

Joseph Forgives His Brothers

Elementary Lesson



Theme: God wants us to forgive others.

Scripture: Genesis 45:1-15

Memory Verse: “And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.” Genesis 45:15

Get Ready: Click [here](#) to get your complete supply list for this lesson.

The Children’s Sermon:

You’ll Need:

- Bible
- One lemon slice in a Dixie cup per child
- One lemon slice sprinkled with sugar in a Dixie cup per child
- Plastic spoons
- Hand wipes

Get Ready: Give each child both kinds of lemon slices in cups.

Do This:

In today’s Bible lesson, Joseph had a choice. He could choose to punish his brothers for what they had done to him, or he could forgive them and reunite with them. Joseph chose forgiveness, and God wants us to forgive others, too.

Read aloud Genesis 45:4-7.

I'd like a few of you to share about a time that someone wronged you and you got angry about it. (Allow time.)

Those things hurt us. We have to make choices every day about whether to forgive people. Let's see what it's like when we choose to forgive others.

Have kids take the cup with the plain lemon and take a bite of the lemon.

What does that taste like? (Allow kids to answer.)

Think about a time that you forgave someone.

Have kids take the cup with the sugar-coated lemon and take a bite of the lemon.

What does that taste like? (Allow kids to answer.)

How is the bitter lemon like or unlike not forgiving others? How did the sugar change the taste of the lemon? How does forgiveness change our relationships to be sweeter?

The first lemon was bitter like the bitterness we feel when we don't forgive. The second lemon was sweet and tasty like the sweetness we feel when we forgive others. God chooses to forgive us when we ask, and Joseph forgave his brothers for the horrible things they did. God wants us to follow Joseph's example of sweet forgiveness and forgive others.

Pray: God, thank You for forgiving us. Please help us remember Joseph and find the strength to forgive people who wrong us. In Jesus' name, amen.

Interactive Scripture Experience: Genesis 45:1-15

Forgive and Forget

You'll Need:

- ["Family Tree"](#) handout - 1 per child
- Pencils

Do This:

Give a "Family Tree" handout and pencil to each child.

Say: **Have you ever been to a family reunion? A reunion is a lot of fun. You get to visit with aunts, uncles, and cousins that you haven't seen for a long time. Family reunions usually include plenty to eat and lots of hugs and kisses. But if you haven't seen your family members in a long time, you might not recognize them right away.**

Say: **Today's Bible lesson is a bit like a family reunion. You might remember how Joseph's brothers were jealous of him. They beat him up, threw him in a pit, and sold him to some merchants who were on their way to Egypt. Joseph's brothers were jealous of him and they betrayed him in a terrible way.**

Have kids draw a picture of Joseph in a colorful coat on the first leaf of the "Family Tree" handout.

Say: **When Joseph arrived in Egypt, a lot of things happened to him—some good and some not so good. I'm going to need your help to tell what happened to Joseph next. I'll tell you what happened to Joseph, and you'll decide whether it was good or bad. Stand up. I'll tell you what happened. You'll take a step forward if you think it was good or a step backward if you think it was bad.**

- **Joseph made it to Egypt and was put to work in the house of Potiphar, a captain in Pharaoh's guard. Joseph was put in charge of all of Potiphar's money. (Pause.)**
- **Potiphar's wife told terrible lies about Joseph to her husband. (Pause.)**
- **Because of his wife's lies, Potiphar had Joseph thrown into jail. (Pause.)**
- **The head jailer liked Joseph and put him in charge of all the other prisoners. (Pause.)**

- **Joseph used his God-given gift to interpret or explain the other prisoners' dreams.** (Pause.)
- **Joseph was stuck in jail for more than two years.** (Pause.)
- **Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, heard that Joseph had the ability to understand dreams.** (Pause.)
- **Pharaoh released Joseph from jail to explain his dreams.** (Pause.)
- **Pharaoh believed what Joseph told him and put him in charge of the entire land of Egypt.** (Pause.)

Say: **Stop and take a look at where you're standing. You're probably ahead of where you started out. Joseph had some setbacks, but he also had some good things happen, and he ended up ahead.**

Have children draw a crown for Joseph on the second leaf of their "Family Tree" handout.

Say: **Next, Pharaoh asked Joseph to interpret a specific dream. Joseph said Pharaoh's dream meant that there would be seven years when the harvest would be great and there would be plenty of food. But then, he said, there would be seven years when there would be nothing—no harvest and nothing to eat. God was telling Pharaoh to set aside grain during the good years so that there would be plenty of food during the bad years. So that's exactly what Pharaoh did. When the bad years came, there was plenty of grain in Egypt, but all the countries around them were starving.**

Have children draw a plate of food on the third leaf of their "Family Tree" handout.

Say: **People came from all the surrounding countries to buy grain from Joseph, because the whole world needed food. Some of those people were Joseph's very own brothers—the ones who'd treated him so badly. When his brothers showed up, Joseph knew who they were...but they didn't recognize him. This is kind of like that family reunion we talked about, where so much time passes, it's hard to recognize someone you haven't seen in a while. Plus, Joseph's brothers had left him in a very low state. They wouldn't have expected to see him in a position of great power. Just imagine if you**

hadn't seen your own family member for a while and all of a sudden, he or she was president of the country!

Say: Joseph met with his brothers several times without telling them who he was. Finally, he couldn't keep it to himself any longer. He told his brothers, "I'm Joseph! Is my father alive?" But his brothers were speechless because they were scared.

Have children discuss why they think Joseph's brothers were afraid.

Say: Joseph could've used his power to punish them. After all, they had treated him horribly. Instead, he said, "Come closer. I'm your brother, the one you sold! Don't worry, and don't be angry at yourselves for selling me into slavery. You see, it wasn't you who sent me here. God has put me here to save people from starving."

Have children draw a picture of Joseph talking to one of his brothers on the fourth leaf of their "Family Tree" handout.

Say: Then he said, "Now, go and tell my father all about the high position I hold in Egypt. Tell him everything you've seen here. But don't take all day. Hurry up and get my father down here."

Say: That's pretty surprising. Things could've been bad for the brothers, especially if Joseph chose not to forgive them. But Joseph took a different approach. He forgave them and wanted to be a family again.

Have children draw a picture of Joseph's happy heart on the fifth leaf of their "Family Tree" handout.

Say: Their reunion became a happy, joyful celebration. And guess what? There were hugs and kisses and plenty of food for everyone.

Virtual Lesson Tip:

Kids can do this activity with their family.

Bible Memory Verse: “And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.” Genesis 45:15 (NIV)

Hello, My Name Is...

You'll Need:

- Name tags - 1 per child
- Fine-tipped markers

Do This:

Say: **Let's take a few minutes and practice our Bible memory verse. Keep in mind that Joseph could have chosen to punish or ignore his brothers. He could have chosen not to give them any grain and let them starve. But instead, he forgave them and they became a family again.**

Say: **God led Joseph to forgive his brothers and reconcile, or reunite, with them. God also chooses to forgive us for our sins so we can be reunited with Him.**

Show kids the name tags and markers.

Say: **A lot of times, people wear name tags at big family reunions because they might not recognize everyone, so it's easier to put your name where everyone can see. So, we're going to use name tags to learn our Bible memory verse.**

- Give each child a marker and name tag.

- Have children each write the Bible memory verse on the nametag and then stick it to their shirt.
- Give kids 1 minute to find a partner and stand 6 feet apart.
- Have them take turns reading the memory verse off the other person's name tag,
- When time's up, have kids find a new partner and repeat.
- Play for five minutes or so, then have everyone repeat the Bible memory verse aloud together.

Virtual Lesson Tip:

Kids can do this activity with their family.

“Family Reunion” Video Lesson

You'll Need:

- [“Family Reunion”](#) video lesson
- Something to play the video

Do This:

Show kids the video.

Afterward, ask:

- What did you learn about Joseph's surprising choice during this video?
- When has someone forgiven you?

Say: Sometimes forgiving others seems like the hard choice, but in the end, it makes *our* lives happier and sweeter. Joseph still remembered what his brothers had done, but he chose to forgive them so they could reunite as a family and be happy again. We can follow Joseph's example as we face situations every day where we must choose whether to forgive others.

Family Faces Snacks

You'll Need:

- Stick pretzels
- Mini pretzels
- Round cookies
- Red licorice laces
- Rolos candies
- White icing in a tube
- Napkins
- Sanitizing hand wipes

Do This:

Invite children to think about different people in their family who might attend a family reunion. Then encourage them to use the snack supplies to create the faces of two family members they'd like to give a hug to. For instance, they can use the cookies for the face, pretzels for hair, Rolos candies for eyes, and licorice laces for mouths. They can use the icing as "glue."

Say: In today's Bible lesson, we learned that forgiving others is good for everyone because it helps people reunite and be happy. We learned that Joseph had to make a really hard choice to forgive after the way his brothers had treated him, but he did it anyway. Joseph's decision reunited his whole family!

Family Reunion! Game

Do This:

Explain to kids that they'll be playing a game called "Family Reunion!"

Play the game like this:

- Choose one child to be “Joseph.” The rest of the kids are “family.”
- Have Joseph stand on one side of the room and the family stand on the opposite side.
- Explain that Joseph will yell, “Family reunion!” and the family must run across the room and make it to the other side without getting tagged by Joseph.
- Once the last family member has been tagged, that person becomes Joseph in a new round.

Afterward, ask:

- **What were you thinking when you tried to avoid getting tagged?**
- **How do you think this might have been like what happened when Joseph’s brothers realized he was the ruler of Egypt?**

Say: **Joseph gave a wonderful gift to his brothers when he forgave them. God wants us to forgive others, too, and give them the special gift of forgiveness.**

Virtual Lesson Tip:

Kids can do this activity with their family.

Ruler of Egypt Craft

You’ll Need:

- [Joseph Forgives His Brothers How-to Video](#)
- [“Ruler of Egypt”](#) handout (1 per child)
- Self-adhesive gems
- Craft decorations such as ribbon
- Construction paper

- Scissors
- Markers
- Glue

Do This:

Have kids follow these steps to create a “Ruler of Egypt” craft to remind them that God helps us forgive and reconcile with others.

- Cut out the tunic from the handout.
- Use markers to decorate the tunic like a servant or inmate on one side.
- Use the self-adhesive gems and decorations to decorate the tunic like a royal leader of Egypt on the other side.

Say: **Joseph had some big setbacks in his life. His brothers beat him up, threw him in a pit, and sold him. He probably looked and felt like he was worthless.** (Have kids hold up the servant/inmate side of Joseph.)

Say: **But he overcame it all and became a ruler of Egypt. He saved Egypt’s people, and he had the power to save or punish his brothers.** (Have kids hold up the ruler side of Joseph.)

Say: **Joseph chose to forgive and reconcile with his brothers. God wants us to forgive others, too.**

Royal Prayer

You’ll Need:

- Self-adhesive gems

Do This:

Give each child a self-adhesive gem and have them stick it to the back of one hand while they hold their “Ruler of Egypt” craft.

Pray: **Dear God, You showed us a great example of Your forgiveness in Joseph's life. Please remind us through the gems on our hands to follow Joseph's example this week and to forgive others. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.**

Time to Praise God

You'll Need:

- Song: "God Is So Good"

[Words and music \(pdf\)](#)

[MP3 Piano Accompaniment](#)

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Do This:

Say: **God forgives us because He loves us and He wants us to join Him in heaven someday. God is good, all the time. Let's sing "God Is So Good" to thank God for his love and forgiveness.**

Lead children in singing "God Is So Good."

If You Have Extra Time...

Use these activity sheets to fill in any time and keep kids learning.

[Joseph & His Brothers Crossword](#)

[Joseph & His Brothers Decoder](#)

[Joseph & His Brothers Word Search](#)

Complete Supply List:

- [Name tags](#)
- [Fine-tipped markers](#)
- [Stick pretzels](#)
- [Mini pretzels](#)
- [Round cookies](#)
- [Red licorice laces](#)
- [Rolos candies](#)
- [White icing in a tube](#)
- [Self-adhesive gems](#)
- [Ribbon](#)
- [Construction paper](#)
- [Markers](#)
- [Glue](#)

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Joseph Forgives His Brothers

At-Home Lesson

Theme: God wants us to forgive others.

Scripture: Genesis 45:1-15

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Read aloud Genesis 45:4-7.

What has someone done to you that has made you angry sometime? (Allow time.)

Those things hurt us. We have to make choices every day about whether to forgive people. Let's see what it's like when we choose to forgive others.

Have kids take the cup with the plain lemon and take a bite of the lemon.

What does that taste like? (Allow kids to answer.)

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