

# For Junior High

## Materials Needed:

- **Bibles** (*one per pair or small group*)
- **Print resources about plagues and/or internet access**

## Faith Connection

### Before Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to explain in their own words the meaning of the word plague. (*A disastrous evil or infliction*)
2. Ask if any of the young people recall stories of plagues as told in the Bible. (*Welcome all responses.*)
3. Remind the young people that one of the major stories about plagues told in the Bible involved Moses, Aaron, and the Pharaoh. Read aloud, or invite volunteers to read aloud, Exodus 7:1-13. Then divide the group into partners or small groups, and have each pair or small group read and prepare a summary of one of the following Scripture passages, each of which describes a plague.
  - Exodus 7:14-24
  - Exodus 7:25—8:11
  - Exodus 8:12-15
  - Exodus 8:16-28
  - Exodus 9:1-7
  - Exodus 9:8-12
  - Exodus 9:13-35
  - Exodus 10:1-20
  - Exodus 10:21-29
  - Exodus 11:1-10
4. Invite the partners or small groups to share, in order, summaries of the ten plagues.
5. Ask the group why God sent the plagues to Pharaoh and his household. (*To get Pharaoh's attention; to prove to Pharaoh that the Lord alone is God; to get Pharaoh to set the Israelites, God's people, free*)
6. Invite the young people to listen to the story of Our Lady of the Grasshopper.

### Telling the Story

Tell in your own words the story of Our Lady of the Grasshopper.

### After Telling the Story

1. Invite volunteers to share what happened in the story, and what the people decided to do. (*Grasshoppers ate the crops; the people followed their pastor's advice to build a chapel and to gather there for prayer to Mary that their crops would be saved.*)
2. Invite volunteers to share similarities and differences between the story and the biblical

account of the plagues. *(Welcome all answers. Highlight that the people in Minnesota turned to God and Mary in prayer and devotion, while Pharaoh's heart remained stubborn and hard. Also highlight the connection between the grasshoppers eating the crops and the eighth plague, the locusts [which are a type of grasshopper].)*

3. Ask why the people call Mary "Our Lady of the Grasshopper." Remind the young people that "Our Lady" is a title of great respect and honor. *(The people prayed to Mary and the grasshoppers stopped eating their crops.)*

### **Putting Faith into Action**

1. Ask the young people to name some hard things that are happening in people's lives and in the world today. *(Homelessness, hunger, sickness, war, joblessness, loneliness, and so forth.)*
2. Choose a day of the week to pray together to Mary for one of the hard things you named in #1 above. Create a title for Mary to use at the beginning of your prayer, such as: Our Lady of the Homeless, Our Lady of the Hungry, Our Lady of the Sick, Our Lady of Peace, Our Lady of the Jobless, Our Lady of the Lonely, and so forth. Decide on a number of weeks to offer the prayer. *(Nine weeks would be a novena, a "special time of prayer".)*
3. At the end of your designated time of prayer, talk about how it felt to pray to Mary each week, like the people in the story did. Encourage the young people to continue to pray to Mary in times of need and in happy times too.

## **Curriculum Connection: Social Studies**

### **Before Telling the Story**

1. Invite half of the class to work in pairs or small groups to research some of the worst plagues in history. Ask them to prepare a ten- to fifteen-minute presentation on their findings. *(Plagues in history include smallpox, the Spanish flu, and the Black Death.)* Encourage them to include progress made in ending the plagues too.
2. Invite the other half of the class to work in pairs or small groups to research modern-day plagues. Ask them to prepare a ten- to fifteen-minute presentation on their findings. *(Modern-day plagues include malaria, cholera, and typhus. You may also want to include the coronavirus.)* Encourage them to include progress made in ending the plagues too.

### **After Telling the Story**

Invite the pairs or small groups to share their presentations on modern-day plagues and plagues in history, and on progress made in ending the plagues.

### **And Furthermore . . .**

Introduce your students to the overseas work of Catholic Relief Services, particularly in the areas of health and water safety. Go to [crs.org](http://crs.org) to learn more.