

## Action Scene 2: Freedom and Release

*This weeks Action Scene pictures the story of the people of Israel being set free and leaving Egypt with the gifts they have been given. We know from our own experiences of moving house, changing schools or a new job that moving on can be both exciting and scary. The Action Scene explores what Israel gained when God set them free and also their ambivalent feelings about what they left behind. This is important because we know that later in the desert when they faced hunger and thirst they longed to return to Egypt. Learning to live in freedom is not always easy. Using the Action Scene we then explore our own experience and that of our church of the freedom God has given us in Jesus and calls us to live in. See [Using Action Scenes](#) for more advice.*

*For this session each group or individual will need **two** copies of the Action Scene. A small group could all work together on one enlarged copy of the picture. Alternatively you will need separate copies for individuals to work on before comparing answers. You may use an OHP acetate or scanned version for an LCD useful during the reading of the text.*

### Reading the Story

Display the Action Scene illustration to accompany the reading or retelling of Exodus 12:31-39. Introduce this by summing up the powerful signs or plagues that God had sent and Pharaoh's refusal to let the people go. There are good retellings in The Lion Bible for Children (use the sections 'The Passover' and 'Freedom') and The Lion First Bible (pages 109-115).

### Israel's experience

Next ask the group to do the following three tasks to recap the story and complete the picture.

1. **Leader:** 'How might you have felt if you were one of the people leaving Egypt?'

*Encourage a variety of answers. Draw expression on the blank faces to represent these feelings. It may help to ask people how they have felt at times of big change: moving house, changing school, starting a new job.*

2. **Leader:** 'What did the Israelites take with them as they left Egypt?'

*Fill in the picture with drawings or captions – for example, gold, silver, clothes, family, friends, flocks, half-made bread. You might also mention and draw the pillar of cloud and fire symbolising the help and presence of God.*

3. **Leader:** 'What did the Israelites leave behind as they set off into the desert?'

*Draw or write answers on the space in the land of Egypt – for example homes, water supply, food supply, cruelty, suffering, slavery.*

### Our experience

The leader should now offer a very brief summary. God had set the Israelites free from slavery; as they set off; he ensured they had many good things. Best of all was the fact that he was going with them. The people of Israel were released from

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captivity and set out on a journey to a new and Promised Land and God himself went with them on this journey. The New Testament uses the image of freedom from slavery to sin to describe what Jesus has done for us. As the Israelites set out on a journey when they were set free, so our new life in Jesus, both personally and together as a church is also a journey.

*Give each group or individual a new copy of the picture to complete the following tasks,:*

4. **Leader:** 'How do you feel about being set free by God? What is exciting and new; what makes you anxious of the future? How do you feel about belonging to the local church?'

*Complete the faces to show those feelings. Perhaps invite people to share their early experiences of faith or a time when they felt God was doing something special in their lives.*

5. **Leader:** 'What do we – as a church – have that we take with us on this journey?'

*Make it clear that this is the church as people, not as a building. Perhaps search for clip art with the outline of a church building but made up of people or faces. Draw or write answers on the baggage space – for example, one another, a variety of gifts and skills, forgiveness, love, care for each other, leaders, partnerships in our local community, our physical resources (such as a church and church hall) music, the presence of God with us. Let the answers spill out over the picture. We might take things with us that should be left behind (things we cannot forget, people not forgiven, old ways of doing things, things we do or say).*

6. **Leader:** Talk together about the question, 'What have we 'left behind?' What is hard to leave behind; what comes on the journey with us, even if we do not want it to? Has our freedom in Christ changed our attitude to money and possessions at all? Do we feel trapped, either by debt or the need to accumulate? Have we found freedom in giving or a new way of thinking about money? What might Jesus want to say to us about our use of money?'

*Draw or write answers in the 'Egypt space'. Some answers may be personal for individuals, others apply to all (e.g. not knowing God, being alone, guilt, feeling unloved, fear of the future). You could supply some New Testament passages to help (Romans 8:1; Ephesians 2:12; 1 Peter 2:10; Luke 18:28-30; Hebrews 2:14-15). In conclusion, briefly look at the pictures and point out the wealth of things God has given us. Best of all, we know that he is with us – through every part of our lives (Hebrews 13:5).*

### Interview

At this point it would be good to interview someone in the congregation who can talk about an experience of coming to faith – or a significant stage in their Christian life – and can relate that to the picture of being set free. Ask her or him the same three basic questions and fill in the answers on the relevant parts of the picture: Then ask people to suggest a caption or headline to display by the picture. For example: 'Free at last!'; 'Israelites leave Egypt'; 'Loaded!').

- How did you feel at the time about being 'set free' by God?
- From what were you being set free? What did you leave behind? (It will be especially appropriate if this includes an element of being set free from former attitudes to wealth/possessions e.g. not worrying about the future).
- What did you gain as a result of that experience?