

UNIT VERSE

I will praise you because I have been remarkably and wondrously made. Your works are wondrous, and I know this well.

Psalms 139:14

JOSEPH LOVED HIS BROTHERS



LEADER BIBLE STUDY

CONTEXT AND COMMENTARY FOR PERSONAL STUDY AND PREPARATION

(For age-appropriate language, use the Bible story on the following pages.)

Joseph came from an incredibly dysfunctional family. His father, Jacob, had multiple wives, and these women bore him many children through a rivalry filled with spite and insecurities (Genesis 29:31-35; Genesis 30:1-24; Genesis 35:16-20). Because Jacob loved one wife more than the others, he also loved certain children more than the others. Joseph was the favored child, which caused resentment and anger among his brothers. All of these factors eventually led to them selling Joseph into slavery when they got the chance. Dysfunctional, indeed.

Many years later, after Joseph had risen to power in Egypt, he came face to face with his brothers, the people who had completely destroyed the life he knew, and he had a choice to make. Would he forgive or get his revenge? When someone in your family hurts or injures you, you face the same decision. It is tempting to dwell on various ways you can make that person pay for how he hurt you-the silent treatment, spread lies about him, share his dirty secrets. The options are endless for getting revenge! But is this the way of Jesus?

The apostle Peter taught Christians to respond differently. He implored Christians to be loving and compassionate, and they should not pay "back evil for evil or insult for insult" (1 Peter 3:9). Peter calls us to follow the way of Jesus. Jesus never paid evil back with evil, nor did He ever take revenge on those who hurt or disappointed Him. Peter knew this firsthand after Jesus forgave him for denying that he even knew Him (Luke 22:54-62; John 21:15-19). Jesus wants to forgive people when they repent and turn back from their wrong behavior. Do you?

Joseph forgave his brothers. Jesus offers forgiveness to everyone. Are you willing to forgive your family members?

As you pray this week, thank God for the family He gave you. Ask Him to fill you with a desire to forgive quickly when a family member sins against you.

LEVEL OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

God's plan is for all family members to work together so that God is honored by their family.

LIFE POINT

Family members can love and care for one another.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Genesis 37, 42-43, 45-46, 50

WEEKLY VERSE

Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others. Philippians 2:4



TELL THE STORY

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

- Write “FORGIVE” “PROVIDE” and “CARE” on a sheet of paper and cut each letter out individually and scramble them.
- Remind kids that God had a plan to create the world. Part of that plan was to create people in His image and to be in relationship with them. God wants people to be in relationship with one another as well, so God made families. God's plan is for all family members to love one another.
- Explain that the letters spell out three different ways family members show love to one another. (forgive, provide, care) Challenge kids to unscramble the letters to spell out the three words.
- Say: "Today's Bible story is about a powerful man named Joseph. His brothers were not kind to him, but Joseph did not use his authority to harm them. Instead, Joseph loved his family by forgiving them and caring and providing for them."

1. GETTING TO THE POINT

- Lead kids to open their Bibles to Genesis 37.
- Mention that many of the kids may have already heard the story of Joseph and his brothers. Before telling the story, pray for God to reveal new truths to them as they hear His Word.
- Open your Bible to Genesis 37 and tell the Bible story.

JOSEPH LOVED HIS BROTHERS

A father named Jacob had many sons. He loved his son, Joseph, more than his other sons, and he made him a coat of many colors. Joseph's brothers hated him because of this, and they planned to kill him. Instead of killing him, his brothers sold him to traders who were traveling to Egypt. Jacob thought his son had died.

While Joseph lived in Egypt, God warned him about a famine. For seven years, he prepared for the famine. Because God led Joseph to plan wisely, there was plenty of food in Egypt. Many people came to him for food. The famine was severe in every land. Jacob heard about grain in Egypt, so he sent all his sons, except Benjamin, to Egypt. When the brothers arrived, they bowed low to Joseph, not knowing who he was, but Joseph recognized his brothers! "You are spies," Joseph accused them. "No!" the brothers said. "We are honest. There were twelve of us brothers. The youngest is home with our father, but one is no longer living."



TELL THE STORY

He gave orders to give them grain and to return their money secretly. When the brothers stopped for the night, one of them opened his grain bag and found the money he had used to buy grain! Joseph had provided for their family and kept none of their money.

Joseph's family used all the grain they had brought back from Egypt. The famine was not yet over, so their father, Jacob, said, "Go back and buy us more food." One of Joseph's brothers reminded his father that if they returned to Egypt, they must keep their promise and take Benjamin, their youngest brother. The brothers traveled to Egypt and brought Benjamin along. They were afraid that the official in charge would punish them. Instead, Joseph held a feast for his brothers. Joseph told his brothers that he was the one they sold, but not to worry because God sent him there to save lives.

The brothers hurried home and told Jacob, "Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all of Egypt!" Jacob was surprised at the amazing news and decided quickly to go to Egypt to see his long-lost son. After Joseph's father died, Joseph's brothers came to apologize for all the harm they caused Joseph. He told them what they intended for evil, God planned for good so that many people would be saved.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- How did Joseph first come to Egypt? (His brothers sold him to traders who were traveling to Egypt.)
- Why did Jacob's sons go to Egypt? (to buy grain)
- Why did the brothers need to go back to Egypt? (They had used all the grain they got on their first trip and needed to buy more.)
- When the brothers returned to Egypt, whom did they have to take with them? (their brother, Benjamin)
- What did Joseph have hidden in each brother's sack of grain? (money the brothers had used to pay for the grain)
- Joseph told his brothers not to worry because . (God had sent him to Egypt to save lives.)
- Where did Joseph want his father and his family to live during the rest of the famine? (in Egypt)



BIBLE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

STATION 1. FAMILY TREE

Tell the kids they are going to make a family tree for Joseph's family. Ask children to share with you about their family. Thank God for families. Remind children that no matter what their family looks like, God loves and cares for them.

STATION 2. THROW AWAY RELAY

Tell the children who the brothers took hold of Joseph and threw him in the pit. In this game we're going to try to do the same with a towel and a ball. They are the brothers, the ball is Joseph, and the rubbish bin is the pit! Make a start line and a throwing line. Divide kids into two teams and pair them up. Each pair uses a towel to carry the ball from the start line to the throwing line. Then they work together to launch the ball into the bin using the towel. If they miss, they can try again. If they drop the ball, they must restart. Once finished, they return and the next pair goes.

STATION 3. SCAVENGER HUNT

As a class, walk around the Kids Building and find the pictures of Joseph from the Bible story. When you finish, use the pictures to tell the Bible story.

STATION 4. JOSEPH'S COAT

Give each child a paper sack that is cut up the center front, armholes and a neck holes cut to make a coat. Provide paint, markers, tissue paper, and old fabric to decorate coats. Wear coats while going on the scavenger hunt.

STATION 5. WAGONS TO EGYPT

Kids draw or build wagons with blocks or paper to represent moving to Egypt. Talk about God caring for Joseph's whole family.

STATION 6. CARE FOR MY FAMILY

Have the children sit in a circle and pass a paper bag that represents a grain sack while music plays. When the music stops, the child holding the sack shares one way they can help their family, such as cleaning up, being kind, or listening. Explain that just like Joseph helped take care of his family by providing food, we can show we care for others by helping the people in our families.