron will help care for you.

**Narrator:** As the baby became bigger and stronger, his cry became louder too.

**Miriam:** [speaking to baby, in a hushed voice] Please don't cry!

**Narrator:** Miriam would shake a clay rattle or try to make funny faces to turn the baby's cry into laughter.

**Miriam:** [to herself] It is hard to keep him quiet now.

**Jochebed:** We cannot hide the baby any longer.

**Miriam:** [worried] But what can we do?

**Jochebed:** [softly] You will see.

**Narrator:** Jochebed began to weave some long reeds into a basket shape.

**Jochebed:** God will take care of him.

**Narrator:** Jochebed covered the outside of the basket with a coating of tar to make it water proof. She carefully laid soft cloths in the bottom of the basket to make a bed for the baby. She put the baby in the basket. When the baby fell asleep, she placed a thatched cover over the basket.

**Jochebed:** [to Miriam] Come Miriam, lets go to the river.

**Narrator:** Quietly Miriam watched as her mother placed the basket in the water.

**Jochebed:** These tall water plants will keep the basket from floating away. Stay here and pretend to play, but watch the basket carefully.

**Narrator:** Jochebed walked away leaving Miriam to watch the basket, gently floating on the river.

**Miriam:** [to herself, worried] I wonder if the baby will wake up and cry? Will the Egyptian soldiers find him?

**Narrator:** Miriam peaked through the tall reeds and watched as the basket rocked gently in the water. [scared] Then she heard footsteps and voices. She stepped back out of sight. Down the path came the Egyptian princes and some of her maids. Miriam did not know what to do.

**Miriam:** [to herself, scared] Will the princes find the baby? What will she do? Will she tell her father the Pharaoh?

**Narrator:** Miriam did not dare to move from her hiding place. The princes squinted her eyes as she looked out into the water.

**Princes:** [pointing] Isn't that a basket floating out in the water? [speaking to one of her maids] Please get it for me.

**Narrator:** Miriam was very still as the maid waded into the river. Miriam held her breath as she watched the maid pick up the basket and carry it to the Princes. The maids gathered around to see what was in the basket. When the cover was removed, the frightened baby began to cry loudly.

**Princes:** [picking up the baby] It is a little Hebrew baby! [excited and caring] Isn't he sweet! [holding the baby close] I think I will keep him. I will call him Moses.

**Narrator:** Quickly, Miriam ran to the Princes.

**Miriam:** [excited] Your Highness, would you like for me to find a Hebrew woman to be his nurse?

**Princes:** Yes, please do.

**Narrator:** Miriam ran as fast as she could to get her mother. Together, they hurried back to the Princes.

**Princes:** [to Jochebed] Take good care of this child. I will pay you well.

**Jochebed:** [smiling at the baby] I will give him special care.

**Narrator:** Proudly she held her son as Miriam danced beside her.

**Miriam:** Imagine, getting paid to take care of your own son! The Prince wants you to take care of your own son for her!

**Jochebed:** Now the baby is safe. God is taking care of him.

The End

## ***Supplemental Information***

Several hundred years before this story begins, a young Hebrew named Joseph was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers. The bright lad was taken to Egypt. After many unpleasant events Joseph was brought to the Pharaoh's palace because it became known that he could interpret dreams. Through the king's dream, God warned of a coming famine. The king put Joseph in charge of storing up food during the seven good harvest seasons in preparation for the seven years of famine. When the crops begin to fail, there was still plenty of food in Egypt, thanks to Joseph.

Joseph's brothers came to buy food from Egypt during the famine. On the second visit, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers who had not recognized him. Joseph told his brothers to bring his father and all of their families to Egypt because the famine was ongoing and he could take care of them. Seventy people came. The Pharaoh offered the families good land where they could pasture their flocks.

Now, hundred of years later, there were many Hebrews. Joseph was long dead and the new Pharaoh had not even heard of him, but he became concerned about the many Hebrews. The Pharaoh was worried that the Hebrews might side with their enemies during a war and overthrow his kingdom. To prevent such a situation and to provide workers for his building projects, the Pharaoh made slaves of all the Hebrews.

The Egyptian taskmasters made the Hebrews work long and hard. Yet, God blessed the Hebrews in all their labors. Instead of becoming weaker, they became stronger. More and more healthy Hebrew babies were born and the Pharaoh became more fearful. The Pharaoh called the midwives and told them to kill every Hebrew baby boy as soon as it was born. The Pharaoh thought this would keep the Hebrew population down. The midwives feared God and did not obey the Pharaoh.

Pharaoh ordered a new law that every Hebrew boy child would be thrown in the river. When Jochebed's third child, a boy, was born, she was determined to keep him safe. Miriam was about twelve years old. Aaron was about three. They helped hide the baby and keep him quiet.

Jochebed must have had great faith in God. She took a bold step when the baby's cries became so loud that they could be heard outside the house. She placed the child in a waterproof basket in the river, among the reeds. The reeds kept the basket from floating far from shore. Jochebed must have also known that this was a spot that was sometimes used by the Pharaoh's own daughter, the Princess, to bathe.

When the baby was found, the baby's tears won the heart of the Princess. Even though she recognized him as a Hebrew, she decided to adopt him as her own child. Miriam, who had been quietly hiding, boldly came forward to the Princess and offered to get a Hebrew nurse for the

baby. Their mothers nursed children until they were several years old. Since there were no baby food formulas, women hired out as wet nurses. The Princes was glad to take Miriam's offer. Miriam ran to get her mother as the nurse. Thus God spared Moses, who would someday lead the Hebrews out of the Egyptian bondage.

### ***Bible Time Toys***

Have you ever wondered if boys and girls in Bible times had toys? They certainly did! They played with models of houses, dolls, and toy animals, just as children do today. Poor children had little time to play with toys, though, because they had to work to help support the family. They had few, if any, toys.

Children in wealthy homes enjoyed dolls with movable joints. Doll hair was made of strings or mud or beads instead of realistic hair made for dolls today. Bible time children had pull toys, too. A small toy dog has been found that had a hold in the nose for a cord. For babies, there were reddish clay rattles shaped like doves.

You can make a Bible time rattle. Place five or six pieces of uncooked rice or small stones in a small balloon, about two inches long. Blow up the balloon until it is about four inches long. Tie it tightly with string. At the other end of the balloon, tie off a small section for the head of your dove. Now mix together one-third cup of salt, and one-third cup of flour. Add water a little at a time until you have a thick paste. Carefully smear this thickly over your balloon bird. Cover completely. Place your bird on a piece of cardboard to dry. This will take several days. When it is dry, you may paint your rattle with tempera or any watercolor paint.

Bible time rattles were made of reddish brown clay. You may want to paint yours reddish brown, too. Add eyes, beak, and wings with black paint. The rice or stones inside will rattle when the clay is completely dry.