

Joseph (Part 1)- Genesis 37

THE POINT

Focus:

God works through difficult times and others sins to accomplish his plan.

Application:

We can trust that God is with us in difficult times.

Last Week:

2 Weeks Ago:

HEART CONNECTION (MINUTES)

MATERIALS:

- clear vinyl luggage tag for each child (available inexpensively online or at some box stores)
- paper insert
- markers and stickers to decorate
- Optional: pre-write "God is Always With Me" on each tag

Content: Explain how in our story today, someone Joseph going to take an unexpected journey, but God says that he never left Joseph's side. No matter where we go, God's love goes with us because we belong to God. As a reminder, we're going to decorate these bag tags, and children can attach the tag to a backpack, sports bag, or overnight bag that they take to a place where they want to remember that nothing can separate them from the love of God.

STORY CONNECTION (10-12 MINUTES)

MATERIALS:

- Background story cloth
- *wooden figures representing: Joseph, a few of the brothers (at least 4...), and a few slave-dealers (2-3)
- felt "robe" for Joseph
- felt circle to represent the well
- felt cut-out or dried grass to represent wheat
- felt cut-out or star stickers to represent the celestial dream
- Optional: Sheep (rolled and glued felt or cotton balls)

*you can make these from wooden clothespins available at most craft stores, or you can make them from pegs. Clothespins are larger, but wooden pegs are easier to balance. Pegs can be reused for a variety of stories.

Instructions:

Use the materials to tell the story. It may work best to have one person read while the other sets the pieces out. The story will go most smoothly if you do NOT let the children participate with the initial placing of figurines; they will become distracted with volunteering, helping, and making sure everyone can help fairly. Instead, have them watch (let them fidget with a pipe cleaner if they need something to do with their hands!) and invite them to use the story materials afterwards to retell the story.

Great examples of this methodology are available on YouTube with GodlyPlay and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd videos.

Have the children sit in a circle for the story This helps include children who might feel shy, and it helps each child feel equally engaged. It reassures children that they are seen and welcome in the community.

This lesson has some summarized parts for length and content. If you're in a context where the idea of brothers threatening Joseph's life is too graphic, you could say "hurt him badly" or "injure him". This obviously doesn't express the fulness of the text, but it may make the text appropriate for children until they have the emotional resources to handle it. For other children, the abstract idea of death isn't scary because it doesn't feel permanent.

Genesis 37:5-13, 18, 21-27

Jacob, who we learned last week was renamed Israel by God, had many sons. One son, though, was the most special to Israel; his name was Joseph. To show that Joseph was special, Israel gave him a special robe to wear. This made Joseph's brother's jealous! In our story today, we'll learn about some hard things that happen to Joseph, and we'll see how God was with Joseph the whole time!

5 Joseph had a dream. When he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. 6 He said to them, "Listen to the dream I had. 7 We were tying up bundles of grain out in the field. Suddenly my bundle stood up straight. Your bundles gathered around my bundle and bowed down to it."

8 His brothers said to him, "Do you plan to be king over us? Will you really rule over us?" So they hated him even more because of his dream. They didn't like what he had said.

9 Then Joseph had another dream. He told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said. "I had another dream. This time the sun and moon and 11 stars were bowing down to me."

10 He told his father as well as his brothers. Then his father rebuked him. He said, "What about this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers really do that? Will we really come and bow down to the ground in front of you?" 11 His brothers were jealous of him. But his father kept the dreams in mind.

12 Joseph's brothers had gone to take care of their father's flocks near Shechem. 13 Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are taking care of the flocks near Shechem. Come. I'm going to send you to them."

"All right," Joseph replied.

18 But they saw him a long way off. Before he reached them, they made plans to kill him.

21 Reuben heard them talking. He tried to save Joseph from them. "Let's not take his life," he said. 22 "Don't spill any of his blood. Throw him into this empty well here in the desert. But don't harm him yourselves." Reuben said that to save Joseph from them. He was hoping he could take him back to his father.

Reuben wanted to stop his brothers because he loved his father and wanted to protect Joseph.

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23 When Joseph came to his brothers, he was wearing his beautiful robe. They took it away from him. 24 And they threw him into the well. The well was empty. There wasn't any water in it.

25 Then they sat down to eat their meal. As they did, they saw some Ishmaelite traders coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, lotion and myrrh. They were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

26 Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and try to cover up what we've done? 27 Come. Let's sell him to these traders. Let's not harm him ourselves. After all, he's our brother. He's our own flesh and blood." Judah's brothers agreed with him.

The brothers sold Joseph to the traders and lied to their father about what had happened. Even with how horrible things were, God was with Joseph. Joseph went to live in Egypt and worked in a big house. God provided for Joseph, and next week, we'll hear how God made a beautiful end to a story even though the brothers were so wicked.

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WONDER CONNECTION (3-5 MINUTES)

MATERIALS: None.

I wonder what Joseph thought about at the bottom of that well.

I wonder if Joseph prayed to God.

I wonder how God will make it work out for good.

What do you wonder?

SPIRIT CONNECTION (7-10 MINUTES)

MATERIALS: Coloring supplies: paper, crayons, pencils, hard drawing surfaces (floor, clipboard, or a table).

Take a few minutes to talk quietly with the Lord while you draw, write, or just think inside your heard. Talk with God about the story today. This is a quiet time for you to spend with the Lord, not with your neighbor or anyone else.