

Unit Verse

I praise you, for I am fearfully
and wonderfully made.^[a]

Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.

Psalms 139:14

JOSEPH LOVED HIS BROTHERS**LEADER BIBLE STUDY****LIFE POINT**

Family members can
love and care for one
another.

**LEVEL OF
BIBLICAL
LEARNING**

God loves families
even when they
are broken. God
wants all believers
to act as the family
of God and help
others in difficult
times.

**SCRIPTURE
REFERENCE**

Genesis 37; 41:29-57;
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

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.



TELL THE STORY

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

- Provide each preteen with a sheet of paper and a pencil. Instruct them that you will give them 30 seconds to scribble as much as they can on their paper.
- When they finish, ask them to try to erase all of the markings off their paper.
- Ask “Could you make the paper perfectly clean again?”
- Point out that pencils have small erasers that wear down quickly. Share that just like how erasers get worn down, people who are hurt by other people’s sin get worn down trying to forgive people. When somebody hurts you by sinning, somebody can’t completely erase that they were hurt, even after they forgive. But, God helps people to forgive and care for their families even when they are worn down and it seems impossible. God loves families even when they are broken. God wants Christians to act like a family even when it’s hard.

1. GETTING TO THE POINT

- Ask preteens if they have ever felt wronged by people in their families.
- Acknowledge that families have problems, but God helps people love and care for their families.

2. LOOK IN THE BOOK

- Invite preteens to sit on the picnic blanket(s).
- Display the teaching picture and encourage preteens to open their Bibles to Genesis.
- Teach that the passages preteens will read today happened in the life of Joseph. Joseph was his father's, Jacob's, favorite son, although he had 11 other brothers.
- Ask preteens how they would feel to be Joseph's brother or sister.
- Hold up the sunglasses and point out that in the summer time, sunglasses often come in handy, and they will for this Bible story, too.
- Inform preteens that whoever reads will get to wear the sunglasses.
- Choose volunteers to read the following Scripture passages that tell the story. Allow the reader to wear the sunglasses, then pass them to the next reader: Genesis 37:3-4; Genesis 37:5-8; Genesis 37:14-24; and Genesis 37:28.
- Point out that at this time, a famine came to the land and food was hard to find, so the father, Jacob, suggested his sons go to Egypt to find grain.
- Share that Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, and Joseph ended up working for Pharaoh in Egypt.



TELL THE STORY

- Remind preteens that when his brothers came to Egypt and asked for grain, they didn't recognize Joseph, but he recognized them. Read Genesis 42:21-26. Teach that Joseph's brothers ended up returning to Egypt and saw Joseph again.
- Read Genesis 45:1-8 and Genesis 50:19-21.
- Ask: "What stands out to you in these passages? How would you have felt being treated so badly by siblings for so many years? Could you treat your brothers or sisters with kindness after being treated like Joseph?"
- Teach that family members can love and care for one another even when it is difficult. God loves families even when they are broken. God wants all believers to act as the family of God and help others in difficult times.
- Ask preteens how Joseph helped his brothers in a difficult time, even after they had been so mean to him. (He supplied them with grain during the famine.)
- State that Joseph recognized that, though his brothers intended evil, God planned his circumstances for good and forgave them. Jesus was sacrificed to save God's people and to give them forgiveness from sin.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

- Who was Jacob's favorite son? (Joseph)
- How many brothers did Joseph have? (11)
- What did the brothers do to Joseph? (tore his coat, threw him in a pit, thought about killing him, sold him into slavery)
- What job did Joseph get in Egypt? (working for Pharaoh)
- What do you think went through the brothers' minds when Joseph revealed who he was to them? (fear, regret)
- How do you think Joseph was able to treat his brothers with kindness? (answers will vary)
- Do you think you would be able to treat your siblings with kindness after all that happened? (answers will vary)



BIBLE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

JOSEPH 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.

BUILD WAGONS

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

STORYBOARD

Have students create a 4-panel comic strip representing the Pit, Potiphar, Prison, and Palace.

GRAIN BIN

Write words of the unit verse on strips of paper. Hide them inside a grain bin, and challenge preteens to find all the pieces and put them in order. Say "Joseph had a dream where wheat bowed down to him. Joseph trusted God, even when things didn't go how Joseph wanted them to."

KICK THE CONE

Say "Joseph's brothers put him in a pit and planned to kill him. Joseph was left by himself to obey and trust God even when his family didn't. This game will help us feel what it is like to be the only one doing the right thing." Make a tape square on the floor. Place a cone in the center of the tape square. One preteen will stand inside the tape square and cannot leave. The rest of the preteens stand outside the square. Their goal is to run into the tape square and knock over the cone. If they are tagged by the player guarding the cone, they must go back outside the square. Say "The player in the center was left alone to guard the cone. Joseph was left alone to follow God. When is it hard for you to follow God? If your family didn't follow God, would it be hard for you to follow on your own?"