



EDUCATOR GUIDE

Race to the Red Sea



'Interact with Judaism' is a collaboration between **Jewish Interactive** and **RE:ONLINE**, aimed at teachers and children in non-Jewish settings who want to find out more about Judaism. <http://jewishinteractive.org>

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RACE TO THE RED SEA¹

STORYLINE



OVERVIEW

Race to the Red Sea is a fun platform game that allows players to try and imagine that they are an Israelite who is escaping Egypt to make it towards the Red Sea and eventually, to the Promised Land. However, just like the Biblical story, this journey is not easy, as the player is chased by Pharaoh and the Egyptians to the Red Sea.

In order to overcome this threat, the player must use the plagues that were meted out to the Egyptians (see Exodus 7:15-12:30), while, at the same time, collecting the Hebrew letters to spell the 10 plagues in Hebrew (NB. these appear in order so all players – including those unfamiliar with Hebrew – can achieve this goal).

Through the fun gameplay of Race to the Red Sea, the player experiences the real challenges that the Israelites faced between their Exodus from Egypt to the miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea.

DESIGNED BY MIDDLE SCHOOL KIDS

“Race to the Red Sea” is an international collaboration between Jewish Interactive (based in South Africa, UK and Israel) and Martin J Gottlieb Jewish Day School (Jacksonville, Florida, USA).

The 7th -Grade students designed the game and its assets under the guidance of Jewish Interactive and their teacher. Jewish Interactive produced the game.

SUMMARY OF THE STORY OF THE RACE TO THE RED SEA

The story of the race to the red sea begins in Egypt where the Israelites have become enslaved to Pharaoh. They are brutally mistreated, and are forced to build up the storehouses in Egypt (see Exodus 1:11). Soon after, Moses and his brother Aaron approach Pharaoh to request that the Israelites be released from their hard labour. However, Pharaoh refuses and places even greater pressure on the

¹ In some translations of the Bible ‘Yam Suph’ is translated as the Red Sea and in others the Sea of Reeds. The Jewish scholar Rashi (11th – 12th century) noted the problem of translation in his commentary on Exodus. The word ‘suph’ may come from the verb ‘soph’ which means ‘comes to an end’ as in **destroy**. This would fit in with the story of Pharaoh and his armies ‘coming to an end’ in the sea. It could also refer to a desert storm or storm wind ‘supah’ as this is referenced in the story (Exodus 14:21).

We get the translation ‘Red Sea’ from the Greek translation called the Septuagint which translates Yam Suph as: ἔρυθρά θάλασσα (eruthra thalassa) which then became part of the standard Latin translation called the Vulgate where it is called the Mare Rubrum. Interestingly, in the Hebrew Bible the term ‘Yam Suph’ is used to describe more than one location and not a single place.

Israelites (see Exodus 5:6-16). Having begged God to help (see Exodus 5:23-6:1), God assures Moses and Aaron that the Israelites will be freed through His interventions, and that all they needed to do is to follow His instructions.

We then read about how the Ten Plagues were meted out to the Egyptians.

- The first was the plague of blood – דַּם (Dam: Exodus 7:14-25), but Pharaoh remained stubborn.
- The second was the plague of frogs - צְפַרְדֵּי (Tz'pharde'a: Exodus 7:26-8:10), but here too he would not budge.
- The third was the plague of lice – כִּנִּים (Kinnim: Exodus 8:12-15), but again Pharaoh wouldn't change his mind.
- Then, God instructed Moses to send the plague of flies – עֲרוֹב ('Arov: Exodus 8:16-28) yet here too, Pharaoh was stubborn and wouldn't send out the people.
- This led to the fifth plague of diseased livestock – דֶּבֶר (Dever: Exodus 9:1-7) but again Pharaoh did not free the Israelites.
- The sixth plague was boils – שַׁחִין (Sh'chin: Exodus 9:8-12), but by this point, God hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he again refused.
- The seventh plague was hail – בָּרָד (Barad: Exodus 9:13-35), yet despite seeing how the hail had ruined the Egyptian produce, Pharaoh still did not free the Israelites.
- The eighth plague was locusts – אֲרֵבָה ('Arbeh: Exodus 10:1-20), but here too, God hardened Pharaoh's heart who then refused to release the Israelites.
- The ninth plague was darkness – חֹשֶׁךְ (Choshek: Exodus 10:21-29), and though God again hardened Pharaoh's heart, it was Pharaoh who told Moses to 'Go from me!'.
• This led to the tenth and most fearsome plague, which was the death of the firstborn - מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת (Makkat b'chorot: Exodus 11:1-12:36), after which Pharaoh declared 'rise up, go out from among my people' (Exodus 12:31).

When Pharaoh said they could go, the Israelites did so with speed. However, soon after, Pharaoh had a change of heart and he and the Egyptian army pursued the children of Israel (Exodus 14:6-10). The Israelites were scared and cried out to God.

They soon reached the Red Sea, at which time Moses was instructed to hold out his staff over the sea so that it would split (Exodus 14:16).

Moses did so, at which time the miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea occurred. The Israelites walked on the dry seabed with the waters standing like walls to their right and left (Exodus 14:22). However, here too, the Egyptians pursued them. Once the Israelites had emerged from the other side of the Red Sea, God instructed Moses to stretch out his hand, at which time the water covered the Egyptian soldiers and chariots (Exodus 15:26-29).

To commemorate this miracle, Moses and the people sang the Song of the Sea² (Exodus 15:1-19), while Miriam led the women in song (Exodus 15:20-21).

² This song is so important that it is recited every day as part of the Morning Prayer (shachrit) in traditional prayer books.

Having experienced this wondrous miracle, the people then journeyed towards the Sinai desert where they were to receive the Torah.