**An Exercise in Leadership**

As an introduction to this lesson, you might write the word "leader" or "leadership" on the board for students to see when they enter the class; or use the lesson, "Leadership Today" which follows. A brief discussion of leadership qualities can ensue. The students can he asked to name some Biblical leaders. Then tell your students the following story:

An Important Decision

Imagine yourself camping up north with a group of people. Everyone is sleeping out-doors in their sleeping bags surrounded by trees under the stars. A thunderstorm suddenly appears, and lightning lights up the sky. Some children begin to cry. The leader of the group quickly wakes everyone and gathers them around him. He now has to make an important decision: What would be the best thing to do to insure the group's safety in this thunderstorm?

The Leader has the following choices:

Everyone can stay where they are together. The leader knows it is dangerous to remain under the trees because of the lightning, but there are other risks in seeking safety elsewhere. He also knows that some of the children won't want to leave because the trees will keep them dry.

He can lead his group to a nearby cave where they will be safe. There are also risks involved in doing this because someone could get struck by lightning along the way, someone might trip and get hurt, or they might find a family of bears or other wild animals in the cave.

Q: If you were the leader of this group, which of these two would you choose? Why?

Q: Should a good leader be willing to take risks with the group's safety?

Q: Does a good leader who takes a risk with your safety and succeeds automatically be considered a good leader?

Q: If that leader takes the same risk and does not succeed in his mission, would you follow him a second time?

Q: Would you be willing to take the responsibility of leadership? (In the discussion point out that this means taking the chance of not succeeding as well as succeeding. This also means taking the risk of loss in popularity.)

Lead into the next set of questions by saying: Each of us leads others from time to time, even if it is to tell a group or person to do something minor.

Q: If you tell others to do something you know they want to do anyway, how would you feel about Pharaoh and respond to Moses?

Q: Was this mission (Moses' request to the Pharaoh) a success?

Q: How did the people respond to their fate?

Q: Even though Moses failed in his mission were his people ready to follow him again? Why?

If you wish to further develop the topic of Moses' leadership qualities, you can read Exodus 2:10-22 to find these qualities:

a. He feels a strong identity with his people. (Verse 11)

b. He takes action and personal risks when his people are subjected to violence and cruelty. (Verse 12)

c. He does not stand idly by when his own people do wrong. (Verse 13)

d. He cares about and protects the weak. (Verse 13, 17)

Lead into the next set of questions by saying: We have taken a good look at leaders and leadership qualities. Now let's explore the role of the followers. Think back to our imaginary episode of camping in the forest. You remember that it was raining very hard, and that it was thundering and lightning. The leader woke everyone and gathered them around himself. He then made a decision about what to do to protect the group's safety. People in the group responded in various ways.

Q: What do you think some of their responses might be?

 (Possible answers: Some of the people didn't want to come. Some people were angry that they weren't consulted about the decision. Some people were afraid to take the chance to go to the cave. Some people were eager to follow.)

Q: Even though some people didn't really want to leave where they were, why do you think they followed their leader anyway?

Leadership Today

The role and meaning of leadership that of Moses and Aaron, the elders of the Children of Israel, or the Pharaoh is a major issue. In Jewish life today, the question of leadership is no less important.

1. Imagine that you are on a committee charged with the task of hiring a rabbi, an individual whose main job is promoting the well-being of your Jewish community. The following "excerpts" have been taken from letters of recommendation written about candidates for this job. Put a "1" beside the most important quality, in your opinion; a "2" beside the next most important; and so on.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Very presentable-looking, and makes an excellent impression on Jew and non-Jew alike."

\_\_\_\_\_ "A first-rate organizer, who knows how to motivate people and get them involved. "

\_\_\_\_\_ "A crackerjack fundraiser!"

\_\_\_\_\_ "A dedicated educator, particularly interested in youth activities."

\_\_\_\_\_ "A brilliant scholar, who has written books about Jewish history and the Bible. "

\_\_\_\_\_ "The word that best describes this person is 'mensch.' A person who listens, feels, understands and above all, whom people come to talk to. One who does everything possible to help them!"

\_\_\_\_\_ "An ardent Zionist who is deeply aware of world Jewry, and committed to its well-being."

2. Leadership, good or bad, is usually a question of people's values--those values that they consider most desirable. Let us imagine for a moment that personal qualities, and even experiences, are goods that can he purchased. You are the buyer, but with only a limited budget. How would you spread your money around? The following "merchandise" is for sale. Each item costs $33.33 1/3. Bear in mind---in this little game, you only possess what you pay for; everything else is out of bounds. You have $100.00-now make your three choices.

a. Physical beauty $33.33 1/3

b. Popularity $33.33 1/3

c. Brilliance $33.33 1/3

d. Good health $33.33 1/3

e. A sense of humor $33.33 1/3

f. Good relationship with parents, husband or wife, and children $33.33 1/3

g. Wealth and success $33.33 1/3

h. Sensitivity, compassion, and generosity $33.33 1/3

i. Making a great contribution to humanity (or to Judaism and the $33.33 1/3

 Jewish people)

j. A powerful, unwavering belief in G-d throughout your life $33.33 1/3

Your choices:

1 .

2

3

What do these choices tell you about yourself?

Source Material: The Rabbi's Bible: The Torah, Part I, Student Activity Book, pp. 93-96

**Conclusion**

Be sure to conclude this session on Moses with practical application for a role as a leader?

Q: If you tell the group to do something that they will not want to do, how would you feel about your role as a leader?

Q: Should you as a leader be concerned about how your followers will react to you as a person? Why?

Q: Do you, as the leader, have the responsibility to tell the group what they want to hear, or what they should hear which might be unpopular?

After this discussion tell the Midrash "The Israelites Cross the Red Sea".

(It can be found in the back of this booklet, Midrash IV.) Or give the students a copy.

Then discuss the following questions:

Q: What leadership decision did Moses make?

Q: Was it a popular decision?

Q: What other person acted like a leader?

Q: What did he do?

Now it is time to look at the Bible itself. Read Exodus 5-6:1 with or to your class. Then interpret what is said. Try to put it into the vernacular.

Lead into the following questions by saying: Moses took a risk when he asked Pharaoh to let his people go to the wilderness to pray for three days.