



THE PLAGUES OF PLEASANT LAKE

“Look at how the lake shimmers.” Jessie pointed as she jumped out of the car behind her cousin Emily.

“Now I see why they call it Pleasant Lake,” said Emily’s mom.

“C’mon, Justin. Let’s grab the swim gear and head to the water.” Jeremy pulled some goggles out of the trunk and handed them to Justin.

“Awesome! I want to see tons of fish underwater.”

Jessie turned to Emily. “You want to swim now?”

“Yeah! Let me grab my floatie tube.”

The four children raced toward the lake, carrying towels, tubes, and toys. Jeremy and Emily’s mom set up a chair to watch the kids while their dad started setting up their campsite nearby.

“Eww! What’s that?” Emily pointed to a gray blob on the shore.

“It’s a dead fish,” said Jeremy.

“It stinks.” Emily pinched her nose.

“I thought this was supposed to be a *pleasant* lake,” said Jessie.

“This reminds me of the plagues we learned about at church,” said Emily.

“Oh, yeah. When Pharaoh wouldn’t let the slaves leave Egypt, God sent all kinds of awful things.” Jessie shuddered.

“I hope our camping trip won’t be like that,” said Emily.

“It already has a dead fish,” Jeremy teased.

“I’m ready to see the *alive* fish under the water.” Justin pulled his goggles over his eyes. “Who’s coming?”

After an afternoon of swimming, splashing, and underwater exploring, the kids dried off and helped prepare dinner. Soon they were gathered around a fire, roasting hot dogs.

“Shoo fly!” Mom swished her hand back and forth in front of her face.

A fly landed in the ketchup on Dad’s hot dog. He frowned. “These flies are everywhere.”

Jessie and Emily waved two flies away and said, “The plagues!”

“What are you talking about?” asked Mom.

The girls explained how the dead fish and the flies reminded them of the plagues God sent on the Egyptians.

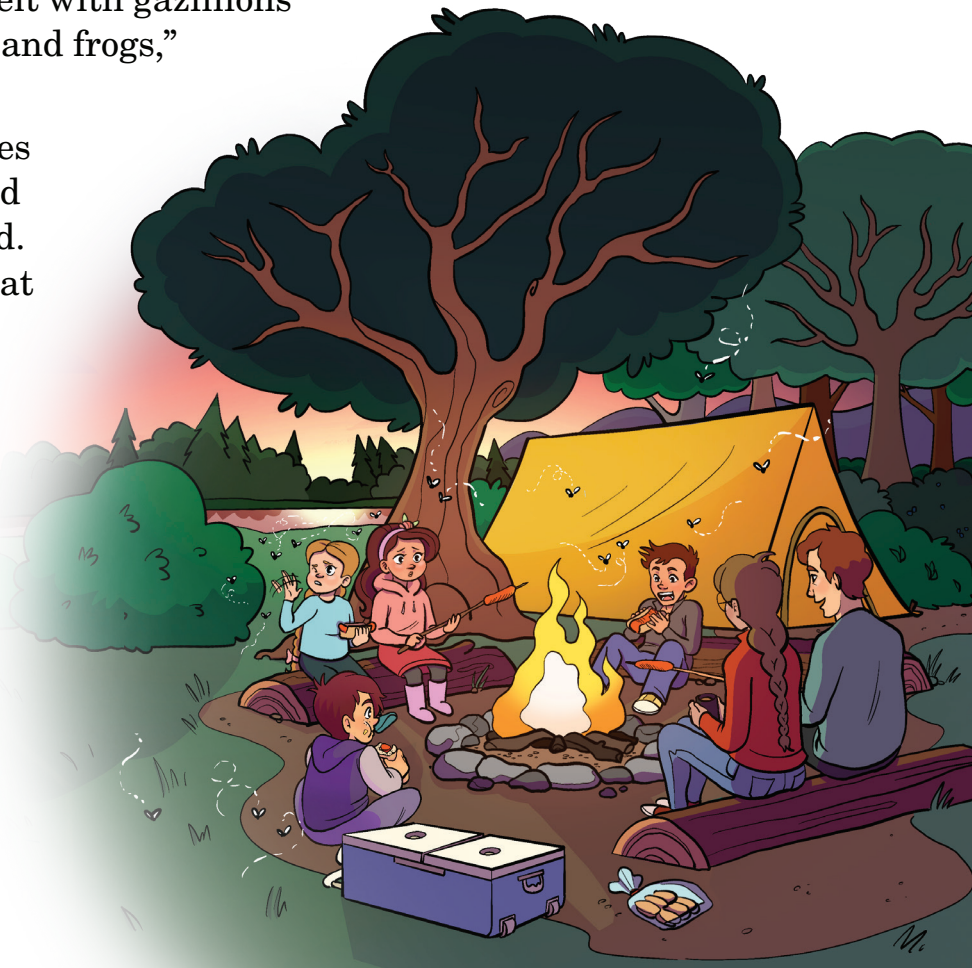
“I’m sure putting up with a few pesky things won’t be anything like what the Egyptians went through,” said Mom.

“Just think how they felt with gazillions of dead fish, grasshoppers, and frogs,” said Jeremy.

“God used those plagues to show his great power and rescue his people,” said Dad. “We can’t even imagine what they were really like.”

“That’s right,” Mom agreed. “What you call ‘plagues’ of Pleasant Lake are pretty tiny, so don’t let them ruin your fun.”

“Okay,” said Emily.



At bedtime, the kids headed to their tents with their flashlights.

Suddenly, Emily let out a shriek.

Dad sprinted to the girls' tent. "What's wrong?"

Emily was huddled in the corner, hugging Jessie and staring at her sleeping bag. "There's something slimy in my sleeping bag!"

Her dad carefully unzipped the sleeping bag and shined the flashlight inside.

Ribbit, croaked a frog. Dad gave the frog a gentle nudge, and it hopped out of the sleeping bag and back outside. He chuckled, and the girls laughed too.

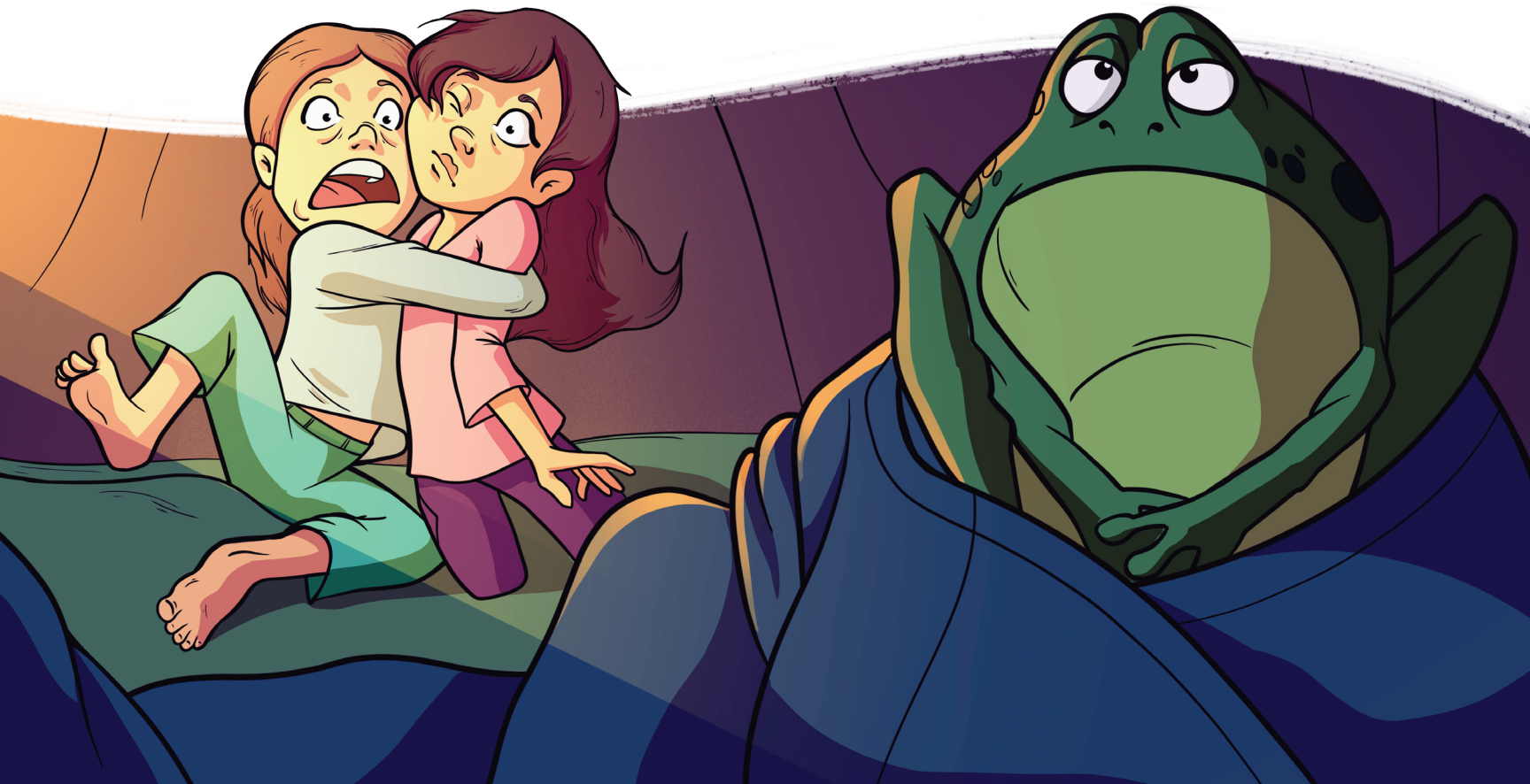
Soon the campfire burned out, and everyone turned out their lanterns and flashlights.

"Emily," whispered Jessie. "It's super dark, isn't it?"

"Yeah. I can't even see my hand in front of my face," said Emily. "Kinda like the plague of darkness."

Jessie clicked her flashlight on. "We can be the Israelites who had light."

Emily giggled at Jessie's glowing face. "I don't think they had flashlights back then."



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“Go to sleep, girls,” Emily’s mom called from the other tent. Jessie quickly snapped off the flashlight and lay down. After a few hours, Jessie woke to a strange noise—like pebbles hitting the tent. *Pop, tick-tick, pop, pop.* Emily opened her eyes. “What is that?” The girls crawled to the tent flap and peeked out. Tiny ice balls were bouncing off the tents and all over the ground. “It’s hail!” Jessie exclaimed. In the morning, the girls scrambled out of their tent. The sun was rising above the trees across the lake, and the sky was a rosy pink. Jessie smiled at Emily. “I believe the plagues of Pleasant Lake are over.”

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. Have you ever experienced something unpleasant during a time that you thought would be fun?
2. What kinds of things reminded Jessie and Emily of the plagues God brought on Egypt? *The dead fish, the flies, the frog, darkness, and hail.*
3. The unpleasant things we may put up with are small compared to the 10 miraculous plagues God did in Egypt. Why did God bring these plagues? *(See Exodus 7:4–5.) God showed his power, judged the Egyptians, and rescued his people from slavery.*