

Joseph Forgives His Brothers

Teacher Pep Talk: Joseph hadn't seen his brothers since they sold him into slavery. He wasn't expecting them to see them on the day they showed up to buy grain. Now as ruler of all Egypt, second only to Pharaoh, Joseph looked different than he had 20 years earlier. His brothers did not recognize him. Joseph took advantage of the situation by putting them through some trials of their own over the next few months. Perhaps he was testing them to see if they had changed over the years. Finally Joseph couldn't stand it anymore. He told them, *"I am Joseph your brother...Come close to me."* His brothers were terrified, and rightly so... The "dreamer" they had sold into slavery was now ruler over Egypt, and they were at his mercy. But Joseph told them, *"Do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you."* God had been with Joseph in Egypt, and now God would save the lives of his whole family through him.

You will need: Bible

Major Points: Joseph was in Charge of All Egypt
Joseph's Brothers Came to Buy Grain
Joseph Recognized His Brothers/ But They Didn't Know Him
Finally Joseph Told Them Who He Was
The Brothers were Terrified
Joseph was Kind to His Brothers
God Meant it All for Good

Scripture Ref: Genesis, Chapters 41-45

Memory Verse: Genesis 45:4 *"it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you."*

- Lesson: **Joseph was in Charge of All Egypt**
- *[Be sure to start with your Bible sitting on your lap.]*
 - *[Review the Timeline in the classroom, if available – See series lessons instructions.]*
 - Joseph's brothers had sold him into slavery in Egypt
 - But God was with Joseph, even in Egypt, and gave him success in everything he did
 - Eventually, the Pharaoh (the king of Egypt) put Joseph in charge of the whole country!
 - Joseph was in charge of selling all of the grain during the famine
 - They had saved up the grain during the 7 years of plenty!
 - It was Joseph's idea; that's why they put him in charge!

Joseph's Brothers Came to Buy Grain

- The famine was terrible! It wasn't just in Egypt.
- So people were coming from all over to buy grain in Egypt
 - Egypt was about the only place that had grain
 - Without grain the people and animals starved
- Joseph's father sent his brothers to Egypt to buy grain
- When they got there they had to meet with Joseph to buy grain
- Wow! What do you think will happen now? (Wait for answers.)

Joseph Recognized His Brothers/ But They Didn't Know Him

- Joseph's brothers came before him and they bowed down low
 - Just like Joseph's dream had foretold!
- When he saw them, Joseph instantly recognized his brothers
- But... Joseph's brothers did NOT recognize him. Why do you think they didn't recognize him? (Wait for answers.)
 - It had been over 20 years since they had seen him
 - He had been living with the Egyptians; so he looked and talked just like an Egyptian
 - His brothers were NOT expecting to see him there!!!

Finally Joseph Told Them Who He Was

- Joseph kept his brothers in the dark for a long time.
- Finally Joseph told his brothers who he was
- Uh oh... then what happened? I wonder... let's see...

The Brothers were Terrified

- Joseph's brothers were terrified.
- They were so scared they didn't dare move or speak!
- Why do you think they were so scared? (Wait for answers)
 - They had done terrible things to Joseph
 - They had sold him into slavery
 - They figured they were NEVER going to see him again
 - Now Joseph was a mighty ruler
 - They were at his mercy!

Joseph was Kind to His Brothers

- Joseph called his brothers over to him
- He told them not to be upset or angry with themselves for selling him as a slave in Egypt
- He told them "...because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.
- Joseph was kind to his brothers
- Joseph knew that God had sent him to Egypt!

God Meant it All for Good

- Joseph had figured it all out!
- God had sent Joseph to Egypt in order to save many lives... including the lives of all of his brothers!
- God had been with Joseph in Egypt
- God had given Joseph success in everything he had done
- Joseph had been put in charge over all Egypt!
- Now Joseph was in a position to help his family so that they wouldn't starve to death during the famine
 - Joseph moved his whole family to Egypt
 - There they would be safe
 - Joseph got to see his father, Jacob, again
 - Jacob, who thought Joseph was dead, was so happy!
- Joseph later told his brothers, that what they had meant for evil, God had meant for good!

Let's pray and thank God that He works to help us, even when things are bad.

Prayer: Dear God,
Thank you that you work to help us, even when things are bad.
Thank you that you were with Joseph and his family.
Thank you that you are with us and our families!
Thank you for loving us!
We love you back!
Amen.

Suggested Activities: *(Choose 1 or 2 that will work with your group.)*

Draw a Picture of a Dream – *The children will choose one dream to draw or color.*

Before Class: Provide adequate paper, pencils, crayons, markers,

During Class: Distribute the paper and pencils. Ask the children to draw one of the dreams that Joseph had (Genesis 37:5-10). Say: *"For the sun, moon and star dream, it is ok not to have them bowing... that would be very hard to draw... But for the sheaves of wheat dream, see if you can make the sheaves look like they are bowing."* Show the children how to draw a star. Have them practice by doing the activity sheet, if you like.

Sing Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star – *The children will sing together.*

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,	<i>(open and close fingers)</i>
How I wonder what you are,	<i>(open and close fingers)</i>
Up above the world so high,	<i>(hold hands up high)</i>
Like a diamond in the sky.	<i>(wiggle fingers, and bring hands down)</i>

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,	<i>(open and close fingers)</i>
How I wonder what you are.	<i>(slowly put hands in lap)</i>

Joseph the Dreamer – *The children will review the story of Joseph's dreams.*

Before Class: Review Lesson 11 about Joseph and His Coat of Many Colors. Read the portions of the story in the Bible (Genesis 37:5-10) about Joseph's dreams of the future.

During Class: Remind the children that Joseph had two dreams that told about the future when he was living with his family. Both dreams made his brothers very angry. Either read the story of the dreams out loud from Genesis 37:5-10, or retell the story in your own words. Discuss the symbolism of the dreams with the children.

The Sheaves of Wheat Dream – In this first dream, Joseph dreams that he and his 11 brothers are out in the wheat field. Each brother has a sheaf (a stack) of wheat. Suddenly Joseph's sheaf stands up straight and his 11 brothers' sheaves bow down low to the ground to his sheaf. In this dream, the sheaves of wheat represent each brother. The symbolism is not lost on the brothers. They are angry and ask Joseph if he thinks that one day they will bow down to him. This is something they don't intend to do, but they end up doing it when they come to buy grain, and Joseph is ruler of all Egypt.

The Stars, the Sun and the Moon – In the second dream, 11 stars, as well as the sun and the moon, bow down to Joseph. In this dream the stars represent his brothers, the sun represents his father, and the moon represents his mother. The brothers are angry again, to think that they will bow down to him. And Jacob, his father, reprimands him for suggesting that Joseph's parents will one day bow down to him. But when Joseph's whole family, including his father, comes to live in Egypt, in reality they are putting themselves under his rule.

Review Timeline – *The children will review the Timeline and collect their work.*

Before Class: Determine if you will be continuing on to Series 7 (Moses) in the Just Us Little Guys curriculum. If so, then you may want to continue to use the Timeline during that series as well. *The two series were written to go together in this manner.* If you will not be continuing to Series 7, then this is the last of the lessons in this series. If you have been saving the children's work in the room or in a student notebook, then this may be the point at which you will want to send the materials home with the children.

During Class: Discuss the series of lessons with the children, review the Timeline. Let them tell you some facts about the different persons/events on the Timeline. Consider preparing a folder to take the work home in: a large piece of construction paper (11x17) folded over works well. Alternatively, use a manila folder or notebook.

Joseph's Dreams Came True – *The children will learn to draw either a 5-pointed or a 6-pointed star.*

Before Class: Provide copies of one of the Activity Sheets for the children. (*Choose either the 5 or 6 pointed star.*) Also provide pencils, markers or crayons.

During Class: Distribute copies of the activity sheet and ask the children if they know how to draw a star. Following the numbers, draw lines forming the big 5-pointed star. Make two big triangles to form the 6-pointed star. (One right side up and one upside down.) Practice a few more, by following the lines on the little stars. Who did the stars in Joseph's dreams represent? (His 11 brothers)



