



Miriam Rejoices

(based on Exodus 15:20–21)

As the waters of the Red Sea closed in, the Israelites stood on the far side. They could have been captured. They could have been taken back to Egypt. Now they were safe.

“We are free!” a few began to shout. Then more and more joined in. “We are free! We are free!” They all began to celebrate God’s gift of freedom.

Miriam couldn’t stay quiet. She couldn’t keep her feet from dancing. Miriam was Moses’ sister. Miriam remembered how Moses had passed safely through the water as a baby in a basket. Now Moses opened a way for the people to cross safely through the water to escape Pharaoh’s army.

Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

Soon other women joined Miriam in leading the people in rejoicing. They sang, danced, and played their tambourines. All the women felt the power of God’s gift of freedom as they swayed and leapt to the music:

Leader: God is my strength.

Children: God is my song.

All: God has saved us.

Leader: God sent a wind to make a path through the water.

Leader: God is my strength.

Children: God is my song.

All: God has saved us.

Leader: God rescued us and led us to safety.
Let us praise God.

Leader: God is my strength.

Children: God is my song.

All: God has saved us.

Miriam and the people gave thanks for God’s salvation. They sang out their thanks for God’s grace and mercy.

The people sang, danced, and played music!
They knew God was with them. They knew God would look after them.

Sometimes when you are jubilant, you just have to sing and dance!



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Miriam and her friends danced and sang for joy. Wonder together when you have felt like dancing and singing for joy.
- The Exodus story has inspired many who have experienced some form of oppression. Let your bodies reflect feelings of sorrow, heaviness, burden, and suffering. Then remember the response of Miriam. Let your body reflect the feelings of joy, freedom, delivery, and release.



Responding to God's Grace

- What do you do when you feel joyful? What kind of music makes you feel happy? Listen to each other's favorite music.
- Make tambourines. Decorate a paper plate with markers and shapes cut or torn from fancy paper. Tape streamers around the edge. String bells, shells, beads, or soft drink can tabs on the end of a piece of string or yarn and tie a knot to secure. Punch holes in the edge of the plate and tie the strings to the tambourine.
- There are many artistic images of Miriam dancing after the Exodus. Do an internet image search for "Miriam dancing." Look at a number of the pictures. Let each person identify a favorite and tell why and how it makes them feel.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Miriam was happy. Say why you are happy. Play the YouTube video "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy" (bit.ly/JoySong, 2:10). Sing along and dance to the music. Play your tambourines or other rhythm instruments you can find in your home, such as wooden spoons, pots and pans, keys, and so forth.
- Pray this way during the week: Think of all the ways you can shout for joy, such as Hurrah! Wow! Yippee! Yay! Invite everyone to choose one way to shout for joy. Loudly call out your words all together. Use them as a response in a simple litany. Invite each person to offer something to give praise or thanks for, and the group responds with a shout of joy. For example: "Thank you, God, for this beautiful day!" *Yay! Wow! Yippee!* "I praise you, God, for my friends!" *Hurrah! Yippee! Wow!*