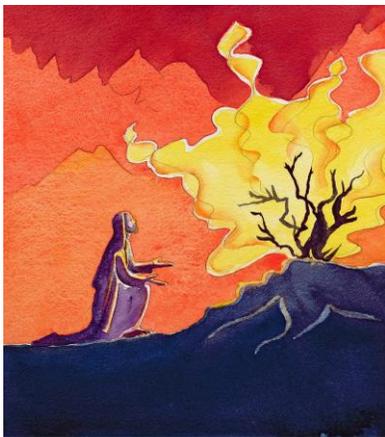


# SUNDAY STORIES

Pinky Promises / Exodus 12:1-14 / Matt. 18:14-20

## QUICK NOTES

Time has passed between Moses' experience of the burning bush and being called to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt. Pharaoh has refused to let God's people go. He doesn't believe in God's power. There are 9 plagues. Each time Pharaoh relents, then changes his mind. Finally the 10<sup>th</sup> and last plague. It is the worst, but it's the one that binds the Hebrew people into a community that follows a God of liberty.



## BOUND UP IN A PROMISE

Most people know what a pinky promise is. It's also known as a pinky swear. It originated in China and Japan as a way to seal a contract. A broken pinky promise results in the loss of a pinky finger. The tradition spread to the U. S. around the 1850s (probably at the time railroads were being built by Chinese and Japanese immigrants). Before there were pinky promises people found other ways to bind someone to them. God made a promise a long time ago to Abraham, that his descendants would be free and would be his chosen people. After 9 plagues Pharaoh still will not let the enslaved Hebrew's go. For the 10<sup>th</sup> plague the spirit of God will pass over Egypt and the first born of every household will die. The Hebrew people were given specific instructions on what to do to protect themselves and be ready to run the next day. Prepare a meal quickly, no leavened bread (you have to wait for it to rise), roast a lamb or goat, be dressed and ready to leave, share with your neighbor who does not have, no leftovers please, mark the doorposts with blood so the first born of the Hebrew children will not be harmed, and finally, mark it as a day that would be bound to the remembrance and identity of the Hebrew people forever. God's Pinky Promise: I will lead you to freedom. All you have to do is do what I tell you and honor my name. Hebrew Pinky Promise: Alright we will. We will love you with all our heart, soul, and mind, and our offerings will reflect our love for you. The Passover will be the celebration that reminds us how we are bound together.

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*“Trust is the residue of promises fulfilled.”*

— [Frank Navran](#)

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## RABBINCAL AUTHORITY TO BIND AND LOOSEN

God bound the Hebrew people together with a promise. He gave them the Laws of Moses and they added and added and interpreted and interpreted till the Laws in human hands became the thing that binds people so tightly it begins to strangle the love right out of it. It was the Rabbi's prerogative to decide who was in and out. It was like the Jean Valjean in *“Les Miserable”* who was so hungry he stole a loaf of bread and was sent to prison for life. The Law was meant to be freeing while it bound a community together. The Law was so rigid those in desperate need were being cut from community.



*Valjean occupies a place on the wrong side of the law, but the right side of human virtues and ethics.*

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## HOW JESUS CHANGED THE MEANING

Jean Valjean, “*Les Miserable*” escapes from prison. He is welcomed into the home of a priest. The next morning he steals all the silver from the priest’s home. He is caught and brought before the priest. The priest hands the silver back to the man and informs the Law that he gave it to the man. This is what Jesus expects when he tells the disciples they have the authority to bind up (forbid) and loosen up (set free). In so doing there is a new kind of binding together that creates a community of freedom. From the moment Jean Valjean leaves that priest’s home he makes a promise to live a life that is always giving and taking care of those in need and indeed the factory he establishes does not fit the sweat shops of the factories around him, and people find themselves bound to Jean Valjean because of his kindness.

It is this kind of binding and loosening that Jesus had in mind when he gives his disciples authority to bind and loosen. They do it with the mindset that they are bound to Jesus the Christ and therefore bound in Love.

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*Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. –Romans 13:8-14.*

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## JESUS PAYS FOR OUR BROKEN PROMISES

We break our promises to God all the time. We have good intentions about praying regularly, teaching our children, checking up on a sick neighbor, volunteering somewhere, remaining connected to church. These were pinky promises that were made in baptism and confirmation, and for some just out of their own private promises. If God stuck to the pinky promise rule we’d all be running around with missing pinky fingers. Instead Jesus gave his whole body up for the promises we broke and continue to break over and over again. But this is what God always pinky promised us: Salvation for the Whole World. That’s how much he loves us.

## TAKE TIME TO THINK

What are the promises I made to God that I haven’t kept? What promise did I break with regards to my family, friends, and even myself?

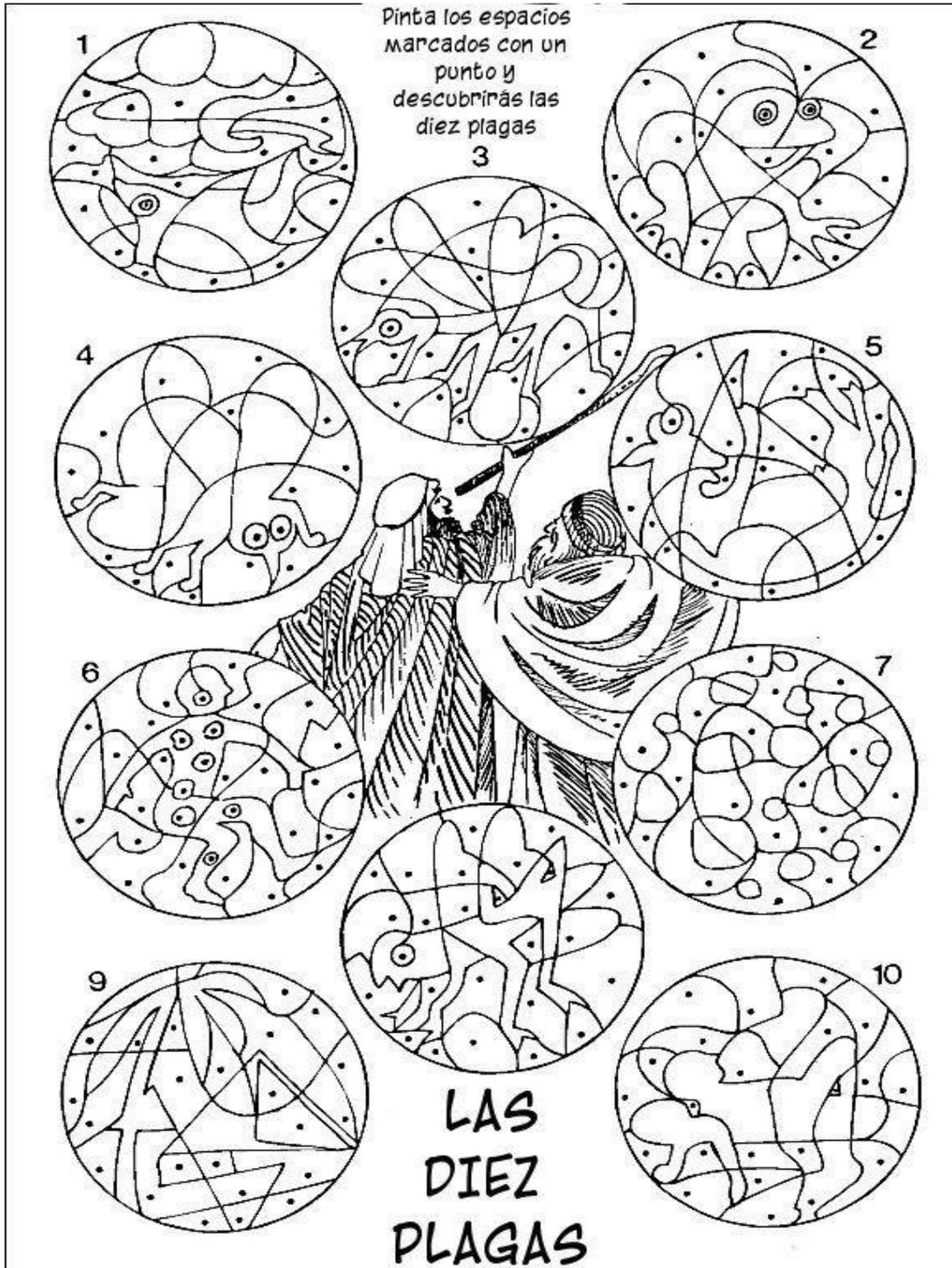
## PRAYER

Lord of Promises. You are always faithful to those who love you and faithful even to those who don’t know you. Help us to keep the promises we’ve made as Christians of a particular community. When we break bread together at the table of our church or in our family, help us to remember the promise you gave and accept our prayer of thanksgiving. Amen

# Children's Section

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_detailpage&v=aTpKYIFVtyQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=aTpKYIFVtyQ)

The link above will take your child to an animated version of Moses story. You can start it at 20:20 and then watch up through the plagues. Then they can color the spaces with dots to see what plagues were visited on Egypt.



## **Prayer in motion.**

You can say this prayer with your child as you teach them the motions.

The LORD is merciful and loving,  
slow to become angry and full of constant love.  
(PALMS UP)

He does not punish us as we deserve  
or repay us according to our sins and wrongs.  
(HORIZONTAL SLASH WITH PALM DOWN)

As high as the sky is above the earth,  
so great is his love for those who honour him.  
(POINT UP HUG SELVES)

As far as the east is from the west,  
(PUSH ONE HAND TO EAST)  
so far does he remove our sins from us.  
(OTHER TO WEST)

Amen.  
(FOLD HANDS TOGETHER IN PRAYER)