

☞ Song of Freedom: Go Down, Moses ☞

The song *Go Down, Moses* has been sung since before the Civil War as a freedom song. It is a spiritual, or a religious song, sung by the slaves in the U.S. South. The song refers to Moses, the Hebrew leader and prophet. Moses' people, the Jews, were Egyptian slaves. In the song, Moses has been instructed by God to tell the Egyptian pharaoh, or king, to set the Jews free.

Go Down, Moses

When Israel was in Egypt's land,
Let my people go.
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my people go.

Go down, Moses,
'Way down in Egypt land.
Tell old Pharaoh:
Let my people go.

"Thus spoke the Lord," bold Moses said,
Let my people go.
"If not I'll strike your firstborn dead,"
Let my people go.

Go down, Moses,
'Way down in Egypt land.
Tell old Pharaoh:
Let my people go.

No more shall they in bondage toil,
Let my people go.
Let them come out with Egypt's spoil,
Let my people go.

Answer the Questions:

1. What does bondage mean?

2. The song says, "Let my people go" over and over again. Why is that line important to the slaves?

3. List two words that rhyme in the song.

4. How was Moses' Egypt like the South before the Civil War?

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Answer the Questions:

Actual student's answers will vary.

Example of correct answers:

1. What does bondage mean?

slavery

2. The song says, "Let my people go" over and over again. Why is that line important to the slaves?

They want to be free.

3. List two words that rhyme in the song.

said/dead

4. How was Moses' Egypt like the South before the Civil War?

Both had slaves that wanted freedom.
