
Forward

This book contains lessons from Genesis about the Patriarchs of our Faith: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Your students will learn the history of the Children of Israel and why the land rightfully belongs to them. They will be encouraged to have faith as strong as Abraham's and the integrity of Joseph. They will discover that God always keeps His promises, no matter what!

I have designed these lessons to enable you to teach the Bible expositively. The idea is to have the kids read the passages in their own Bibles and the teacher explain the scriptures and give good practical applications that are age-appropriate. My goal is to ensure that children learn that God's Word is exciting and meaningful and that teachers teach sound doctrine!

Even though I've scripted the lessons, I don't expect teachers to read my lesson materials verbatim to the children as they teach. My lessons are meant to provide the details you need to get background information and some suggestions for child-oriented personal application. Once you know and understand the Bible lessons for yourself, you'll be ready to teach your class.

The two-column layout of this book is designed so that you can copy and cut the pages in half to fit into your Bible. When the children observe that you are teaching right out of the Bible, rather than from a curriculum book, it validates God's Word and gives your teaching more authority.

You will discover that there is not always a Craft or Game idea suggested in each lesson. When I've had a good idea that really seems to support the lesson objectives, I've included it. But I have another handbook called *Tips and Tricks — Making Children's Bible Lessons Come to Life* that gives lots of suggestions for activities that will help reinforce your lesson and teach the memory verse. (This is available from my website:

<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com/>)

Use the Teaching Schedule to help you organize your teaching rotation.

I pray that you will use these lessons for God's glory by teaching the Bible as an entire plan by a systematic and connected study of the Word.

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Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. (Mark 10:14)

Sheila Scroggins

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Teaching Schedule

Lesson	Date	Teacher	Lesson	Memory Verse
1			God Blesses Abraham (Genesis 12 – 13)	<i>It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. (Hebrews 8:11 NLT)</i>
2			Abraham's Faith is Tested (Genesis 21 – 22)	<i>When troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. (James 1:2-3 NLT)</i>
3			Isaac Gets a Bride (Genesis 24)	<i>Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. (Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV)</i>
4			Jacob Gets Esau's Birthright (Genesis 25)	<i>Deceit fills hearts that are plotting evil; joy fills hearts that are planning peace. (Proverbs 12:20 NLT)</i>
5			Jacob Gets Esau's Blessing (Genesis 27)	<i>The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. (Lamentations 3:22-23 NLT)</i>
6			Jacob's Dream (Genesis 28)	<i>If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. (1 John 1:9)</i>
7			Jacob Gets Two Wives (Genesis 29)	<i>So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)</i>
8			Jacob Leaves Laban (Genesis 30 – 31)	<i>Don't sin by letting anger control you. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil. (Ephesians 4:26-27)</i>
9			Jacob Comes Home (Genesis 32 – 33)	<i>Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. (James 1:2-3)</i>
10			Joseph Sold by His Brothers (Genesis 37)	<i>...love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. (Matthew 5:44 NKJ)</i>
11			Joseph's Temptation (Genesis 39)	<i>...the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. (1 John 4:4)</i>
12			Joseph Interprets Dreams (Genesis 40 – 41)	<i>We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. (Romans 8:28)</i>
13			Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt (Genesis 41 – 43)	<i>If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Matthew 6:14-15)</i>
14			Joseph Forgives His Brothers (Genesis 44 – 45)	<i>Forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. (Matthew 6:12)</i>
15			Israelites Settle in Goshen (Genesis 46-50)	<i>"And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins." (Jeremiah 31:34)</i>

God Blesses Faithful Abraham

(Genesis 12 - 13)

Introduction

For the past 14 weeks we have been learning about the beginning of things:

- The beginning of the universe (how God created the world in seven days).
- The first sin (when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit).
- The first murder (when Cain let his jealousy towards his own brother cause him to kill Abel).
- The first time God judged sin (when He wiped out all of mankind with a great flood.)
- The beginning of language (when God confused the people of Babel by giving them different languages).

Today we're going to start learning about the family of Abraham who is the next character that comes along in the book of Genesis after the people of Babel were scattered by the Lord.

In Genesis 3:15, right after Adam and Eve sinned, God made a promise to send the Messiah, who would be born of a human mother and be the Savior of the world by taking the punishment we all deserve for our sin. That meant God needed a human family. So, God looked down out of heaven and chose Abraham to fulfill this promise.

Note, as we read in the Bible, you'll see that Abraham's name started out as Abram; later God changed it to Abraham. We'll learn more about that in the weeks to come.

Opening Prayer

Lord, I know that we have all been let down by people who have broken their promises to us. But we want to thank You that You never

break Your promises. We can believe and trust in You; You will never disappoint us. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. (Hebrews 11:8 NLT)

Lesson

Even though God had swiftly judged sin both with the Flood in Noah's time and the incident with the tower of Babel, people at this time generally ignored Him and continued to sin. But Abraham knew God.

One day, God appeared to Abraham and made three promises to him: Land, Family, and Blessing. This was an unconditional covenant, which means that these promises would definitely be fulfilled, not because of Abram's faithfulness, but because of God's faithfulness.

Let's read about the promises God made to Abram.

Genesis 12:1-3

*The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the **land** that I will show you. ²I will make you into a great **nation**. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. ³I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. **All the families on earth will be blessed through you.**"*

Abram loved God, but many of his neighbors who lived in his city did not. They worshiped the moon god and made sacrifices to this god in the temples. God told Abram to get out of that evil place and go to another land. First, Abram left his home town of Ur and traveled to Haran with his father, his wife, Sarai, and his nephew, Lot. He stayed in Haran until his father passed away and then the Lord prompted him move on to the land of the Canaan.

Abram didn't need to know where the Lord was leading him because he knew God had promised to bless him. He trusted God so he obeyed Him without question.

Genesis 12:4-6

So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.⁵He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth--his livestock and all the people he had taken into his household at Haran--and headed for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in Canaan,⁶Abram traveled through the land as far as Shechem. There he set up camp beside the oak of Moreh. At that time, the area was inhabited by Canaanites.

When Abram got to the land, it wasn't empty. At that time the people of Canaan were living in the land. They worshipped false gods.

Genesis 12:7

*Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "**I will give this land to your descendants.**" And Abram built an altar there and dedicated it to the LORD, who had appeared to him.*

This is the 2nd time God promised to give the land to Abram's offspring. At this point Abram and his wife Sarai had not been able to have children. So, to hear God's promise that this land was to go to their offspring must have been thrilling, especially at the age of 75!

Genesis 12:10

*At that time a **severe famine struck the land** of Canaan, forcing Abram to go down to Egypt, where he lived as a foreigner.*

When a severe famine struck the land, Abram moved his family down to Egypt. But the Lord had not instructed Abram to go to Egypt. Things didn't work out well for him down there, so he chose to obey the Lord and came back to the land that God had promised him.

Genesis 13:1-2 and 5

¹So Abram **left Egypt and traveled north into the Negev**, along with his wife and Lot and all that they owned. ²(Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold.)

⁵Lot, who was traveling with Abram, had also become very wealthy with flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and many tents.

Both Abram and Lot were very wealthy. They had lots of sheep and cattle and many servants. They had so many animals, there wasn't enough good pasture land for all the animals to graze together.

Genesis 13:6-7

*But the land could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. ⁷So **disputes broke out between the herdsmen** of Abram and Lot. (At that time Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land.)*

There were too many animals and not enough pasture. So, fights broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot.

Ask: Do arguments ever break out at your house?

Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount, "**Blessed are the peacemakers.**" (Matthew 5:9) God promises to bless you when you make peace rather than war! Abram was a peacemaker.

Genesis 13:8

*Finally, Abram said to Lot, "**Let's not allow this conflict to come between us or our herdsmen.** After all, we are close relatives!"*

Abram didn't want to fight with his nephew.

Genesis 13:9

*The whole countryside is open to you. **Take your choice of any section of the land you want**, and we will separate. If you want the land to the left, then I'll take the land on the right. If you prefer the land on the right, then I'll go to the left."*

Abram was very kind to let his nephew, Lot, choose first. He didn't have to give his nephew first choice. He was older, the head of the family, he had every right to choose first. But Abram was willing to let Lot choose first just to solve the dispute between them.

Ask: Do you ever let others have the first choice, even if that means not getting what you want?

We need to put our selfish desires aside and think of other people first. We need to be love-centered, not self-centered.

Let's see which land Lot chose:

Genesis 13:10-11

*Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the LORD or the beautiful land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹**Lot chose for himself the whole Jordan Valley** to the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram.*

Lot took the best land for himself! He took the beautiful countryside on the east side that had lots of water and green grass for his sheep. But He was greedy. He only wanted the best for himself without thinking about his uncle Abram's needs or what was fair.

Life is a series of choices. We, too, can choose the best while ignoring the needs and feelings of others. But this leads to problems for us, just as it did for Lot.

Genesis 13:12-13

*So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and **Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom** and settled among the cities of the plain. ¹³But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the LORD.*

Lot had made a mistake. Later on in Chapter 19 we learn that God sent fire from heaven to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because of the people's extreme wickedness. Although Lot's life was spared, he lost everything--his wife, his home, and all his possessions. But God blessed Abram for being faithful to Him...

Genesis 13:14-17

*After Lot had gone, the LORD said to Abram, "Look as far as you can see in every direction—north and south, east and west. ¹⁵**I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants as a***

***permanent possession.** ¹⁶And I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted! ¹⁷Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you."*

This is the 3rd time God promised to give land to Abram and his descendants. Because Abram believed God's promise, he was willing to leave his country and family and friends to go to a place he didn't even know existed. And God blessed Abram's obedience. [Review verse for today.]

If we trust and obey God, we won't miss out on His promise to bless us.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, we don't want to miss out on Your great plan for our lives. Please help us to trust You and obey You always. And help us also not to be selfish, Lord. Help us to be peacemakers and to want to put other people first. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CRAFT CORNER

The Promise Tree activity sheet or a craft with promises as the theme (i.e., create a Promise Box to put the memory verses in each week. Decorate with sequins and stickers, etc.).

GAME CENTER

Blindfold challenge.

- Detail: We would set up teams of 2, blindfold one of them, and then the other would have to "lead" them to a location somewhere in the room. Depending on time, we will then switch and let the partner be blindfolded. The goal of this game would be to experience how Abraham trusted God, even

though he was "blind" to what God was doing, how we often are as well!

Packing for an unknown adventure!

- Detail: Bring a random assortment of items that would typically apply to an adventure, and then break the kids into groups to pack. Tell them they are going to place they've never been and they need to pack without knowing where they are going. Once they are packed reveal to them the mystery location of their adventure. Then have each team explain why they chose what they did and whether or not they chose well based on the location. The goal of this game is to show how we can plan for God to send us anywhere, but we should trust Him to provide if we miss something!

Or use the following questions in a game or discussion of your choice:

Review Questions:

1. What did God promise Abraham? (That he would make his descendants into a great nation)
2. Where did God tell Abraham to go? (*He didn't know*)
3. Would you pack up and leave your home, your country, your family and friends to go someplace that you didn't know where it was? What if God told you to go?
4. Why did fights break out between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot? (*There were too many animals and not enough pasture.*)
5. How did Abraham settle the dispute between him and Lot? (He suggested that they split up and he let Lot choose where he wanted to settle first.)
6. Where did Lot choose to settle? (He took the best land for himself; near Sodom and Gomorrah.)
7. How would you describe Lot's attitude? (*He was selfish and greedy.*)
8. Why might it have been hard for Abram to let Lot choose first? (He wasn't sure where he'd end up. He didn't know when God's promises would come true.)
9. How should we handle it if you and somebody else are fighting over something? (*We need to be love-centered; not self-centered.*)
10. Why was it a big mistake for Lot to move into Sodom and Gomorrah? (God sent fire from heaven to destroy the cities because of the people's wickedness. He lost everything.)
11. What should we do to be sure we don't miss out on God's great plan for our lives? (*Trust and obey*)
12. What are some things Abram did that showed he trusted God to keep His promises? (Left his home and moved to a new land. Let Lot choose land first.)
13. What are some ways we can show that we trust God today?

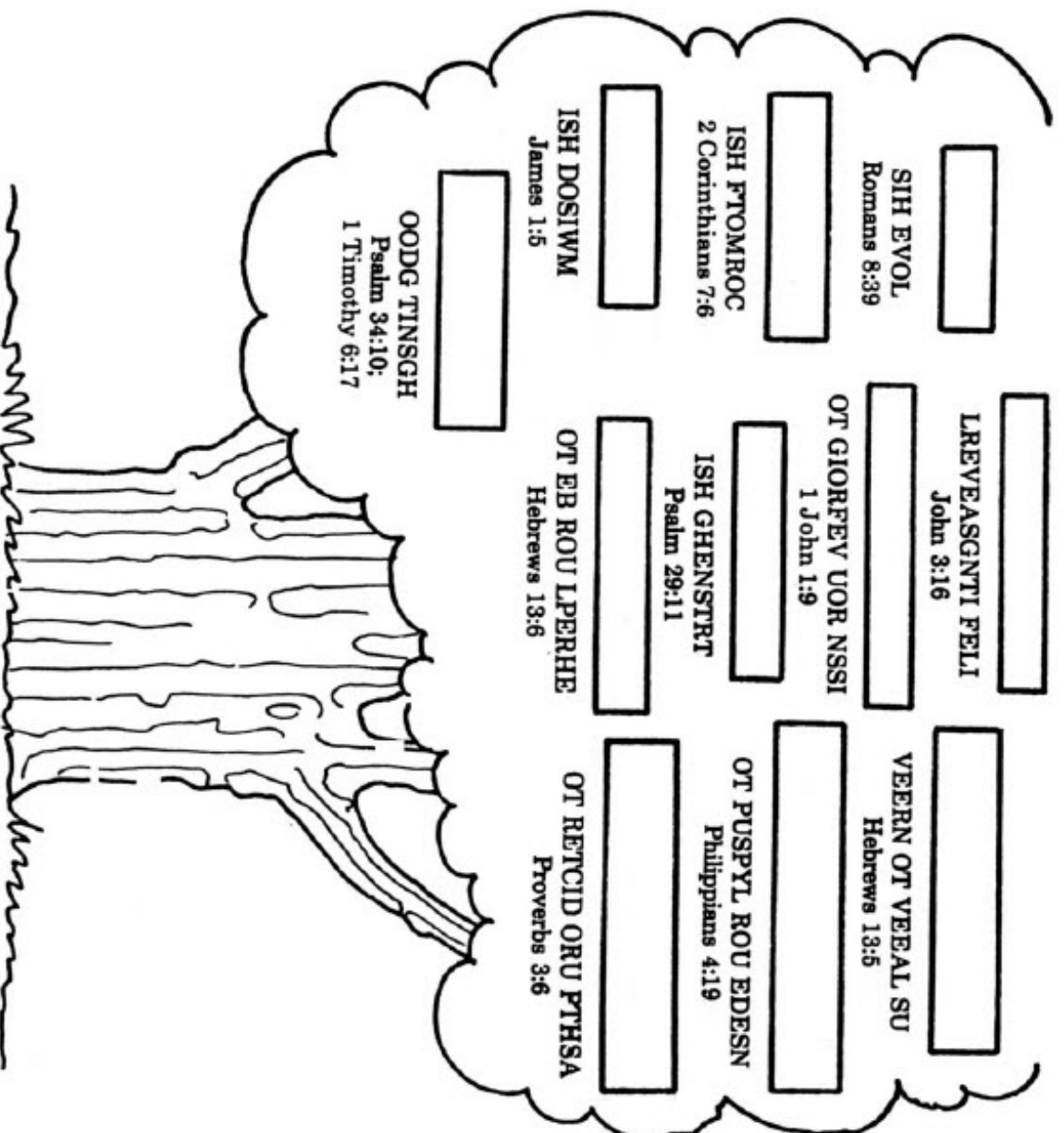
[For more expositional lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]

Promise Tree

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: (for He is faithful that promised).
—Hebrews 10:23

Read each verse. Unscramble the words which tell about God's promises to His children. Write each promise in the boxes provided on the Promised Tree.

GOD PROMISES . . .



Abraham's Faith is Tested

(Genesis 21 - 22)

Introduction

Ask: What is something that you really, really want? Something you've been begging your parents for; maybe even praying to God for?

Let's say that you finally got that thing you've desired. How would you feel? Now say, that your parents asked you to give it away to someone else. How would you feel about that? Would you be angry?

Today we're going to find out that Abraham was asked to give up the most precious thing in his life; something he'd waited many years for. Will Abraham trust God's motives? Would he obey?

Opening Prayer

Father, sometimes we don't understand Your ways. Sometimes it's hard to follow You and be a Christian in this pagan world. But Lord, we know Your way is the right way. Help us Lord, to have the faith we need to trust and obey You, even when it doesn't seem to make sense to us. Help us to be like Abraham. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. (James 1:2-3 NLT)

Lesson

Last week we began a new series of lessons on the life of Abraham, the father of the children of Israel, the first Jew.

To review, let me ask you some questions:

1. What did God ask Abraham to do? (To leave his country and go to a place he did not know even existed.)
2. What did God promise Abraham? (That He would make his descendants into a great nation.)
3. What happened to Abraham's nephew, Lot? (He chose to live in Sodom and Gomorrah and lost everything he possessed.)
4. What should we do to be sure we don't miss out on God's great plan for our lives? (Trust and obey God.)

Last week we learned that when Abraham was seventy-five years old, God made a promise to him that his descendants would be as numerous as the dust of the earth, if you could possibly count it. But there was one small problem. Sarah and Abraham hadn't been able to have any children.

This morning we'll be picking up the story about 25 years later and they still hadn't had any children! This makes God's promise that Abraham's descendants would be a great nation seem impossible, doesn't it? But we know nothing is impossible for God.

Open your Bibles and read with me from Genesis 21...

Genesis 21:1-3

The LORD kept his word and did for Sarah exactly what he had promised. ²She became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. This happened at just the time God had said it would. ³And Abraham named their son Isaac.

Sarah was amused to have a baby at the age of 90. So, she named him Isaac, which means "laughter." Can you imagine how happy she was to finally have a baby after so many years of waiting?

Genesis 21:5-7

Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born. ⁶And Sarah declared, "God has brought me laughter. All who hear about this will laugh with me. ⁷Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse a baby? Yet I have given Abraham a son in his old age!"

God said they would have a whole nation full of descendants and they knew they had to have at least one to start with. Weren't they patient? It's hard to wait for a long time to get something you really want that's been promised to you, isn't it? They waited 25 years for God to fulfill His promise to them. But they never gave up hope because they knew that God always keeps His promises.

But sometime later God tested Abraham by asking him to do what must have been the hardest thing in the world for him to do.

Genesis 22:1-2

Some time later, God tested Abraham's faith. "Abraham!" God called. "Yes," he replied. "Here I am." 2"Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you."

Isaac was a young man by this time (likely between 20 and 37 years old). How could God possibly fulfill His promise to Abraham's descendants if Isaac was killed now? God was truly testing Abraham's faith by asking him to sacrifice the promised son for whom he had waited so long.

Abraham didn't understand God's purposes, but he obeyed and began the journey the next morning...

Genesis 22:3

The next morning Abraham got up early. He saddled his donkey and took two of his servants with him, along with his son, Isaac. Then he chopped wood for a fire for a burnt offering and set out for the place God had told him about.

Can you imagine how hard this was for Abraham? Notice Abraham didn't question God, nor did he argue with God; he immediately obeyed God. He got up early, saddled his donkey, got the wood for the fire loaded, and set out for the place God had told him to go.

Ask: Why do you think God tested Abraham's faith? Was God trying to see if Abraham had faith? We know that God is all-knowing. Surely, He knew the depth of Abraham's faith.

God tested Abraham's faith to strengthen and confirm it **to** Abraham because He knew that Abraham was going to need to have stronger faith.

Ask: Did you know that God tests our faith, as well? [Review Verse for Today]

When our faith is tested it causes us to rely on Him and trust Him more. God wants you to have faith to obey Him even when it's hard. He uses these tests to make our faith "muscles" stronger.

Ask: How do you get strong muscles? You have to exercise them. It's the same with our faith. The more we practice using our faith the stronger it gets.

When we go through Hard times, it causes us to put more faith in God. He wants us to remember that He is in control of all things and has a special plan that He is carrying out in each of our lives.

Ask: What are some times when it is hard to trust God? Can you think of a time when you felt helpless and sad?

[Teacher, discuss: Maybe during a thunderstorm? Or, if they have heard their parents argue. Or, perhaps their parents have separated or divorced? Or someone in their family died? Or, someone made a promise they didn't or couldn't keep? Or, they have had to move to a new city and leave all their friends behind.]

These are all hard things that could make you get angry with God or feel discouraged.

Ask: What helps us to have the faith we need to obey God even when it's hard?

Remember God's promises. He is in control and always keeps His promises.

Ask: What are some of the promises of God? He will:

- Never leave you.
- Always comfort you.
- Strengthen you.
- Supply all your needs.
- Be your helper.
- Direct your paths.
- Forgive your sins.
- Help in time of need.

It isn't always easy to trust God, but He promises to give you strength and courage. Remember that God doesn't cause the bad things to happen, but He promises that all things will work together for good for those that love God and are called according to His purpose.

When our faith is strong, it makes us better able to help others who are going through hard times.

God had asked Abraham to do a very difficult thing, but Abraham was so confident in the Lord that he immediately obeyed. God wants you to have faith to obey Him even when it's hard, just like Abraham.

Genesis 22:4-6

*On the third day of their journey, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵"Stay here with the donkey," Abraham told the servants. "The boy and I will travel a little farther. We will worship there, and then **we will come right back.**" ⁶So, Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them walked on together,*

Notice that Abraham said, "**we** will come back to you." He knew that God had some plan to fulfill the promise even if he didn't know what it was. He even knew that God could bring Isaac back to life again if He wanted to (Hebrews 11:19). Abraham had faith that both he, and his son, would return.

Can you imagine what Isaac was thinking about all this? Let's read...

Genesis 22:7-8

Isaac turned to Abraham and said, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "We have the fire and the wood," the boy said, "but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?" ⁸"God will provide a sheep for the burnt offering, my son," Abraham answered. And they both walked on together.

Abraham's answer showed that he had complete confidence in God.

Genesis 22:9

When they arrived at the place where God had told him to go, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied his son, Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.

So, Abraham built an altar and tied his only son to it! Notice that Isaac did not try to resist his father.

As they climbed the mountain, Isaac was the one carrying the large pile of wood. Wood enough for a burnt sacrifice would have been very heavy. If Isaac was strong enough to carry the wood up the mountain, then he was probably strong enough to resist being sacrificed and fend off Abraham if he had wanted to.

Ask: Why do you think Isaac didn't fight off his father?

The fact that Isaac allowed himself to be bound and placed on the altar shows that Isaac completely trusted his father and he knew that his father completely trusted God. Both Abraham and Isaac knew that God good and never makes mistakes.

Genesis 22:10-12

And Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice. ¹¹At that moment the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Yes," Abraham replied. "Here I am!" ¹²"Don't lay a hand on the boy!" the angel said. "Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son."

As Abraham picked up the knife to kill Isaac, the Lord stopped him. Now God knew that he would hold nothing back from Him. Abraham was willing to give everything to God, even his only son. He had shown his faith by obeying God without questioning.

Genesis 22:13

Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son

God provided a substitute; Abraham offered the ram instead of Isaac.

Ask: Why is this story in the Bible? What is this story a wonderful picture of?

God provided a substitute for us. God the Father sent His beloved Son, His only son, to die on the cross in our place. He was our Substitute. That's why we call Jesus, the Lamb of God.

Ask: In what ways was Isaac like Jesus?

Isaac allowed himself to be placed on the pile of wood; Jesus allowed Himself to be nailed to the wooden cross. Isaac was willing to die on the altar; Jesus was willing to die for your sins and mine on the cross.

God never intended to allow Abraham to kill his son. God's command to sacrifice Isaac was to foreshadow God's sacrifice of His own Son.

God the Father sent His beloved Son, His only son, to die on the cross in our place. Jesus was our Substitute. That's why we call Him, the Lamb of God. God provided the perfect sacrifice to take our place.

Abraham had faith to obey God even when it was difficult. God was testing Abraham to see if he would be willing to give up his son, just as God the Father gave His Son.

Closing Prayer

Lord, help us to show our faith in You by obeying You even when it's hard. Help us to put our faith in You even though we don't understand

why things happen the way they do. Help others to know by our actions this week that we are trusting in You, Lord. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Game Center

Musical Chairs

Preparation:

1. Number paper squares, one for each child, and tape them to the front of each chair so the number is visible to you.
2. Place the chairs in a circle.
3. Divide the children in to teams. (For example, Boys against Girls.)

Procedure:

- Have the children walk around the chairs as you play music. (Not as separate teams, but all the children mixed up together.)
- When the music stops, have the children quickly find a chair to sit in. Only one student per chair.
- Roll dice to see which child gets to answer the question. (Depending on the number of children, you may need more than one dice.)
- For a correctly answered question the child gets 100 points for their team.

Or, use the following questions in another game or discussion:

Review Questions:

1. Why did God's promise that Abraham's descendants would be a great nation seem impossible? (He was 75 when he got the promise and when he was 100 he still hadn't had any children!)
2. What does the name "Isaac" mean and why did Sarah call him that? (Isaac means "laughter." Sarah thought it was funny that she had a child at the age of 90.)
3. How long did Abraham and Sarah have to wait for God to fulfill His promise? (25 years)
4. How did God test Abraham's faith? (God asked Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering.)
5. Why did God test Abraham's faith? (God tested Abraham's faith to strengthen and confirm it **to** Abraham because He knew that Abraham was going to need to have stronger faith. God was testing Abraham to see if he would be willing to give up his son, just as God the Father gave His Son.)
6. Do you think Abraham understood God's purposes? (No!)
7. If Abraham didn't understand why God was asking him to sacrifice his son, why did Abraham obey God? (Because he trusted God and believed God had a good reason to ask him to do such a thing. He had faith in God.)
8. Why does God test our faith? (To strengthen our faith. When our faith is confirmed we are better able to help others who are going through hard times.)
9. What helps us to have the faith we need to obey God even when it's hard? (Remembering He is in control of all things and has a special plan that He is carrying out in each of our lives.)
10. When you live by faith in God that means you truly believe God's promises. What are some of the promises of God? (He will never leave you, always comfort you, strengthen you, supply all your needs, be your helper, direct your paths...)
11. Why didn't Isaac fight off his father when Abraham tied him to the altar? (Isaac had complete confidence in his father and he knew that his father trusted God.)
12. What did God do when Abraham raised the knife to kill Isaac? (God provided a sheep, a substitute.)
13. Why is this story in the Bible? What is this story a wonderful picture of? (God provided a substitute for us. God the Father sent His beloved Son, His only son, to die on the cross in our place. He was our Substitute. That's why we call Jesus, the Lamb of God.)
14. In what ways was Isaac like Jesus? (Isaac allowed himself to be placed on the pile of wood; Jesus allowed Himself to be nailed to the wooden cross. Isaac was willing to die on the altar; Jesus was willing to die for your sins and mine on the cross.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]

Isaac Gets a Bride

(Genesis 24)

Introduction

Our lesson this morning is about God's supernatural guidance.

Did you know that God is with you every minute of every day? He never leaves you. He is always leading you and guiding you through your day, even when you don't realize it. Nothing happens by accident. Every person you meet during the day and everything that happens to you is part of His great plan for your life.

God is constantly leading us away from danger for our protection or He's leading us into a place of blessing. He either wants to provide for us or He wants to use us as a blessing for someone else.

Our job is to tune our spiritual ears so that we can clearly hear God speaking into our hearts and minds so that we don't miss out on anything God has planned for our lives.

Opening Prayer

Father, it is exciting to think that You are always with us and that nothing that happens to us during our day is an accident. We are here this morning in Sunday school, because this is part of Your wonderful plan for our lives. You want us to be here today to learn this wonderful lesson from the book of Genesis about Abraham and Isaac. Give us spiritual ears this morning to hear Your voice. Make us good students of Your word today. You are worthy to be trusted! In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. ⁶In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV).

Lesson

Last week we learned about how Abraham had faith to obey God even when it was difficult.

To review let me ask you some questions:

1. How was Abraham's faith tested? (God asked Abraham to offer his only son as a burnt offering.)
2. Why did God test Abraham's faith? (God tested Abraham's faith to see if he would obey God even if it was hard. Would Abraham be willing to give up his son, just as God the Father gave His Son?)
3. Did Abraham kill his son? (No! God provided a ram.)
4. Why is this story in the Bible? What is this story a wonderful picture of? (God provided a substitute for us. God the Father sent His beloved Son, His only son, to die on the cross in our place. He was our Substitute. That's why we call Jesus, the Lamb of God.)
5. In what ways was Isaac like Jesus? (Isaac allowed himself to be placed on the pile of wood; Jesus allowed Himself to be nailed to the wooden cross. Isaac was willing to die on the altar; Jesus was willing to die for your sins and mine on the cross.)

When Isaac grew to be a man, Abraham decided it was time to find his son a wife. Now, he didn't want Isaac to marry a woman from the new land they had moved to, he wanted Isaac to marry a woman from his own father's family who lived in Haran.

Genesis 24:1-4

Abraham was now a very old man, and the LORD had blessed him in every way. ²One day Abraham said to his oldest servant, the man in charge of his household, "Take an oath by putting your hand under my thigh. ³Swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not allow my son to marry one of these local Canaanite women. ⁴Go instead to my homeland, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my son Isaac."

Ask: Why didn't Abraham want his son, Isaac, to marry a Canaanite woman?

He didn't want Isaac to marry a woman of another faith. He knew that if Isaac married one of the local Canaanite girls who worshiped idols, Isaac might be led away from the only true God.

When you grow up, your parents will not want you to marry someone who is not a Christian. The Bible says we should not do that. It's for our own happiness.

But the servant was worried about going to a faraway country and finding just the right woman for Isaac and then being able to convince her to come away with him.

Genesis 24:5-7

The servant asked, "But what if I can't find a young woman who is willing to travel so far from home? Should I then take Isaac there to live among your relatives in the land you came from?" ⁶"No!" Abraham responded. *"Be careful never to take my son there. ⁷For the LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and my native land, solemnly promised to give this land to my descendants. He will send his angel ahead of you, and he will see to it that you find a wife there for my son.*

Abraham wasn't worried. He trusted God. He knew God would work out the details. He remembered how God had provided the ram.

Even when we can't see how things will work out, God can! And, we can trust Him. [Teacher, review the memory verse.]

So, the servant took off with a herd of camels loaded with the best of everything Abraham owned so he could impress the bride-to-be.

Genesis 24:10

Then he loaded ten of Abraham's camels with all kinds of expensive gifts from his master, and he traveled to distant Aram-naharaim. There he went to the town where Abraham's brother Nahor had settled. [Haran]

After traveling for a long time, the servant came to a well to get water for himself and his camels.

The servant knew that the young women from the village always come out to get water every evening. He may have wondered if this would be where he finds a wife for Isaac.

Genesis 24:11-12

He made the camels kneel beside a well just outside the town. It was evening, and the women were coming out to draw water. ¹²"O LORD, God of my master, Abraham," he prayed. "Please give me success today, and show unfailing love to my master, Abraham.

Watch what happens when the servant arrives. I want you to see how God leads and guides us in everything we do.

Genesis 24:13-14 [Servant prays to God...]

See, I am standing here beside this spring, and the young women of the town are coming out to draw water. ¹⁴This is my request. I will ask one of them, 'Please give me a drink from your jug.' If she says, 'Yes, have a drink, and I will water your camels, too!'—let her be the one you have selected as Isaac's wife. This is how I will know that you have shown unfailing love to my master."

The servant prayed and asked God to point out the right girl in a very unusual way, did he?

Ask: Have you ever asked God for something specific like that? I have! I've said, "Lord, when I get to the busy mall, will you provide a parking place right by the door for me?" And, as I drive up, there's a car pulling out of the perfect parking place.

God loves to answer our prayers! So, let's see what happened.

Genesis 24:15-17

Before he had finished praying, he saw a young woman named Rebekah coming out with her water jug on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel, who was the son of Abraham's brother Nahor and his wife, Milcah. ¹⁶Rebekah was very beautiful and old enough to be married, but she was still a virgin. She went down to the spring, filled her jug, and

came up again. ¹⁷Running over to her, the servant said, "Please give me a little drink of water from your jug."

The servant is now testing to see if God had heard his request. Let's see what Rebekah does...

Genesis 24:18-19

"Yes, my lord," she answered, "have a drink." And she quickly lowered her jug from her shoulder and gave him a drink. ¹⁹When she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels, too, until they have had enough to drink."

So, it happened just as the servant asked of God! After the camels had all they could drink, the servant gave Rebekah some gifts.

Genesis 24:22

Then at last, when the camels had finished drinking, he took out a gold ring for her nose and two large gold bracelets for her wrists.

[5.5 oz gold @ \$2,861 per oz = approx. \$16K]

Ask: Why did the servant choose the sign of drawing water for camels?

The servant was looking for a woman of good character to be the wife for Isaac.

Those camels were probably very thirsty after such a long journey. Providing water for 10 thirsty camels would have been a huge job. She probably had to draw up 250 gallons of water for that many animals! Yet she offered to do this big job for a total stranger. And, she did it without complaining. And, it doesn't say that she had anyone helping her.

Her act of kindness tells us something important about her character. She could see that those animals were very thirsty. That shows us she was very compassionate.

And giving 10 thirsty camels enough water until they were completely satisfied probably took many hours of hard work. That shows us she was not selfish.

Ask: Do you ever notice when someone around you needs some help? Maybe a total stranger is struggling to get their groceries loaded in their car. Or someone here at church needs help getting in the front door.

God wants us to be observant. There are people all around us that need our help.

Rebekah's actions showed that she was kind, and a very hard worker, just the right person for his master's son.

Then the servant asked the girl if her family could put him up for the night. So, she invited him home. And, as it turns out, she was from Abraham's relatives. The Lord had led the servant right to the very house of Abraham's brothers!

God leads and guides each of us day by day! Nothing happens to us by mistake. Every person you meet during each and every day is part of God's wonderful plan for your life.

So, when the servant got to Rebekah's home, he told her family what had happened.

Genesis 24:37-40

And my master made me take an oath. He said, 'Do not allow my son to marry one of these local Canaanite women. ³⁸Go instead to my father's house, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my son.' ³⁹But I said to my master, 'What if I can't find a young woman who is willing to go back with me?' ⁴⁰He responded, 'The LORD, in whose presence I have lived, will send his angel with you and will make your mission successful. Yes, you must find a wife for my son from among my relatives, from my father's family.'

After the servant explained all that to Rebekah's family, they were all for this marriage.

Genesis 24:51

Here is Rebekah; take her and go. Yes, let her be the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has directed."

But Rebekah's parents wanted to see what Rebekah thought about this marriage to Isaac.

Genesis 24:57-58

"Well," they said, "we'll call Rebekah and ask her what she thinks." ⁵⁸So they called Rebekah. "Are you willing to go with this man?" they asked her. And she replied, "Yes, I will go."

Ask: Why was Rebekah willing to go with this man to a place she had never been?

Rebekah recognized that marrying Isaac was God's divine plan and she didn't want to waste any time following it. She immediately agreed to go with Isaac's servant.

So, the servant brought Rebekah to Isaac and she became his wife and he loved her deeply.

Ask: Has God ever prompted you to talk to someone about the Lord or to do some random act of kindness for someone?

When God leads us to do something, we should be quick to obey God without questioning Him, just like Rebekah did. His plans always lead to blessings as He works out all things for our good.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, we find such comfort in knowing that You are always with us leading us and guiding us through every day. We pray that we will see Your hand in each and everything that happens to us and every person we meet along the way each day. We don't want to miss any special plan you have for us. Help us to keep our spiritual eyes and ears open to the things of You, God. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CRAFT CORNER

GAME CENTER

Pictionary

Write the names of people, objects, songs, and places from the story on 3x5 cards. For example: camel, pitcher, bracelet, well, wedding, water, daughter, Isaac, servant, Canaan, The servant meeting Rebekah.

Have one student at a time pick a card. The student will try and draw the word on the board, while other students guess what it is. You can divide the class into teams if you'd like, or simply award tokens to the first student to guess. Or do the drawing yourself and have the students guess.

Or, use the following questions in another game or discussion:

Review Questions:

1. Who sent the servant? (Abraham)
2. Who was the servant looking for? (A wife for Isaac)
3. What animals did the servant lead? (Camels)
4. Why didn't Abraham want Isaac to marry a woman from the new land of Canaan? (He didn't want Isaac to marry a woman of another faith. He knew that if Isaac married one of the local Canaanite girls who worshiped idols, Isaac might be led away from the only true God.)
5. How did the servant know which girl was the one for Isaac? (He prayed to God, "When I ask a girl for a drink and she says, 'Yes, certainly, and I will also water your camels,' let her be the one who

will become Isaac's wife." And, then, Rebekah came out with her pitcher on her shoulder... so it happened just as the servant asked of God!)

6. What gifts did the servant give Rebekah? (A gold nose ring and bracelet.)
7. Why did the servant choose the sign of drawing water for camels? (Providing water for 10 thirsty camels would have been a huge job. She probably had to draw up 250 gallons of water for that many animals! Yet she offered to do this big job for a total stranger. And, she did it without complaining. That showed she was not only kind, but also a very hard worker, just the right person for his master's son.)
8. What are some examples in our lesson today of how God leads and guides each of us day by day? (God led his servant to the right village, the right well and the right girl.)
9. What sign did the servant ask for? (That the girl would offer him and his camels water.)
10. What did the servant give Rebekah? (Bracelets and a nose ring)
11. Why did Abraham send the servant so far away? (He wanted Isaac's wife to worship God, like his family there did.)
12. Why did the servant ask God for a sign? (To be sure the girl was God's choice.)

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Rebekah

A Good Answer

A young woman went out every afternoon to draw water from the well. It was hard work, and she had plenty to do to get enough water for her own family and their animals. She might have been rude to the stranger who asked her to draw water for him, but read Genesis 24:1-52 to see how her gracious answer led her to become the mother to generations "as numerous as the stars."

Then you can answer the questions by building words from the syllables listed below. Each of the syllables will be used only once. The number of blanks after each question shows the number of letters in the answer. The number in parentheses tells you how many syllables are in the answer.

(A)	a	ah	ban	bek	(bra)
brace	cam	els	(namp)	l	La
lets	Re	rel	saac	tives	

1. Who sent the stranger? A b r a h a m (3)
2. For whom was the stranger looking for a wife? _____ (2)
3. What animals did the stranger lead? _____ (2)
4. What gold gifts did the stranger give her? _____ (2)
5. The stranger praised the Lord because He had led him to the house of his master's
_____. (3)
6. What was her brother's name? _____ (2)
7. Who was this gracious and courteous young woman? _____ (3)



Jacob Gets Esau's Birthright

(Genesis 25:21-34)

Introduction

Have you ever been tricked? How does it feel when a friend tricks you or lies to you? What happened to your friendship?

Today we've got a lesson about how one brother tricks another into selling something of great value. And we are going to learn that God always wants us to forgive people who sin against us.

Opening Prayer

Lord, sometimes it is hard to forgive someone when they have wronged us. Help us to remember how much You have forgiven us so that we might have the grace to forgive them. Open our spiritual eyes and ears this morning so that we might learn more about how wonderful You are. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Deceit fills hearts that are plotting evil; joy fills hearts that are planning peace! (Proverbs 12:20 NLT)

Lesson

Last week we learned about how Abraham found a bride for his son, Isaac. To review let me ask you some questions:

1. Abraham didn't want Isaac to marry a woman from the land of Canaan. Why was that? (He didn't want Isaac to marry a woman of another faith. He knew that if Isaac married one of the local Canaanite girls who worshiped idols, Isaac might be lead away from the only true God.)
2. So Abraham sent his servant back to his homeland to find a wife for Isaac. How did the servant know which girl was the one for Isaac? (He prayed to God, "When I ask a girl for a drink and she

says, 'Yes, certainly, and I will water your camels, too,' let her be the one who will become Isaac's wife." Then, Rebekah came out with her pitcher on her shoulder... so it happened just as the servant asked of God!)

3. God led the servant to the right village, the right well, and the right girl. God leads and guides each of us every day, too. But what do we have to do to get His direction? (Pray, ask, listen, and obey)

So Isaac and Rebekah were married. But, just like Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah were not able to have children. We'll pick up the story at the point where they had been married for 20 years and still God hadn't given them any children.

Genesis 25:21

Isaac pleaded with the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was unable to have children. The LORD answered Isaac's prayer, and Rebekah became pregnant with twins.

Like Sarah, Rebekah couldn't have children. So, Isaac begged the Lord for a child. And, God answered their prayers. Rebekah had not one baby, but two! She had twins.

Genesis 25:22

But the two children struggled with each other in her womb. So she went to ask the LORD about it. "Why is this happening to me?" she asked.

Rebekah asked the Lord why the babies inside her stomach felt as if they were at war with one another. Listen to what God told her:

Genesis 25:23

And the LORD told her, "The sons in your womb will become two nations. From the very beginning, the two nations will be rivals. One nation will be stronger than the other; and your older son will serve your younger son."

God told Rebekah that the two sons that would be born to her would become two enemy nations. One would be stronger than the other; and the older shall be a servant of the younger! This is a very important prediction that the Lord gave. And the meaning of it will become clearer to you as we go on with the story. But, notice that

God said this was going to be true so we know that it would happen. God never lies and He's always right. He never makes mistakes.

Genesis 25:24-26

And when the time came to give birth, Rebekah discovered that she did indeed have twins! ²⁵The first one was very red at birth and covered with thick hair like a fur coat. So they named him Esau. ²⁶Then the other twin was born with his hand grasping Esau's heel. So they named him Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when the twins were born.

Esau was hairy and Jacob was smooth-skinned. Let's read on...

Genesis 25:27-28

As the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter. He was an outdoorsman, but Jacob had a quiet temperament, preferring to stay at home. ²⁸Isaac loved Esau because he enjoyed eating the wild game Esau brought home, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

So you see, Isaac favored Esau because he liked to go hunting and would bring home good meat for him to eat. And, Rebekah favored Jacob. He probably helped his mother around the house with the cooking.

One day Jacob was cooking up a delicious meal when Esau came in from hunting, and Jacob tricked Esau into selling him something of great value. Let's see what happens....

Genesis 25:29-34

One day when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau arrived home from the wilderness exhausted and hungry. ³⁰Esau said to Jacob, "I'm starved! Give me some of that red stew!" (This is how Esau got his other name, Edom, which means "red.") ³¹"All right," Jacob replied, "but trade me your rights as the firstborn son." ³²"Look, I'm dying of starvation!" said Esau. "What good is my birthright to me now?" ³³But Jacob said, "First you must swear that your birthright is mine." So Esau swore an oath, thereby selling all his rights as the firstborn to his brother, Jacob. ³⁴Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and lentil stew. Esau ate the meal, then got up and left. He showed contempt for his rights as the firstborn.

A birthright was a special honor given to the firstborn son. It meant you got twice as much as the others of the inheritance money when your parents died. It also meant you had the responsibility of becoming the family leader. With privilege comes responsibility!

All of this Esau gave up because he wanted something to eat "right now." He just didn't appreciate the value of his birthright.

Esau sold something that would have lasted for a lifetime for some food that would last only for a few hours! Someday he would be very sorry he didn't stop and think about what he was doing. He acted too quickly and suffered for it.

Let me give you an example that might help. [Teacher, hold up a giant-sized candy bar.] What will you give me for this? [Let the bidding begin!] Keep in mind, I stopped at the store and purchased this for \$2.50 on my way to Sunday school. [Try to keep the bidding reasonable! Once you've established the value of the candy bar, continue...] OK, who has a really nice bicycle at home? Would you trade me your bicycle for this candy bar? Your bicycle will last you for years, maybe even a life time... but the memory of eating this candy bar will be gone in an hour or so!

When we see something we want, our first impulse is to get it. But immediate pleasure often loses sight of the future. We should think before we act! Esau didn't appreciate the blessings he had. He was too quick to trade the most valuable thing in his life for a bowl of stew.

There's a lesson here for us: If you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, God has given you a birthright. You now are "born again" and get to live forever and ever in Heaven when you die. Don't treat your birthright lightly! Appreciate it with all your might. The things of the world are going to look very appealing to you as you go through life, but don't sell out! Don't trade your birthright for something as worthless as Esau did.

Ask: What are some ways that you and I can disregard or disrespect our birthright as Christians? [Teacher, let the children respond.] Jesus died on the cross so that you and I could have our sins forgiven. When we deliberately sin, it is as if we have slapped Jesus in the face. When we grumble or complain, it is as if we have said that what Jesus did for us on the cross wasn't good enough. Anytime we say anything, or do anything, or even think anything that is not God-pleasing is disrespecting our birthright.

To bring it back to our lesson this morning, one way we can show God that we appreciate all He has done for us, is to forgive people that sin against us.

Esau sinned against God by disregarding his birthright. Because he didn't cherish the value of it, he was willing to sell it for a bowl of soup. But, Jacob sinned against Esau by tricking him into selling his birthright. If you have ever been tricked or lied to, God wants you to forgive that person, just like he forgives you of your sins.

We're going to learn more about how Jacob and Esau finally forgive one another in a few weeks. But next week we will continue the story of Jacob and Esau and we'll discover that things get even worse. Their mother takes matters into her hands and really does some bad things, too. But, in spite of their sins, God blesses Jacob and makes of him a great nation, just as God promised. It just goes to show that God's blessings come to us not because we've done good things; it comes to us because He chooses to bless us. He loves us with an everlasting love. And, nothing we do or don't do can change His mind about us.

CLOSING PRAYER

Help us, Lord, to always be truthful. Don't let us follow Jacob's example of being a deceiver. Father, we are so glad You are loving and forgiving. Thank You for sending Jesus who has taken the punishment for our sins when He died on the cross. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

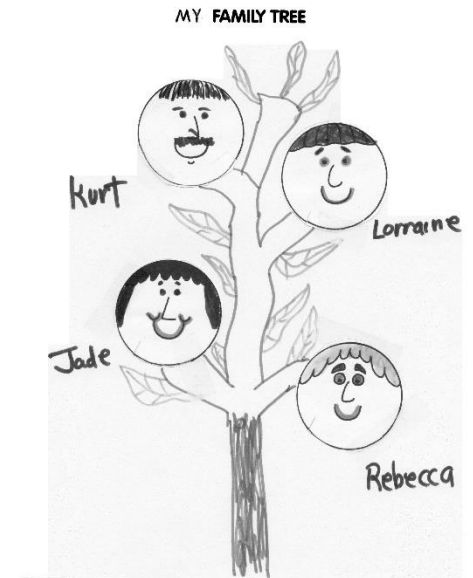
LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CRAFT CORNER

Have each child create a Family Tree.

GAME CENTER

Nerf Dodge Ball. Have the children stand in a circle. Throw a Nerf ball at a child. If he gets hit, he must answer the review question for a piece of candy. Then that child gets to throw the ball at another child. And so forth until all the children have had a chance to win a piece of candy for answering a review question.



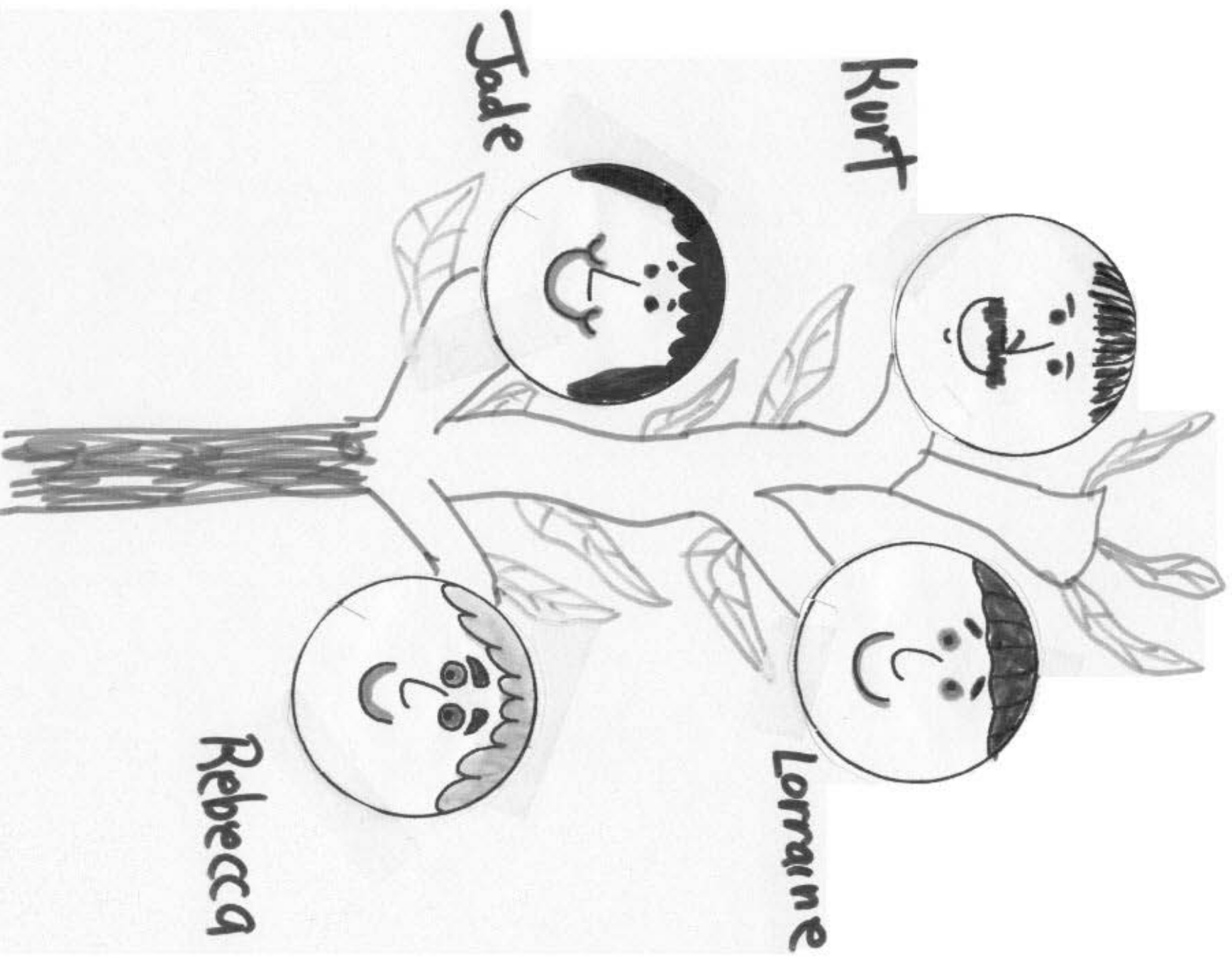
Review Questions

1. Tell me the names of Abraham's descendants that we've learned about so far. (His son, Isaac, married Rebekah and they had two sons, Esau and Jacob.)
2. What did God promise Abraham? (His descendants would become a great nation.)
3. What did God promise Rebekah concerning her sons? (They would become enemy nations and the younger one would rule over the older.)
4. Which one of the twins was hairy? (Esau)
5. Why did Isaac favor Esau? (Because he liked to go hunting and would bring home good meat for him to eat.)

6. Why did Rebekah favor Jacob? (Because he liked to help her around the house.)
7. How did Jacob trick his older brother? (Esau came in from hunting and was really hungry. So, Jacob said he'd give him something to eat if Esau would sell him his birthright.)
8. What is a birthright? (A special honor given to the firstborn son which entitled him to twice as much inheritance as his siblings.)
9. What was Esau's sin? (He sold something of great lasting value for food to satisfy for only a few hours.)
10. What can we learn from Esau's sin? (Don't be impulsive. Think before you act. Also, he didn't appreciate the privilege he had of being the firstborn son.)
11. What was Jacob's sin? (He tricked his brother into selling the birthright to him. He didn't need to be crafty to help God fulfill His promise. It's not good to take matters into our own hands.)
12. What can we learn from Jacob's sin? (Don't trick people into doing something they shouldn't do. Let God fulfill His great plan for your life in His time and in His way.)
13. What's our memory verse for today? (Proverbs 12:20)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]

MY FAMILY TREE



Jacob Gets Esau's Blessing

(Genesis 27)

Introduction

Have you ever been really naughty? Think about the worst sin you've ever committed? Did you know that there is no sin too big or too awful for God to forgive? God's love and mercy are greater than any sin. And He promises to forgive anybody for any sin they confess. And, when He forgives a sin, He forgets completely about it.

This morning, we are going to learn about a terrible sin that Jacob and his mother, Rebekah, commit. Yet, God keeps His promise to Abraham and blesses Jacob anyway in spite of what he did. And, we shall see that God blesses us because He loves us with an everlasting love.

Opening Prayer

Lord, open our spiritual eyes and ears this morning so that we might learn more about how wonderful You are. Lord, we all sin and fall short of perfection. You know that we make bad and wrong choices every day. Thank you, Lord, that Your mercies are new every morning and that You will always be faithful to us, even when we fail You. Show us, this morning, Lord, just how loving and kind You are towards us. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. (Lamentations 3:22-23 NLT)

Lesson

We've been studying about the Fathers of our Faith.

To review let me ask you some questions:

1. Who was the very first Jew? (Abraham)
2. Who were his descendants? (His son, Isaac, married Rebekah and they had two sons, Esau and Jacob.)
3. What did God promise Rebekah concerning her sons before they were even born? (They would become enemy nations and the younger one would rule over the older.)
4. Which one of the twins was hairy? (Esau)
5. Which son did Isaac favor? (Esau)
6. Which one did Rebekah favor? (Jacob)
7. Last week we learned about how Jacob tricked Esau into selling his birthright. What's a birthright? (A special honor given to the firstborn son which entitled him to twice as much inheritance as his siblings.)

Esau sinned against God by disregarding his birthright. Because he didn't value it, he was willing to sell it for a bowl of soup. And, Jacob sinned against Esau by tricking him into selling his birthright.

Now we pick up the story many years later, when their father, Isaac, was very old and almost blind. Let's read together...

Genesis 27:1-4

One day when Isaac was old and turning blind, he called for Esau, his older son, and said, "My son." "Yes, Father?" Esau replied. ²"I am an old man now," Isaac said, "and I don't know when I may die. ³Take your bow and a quiver full of arrows, and go out into the open country to hunt some wild game for me. ⁴Prepare my favorite dish, and bring it here for me to eat. Then I will pronounce the blessing that belongs to you, my firstborn son, before I die."

Isaac knew that he would soon die and before he did, he wanted to give his firstborn son the birthright blessing.

Although Jacob had bought the birthright from his older brother years before for a pot of stew, he still needed his father's blessing to make it legal.

But Rebekah was listening; she was eavesdropping on Isaac and Esau's conversation.

Genesis 27:5-7

But Rebekah overheard what Isaac had said to his son Esau. So when Esau left to hunt for the wild game, ⁶she said to her son Jacob, "Listen. I overheard your father say to Esau, ⁷'Bring me some wild game and prepare me a delicious meal. Then I will bless you in the LORD's presence before I die.'"

Rebekah knew that God had told her, before the boys were even born, that Jacob would be ruler over Esau, but she failed to trust that God could accomplish His goals on His own. So, she took matters into her own hands and came up with a plan...

Genesis 27:8-10

Now, my son, listen to me. Do exactly as I tell you. ⁹Go out to the flocks, and bring me two fine young goats. I'll use them to prepare your father's favorite dish. ¹⁰Then take the food to your father so he can eat it and bless you before he dies."

Rebekah came up with a plan to help God. She quickly devised a plan to trick her husband into blessing her favorite son, Jacob. She did something wrong to try to bring about what God had already said would happen. She didn't want to do a bad thing; she was trying to help God out! But listen, kids, it is NEVER right to do wrong.

Let's say you know of a family that was really poor. They do not even have enough money to buy food to eat. You can see their needs and you want to help them out. So, you decide to steal some food from the grocery store. When you steal for a good purpose like that does it make it right? No! It is NEVER right to do wrong.

Unfortunately, Jacob wasn't concerned about doing a wrong thing. He was more afraid of getting caught by his dad...

Genesis 27:11-12

"But look," Jacob replied to Rebekah, "my brother, Esau, is a hairy man, and my skin is smooth. ¹²What if my father touches me? He'll see that I'm trying to trick him, and then he'll curse me instead of blessing me."

Jacob seemed more worried about getting caught than about doing what was right. He didn't seem concerned about the dishonesty of his mother's plan; instead, he was more afraid of getting in trouble with his earthly dad than with God, the Father.

If you are ever worried about getting caught, you are probably not doing something that is honest. You need to let your fear of getting caught be a warning to do right.

Genesis 27:13

But his mother replied, "Then let the curse fall on me, my son! Just do what I tell you. Go out and get the goats for me!"

Rebekah and Jacob had become so wrapped up in this plan that they no longer saw clearly what they were doing. Sin had trapped them. And Jacob did what his mother told him to do. He brought her the goats and she fixed the meat his father's favorite way.

Genesis 27:14-17

So Jacob went out and got the young goats for his mother. Rebekah took them and prepared a delicious meal, just the way Isaac liked it. ¹⁵Then she took Esau's favorite clothes, which were there in the house, and gave them to her younger son, Jacob. ¹⁶She covered his arms and the smooth part of his neck with the skin of the young goats. ¹⁷Then she gave Jacob the delicious meal, including freshly baked bread.

Rebekah made a pair of gloves from the hairy skin of the goats and she also fastened a strip of the hairy skin around his neck.

Genesis 27:18

So Jacob took the food to his father. "My father?" he said. "Yes, my son," Isaac answered. "Who are you—Esau or Jacob?"

Isaac wanted to make sure which son was in the room with him...

Genesis 27:19-20

Jacob replied, "It's Esau, your firstborn son. I've done as you told me. Here is the wild game. Now sit up and eat it so you can give me your blessing." ²⁰Isaac asked, "How did you find it so quickly, my son?" "The LORD your God put it in my path!" Jacob replied.

Jacob lied! He told a bold-faced lie to his father!

Genesis 27:21-23

Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come closer so I can touch you and make sure that you really are Esau." ²²So Jacob went closer to his father, and Isaac touched him. "The voice is Jacob's, but the hands are Esau's," Isaac said. ²³But he did not recognize Jacob, because Jacob's hands felt hairy just like Esau's. So Isaac prepared to bless Jacob.

So, Isaac thought it was Esau and gave Jacob this blessing...

Genesis 27:29

May many nations become your servants, and may they bow down to you. May you be the master over your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. All who curse you will be cursed, and all who bless you will be blessed."

This blessing has come down through the children of Israel right to this day. Everyone who curses the people of Israel is cursed by God and those that bless them are blessed by God.

As soon as Isaac blessed Jacob, Esau came in with the meat for his father and he found out he was too late.

Genesis 27:30

As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and almost before Jacob had left his father, Esau returned from his hunt.

When Esau found out he was too late, he was very unhappy. He asked his father for a blessing also...

Genesis 27:34-36

When Esau heard his father's words, he let out a loud and bitter cry. "Oh my father, what about me? Bless me, too!" he begged. ³⁵But Isaac said, "Your brother was here, and he tricked me. He has taken away your blessing." ³⁶Esau exclaimed, "No wonder his name is Jacob, for now he has cheated me twice. First he took my rights as the firstborn, and now he has stolen my blessing. Oh, haven't you saved even one blessing for me?"

But, Isaac said it was too late.

Genesis 27:37

Isaac said to Esau, "I have made Jacob your master and have declared that all his brothers will be his servants. I have guaranteed him an abundance of grain and wine—what is left for me to give you, my son?"

This really upset Esau...

Genesis 27:41

From that time on, Esau hated Jacob because their father had given Jacob the blessing. And Esau began to scheme: "I will soon be mourning my father's death. Then I will kill my brother, Jacob."

Esau threatened that as soon as his father died, he would go after Jacob to kill him. Jealous anger blinds us from seeing the blessings we have. When Esau lost the valuable family blessing, his future suddenly changed. Esau was so angry at Jacob that he failed to see his own wrong in giving away the birthright in the first place. So, Rebekah told Jacob to flee for his life.

Genesis 27:42-43

But Rebekah heard about Esau's plans. So she sent for Jacob and told him, "Listen, Esau is consoling himself by plotting to kill you. ⁴³So listen carefully, my son. Get ready and flee to my brother, Laban, in Haran.

So, Jacob had to run for his life!

Let's talk about the consequences of sins:

Rebekah suffered for her bad choice; she never got to see her beloved son Jacob ever again.

Esau suffered for selling his birthright for a pot of stew! He became bitter and angry and eventually became the founder of an enemy nation, just like God had told Rebekah before the twins were born.

Jacob paid a huge price for carrying out this dishonest plan:

- He never got to see his mother again.
- His brother wanted to kill him.
- His family became torn by strife.
- He was separated from his family for many years.

Jacob would have received the birthright and blessing anyway; God had promised it and God always comes through with His promises. Imagine how different his life would have been had he and his mother waited for God to work His way, in His time.

Later on Jacob and Esau get reunited and reconciled to one another. And God forgives them for their sinful ways.

It is NEVER right to wrong. But this is how God's promise to Abraham got passed down first to his son, Isaac, then to his grandson, Jacob.

Let's read the blessing together...

Genesis 28:3-4

May God Almighty bless you and give you many children. And may your descendants multiply and become many nations! ⁴May God pass on to you and your descendants the blessings he promised to Abraham. May you own this land where you are now living as a foreigner, for God gave this land to Abraham."

God can and does make all things work together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

Once again, let me point out that God's blessings come to us not because we've done good things; not because we're so righteous and holy; they come to us because God chooses to bless us. He loves us with an everlasting love. And, nothing we do or don't do can change His mind about us. Isn't that something to thank Him for? Let's thank Him together right now!

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, we are so glad You are loving and forgiving. Thank You for sending Jesus who has taken the punishment for our sins when He died on the cross. God, help us to appreciate all You've done for us in making it possible to be with You in Heaven. Lord, we don't want to take our blessings lightly, like Esau did. He sold his birthright for a pot of stew. Don't let us be tempted to sell our birthright for something the world has to offer us.

Help us also, Lord, to always be truthful. Don't let us follow Jacob's example of being a deceiver. And thank You, Lord, for making all things work together for good for those who love You and are called according to Your purpose -- even our sins and the bad choices we make. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CRAFT CORNER

Make a journal – a blessing book where the children can either write a "Thank You" note to Jesus or draw pictures of all the blessings they have.

GAME CENTER

Ping Pong Ball Toss

Write point numbers in the cups of two egg cartons. Place the two cartons long sides together. Divide the children into two teams. Give a child from each team 3 tosses of the ball for every right answer. The team with the highest points gets two pieces of candy while the other team gets one piece.

Review Questions

1. What was it that Isaac wanted to give his first-born son before he died? (The birthright blessing)
2. Why did Jacob need his father's blessing if he already bought the birthright from Esau for a pot of stew years earlier? (To make it legal)
3. Why was Rebekah anxious for Jacob to get the blessing instead of Esau? (God had told her before the boys were born that the younger would rule over the older.)
4. What was Rebekah's sin? (She took matters into her own hands. She resorted to doing something wrong to try to bring about what God had already said would happen.)
5. What was Rebekah's plan? (She knew that Isaac was almost blind and wouldn't know which son was before him.)
6. What was Jacob's sin? (He was more worried about getting caught than about doing what was right.)
7. What does it probably mean if you are worried about getting caught doing something? (You are probably not doing something honest!)
8. What was the blessing that Isaac gave to Jacob? (That he would be master over his brother and, everyone who is good to him would be blessed of God.)
9. What happened as soon as Jacob got the blessing? (Esau came in with the meal for his father and found out he was too late.)
10. What was Esau's sin? How did Esau react to the situation? (First of all, he shouldn't have given away the birthright. But then, he was so angry, he hated his brother Jacob, and wanted to kill him.)
11. What did God do and why? (God blessed Jacob in spite of his sins. Why? Because God always keeps His promises. He had promised Abraham that He would bless Abraham's descendants. So, He did.)
12. Do any of us deserve to be blessed of God? (No! But, "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness." Lamentations 3:22-23 NIV)

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Jacob's Dream

(Genesis 28)

Introduction

When you sleep do you ever dream? Sometimes we have good dreams and sometimes we have scary dreams. (Let the children talk about their dreams.) Sometimes God speaks to people through their dreams. Well, this morning we're going to learn about Jacob's beautiful dream and the special meaning it had for him.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for speaking to us in so many ways. You are always so faithful to let us know what's on Your heart. This morning, I pray that we can hear Your voice through reading Your word, the Holy Bible. Give us good listening ears. Help us to listen with our hearts because I know You want to speak to each of us in a special way this morning. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

If we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. (1John 1:9)

Lesson

We've been learning about the children of Israel.

Let's review:

1. Who was the first Jew? (Abraham)
2. What was the promise God made to him? (That his descendants would be a great nation)
3. Who was Abraham's first descendant? (Isaac)
4. Who were Isaac's descendants? (Esau and Jacob)
5. Which one of the twins did the blessing go to? (Jacob)
6. Did Jacob deserve to be blessed by God? (No!)

7. What's that a picture of? (How none of us deserves God's blessings, but we get them anyhow because God chooses to love us in spite of the fact that we fall short of perfection.)

Last week we left the story with Jacob having tricked his father into giving him the special birthright blessing. And when Esau came home and found out that Isaac had given the blessing to Jacob, he wanted to kill Jacob. So, Rebekah told Jacob to run for his life.

Let's open our Bibles this morning to where we left off.

Genesis 28:1-2

So Isaac called for Jacob, blessed him, and said, "You must not marry any of these Canaanite women. ²Instead, go at once to Paddan-aram, to the house of your grandfather Bethuel, and marry one of your uncle Laban's daughters."

Remember that Abraham had felt the same way about Isaac as Isaac now feels about his son, Jacob. These fathers didn't want their sons to marry a woman of another faith. When it's time for you to get married, your parents aren't going to want you to marry someone who's not a Christian.

So, Isaac sent Jacob off with his blessing.

Genesis 28:3-4

"May God Almighty bless you and give you many children. And may your descendants multiply and become many nations! ⁴May God pass on to you and your descendants the blessings He promised to Abraham. May you own this land where you are now living as a foreigner, for God gave this land to Abraham."

Jacob went to his mother's family, to his uncle Laban's home in Haran.

Genesis 28:5

So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Paddan-aram to stay with his uncle Laban, his mother's brother, the son of Bethuel the Aramean.

Think of how sad and lonely Jacob was. Jacob must have been very sorry for his sins. His decision to deceive his father and get the birthright blessing from his brother, Esau, tore up his family. His father must have been really upset with him. And now, he was running away from home because his brother wanted to kill him. He was out on the road all by himself; completely alone.

Genesis 28:10-11

Meanwhile, Jacob left Beersheba and traveled toward Haran. ¹¹At sundown he arrived at a good place to set up camp and stopped there for the night. Jacob found a stone to rest his head against and lay down to sleep.

One evening he stopped to camp along the way. He didn't even have a bed to sleep in, no fluffy pillow to lay his head on. He had to find a smooth stone for a pillow and lay down on the ground to sleep. He must have been at the lowest point in his life.

Let's read how God comforts Jacob in a beautiful dream.

Genesis 28:12

As he slept, he dreamed of a stairway that reached from the earth up to heaven. And he saw the angels of God going up and down the stairway.

He dreamed that a stairway reached from the ground all the way into heaven. And on the long ladder he saw angels going up and down! And who do you think was at the top of the stairway?

Genesis 28:13-15

At the top of the stairway stood the LORD, and He said, "I am the LORD, the God of your grandfather Abraham, and the God of your father, Isaac. The ground you are lying on belongs to you. I am giving it to you and your descendants. ¹⁴Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth! They will spread out in all directions—to the west and the east, to the north and the south. And all the families of the earth will be blessed through you and your descendants. ¹⁵What's more, I am with you, and I will protect you wherever you go. One day I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have finished giving you everything I have promised you."

Wow, God spoke to Jacob in his dream and gave him the same blessing he had given to his grandfather, Abraham, and his father, Isaac.

God told Jacob that the ground he was lying on would be his for as far as he could see. And that through him all the people of the whole world would be blessed.

Who knows which one of Abraham's offspring God was speaking of? (Jesus!)

Genesis 28:16-17

Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I wasn't even aware of it!" ¹⁷But he was also afraid and said, "What an awesome place this is! It is none other than the house of God, the very gateway to heaven!"

Think how wonderful it must have been for Jacob to hear the voice of the Lord! He knew he'd sinned by tricking his brother and deceiving his father. But now, to hear from God personally, he knew that God loved him and forgave him.

Genesis 28:18-19

The next morning Jacob got up very early. He took the stone he had rested his head against, and he set it upright as a memorial pillar. Then he poured olive oil over it. He named that place Bethel (which means "house of God"), although the name of the nearby village was Luz.

Jacob never wanted to forget this beautiful dream and the special meaning it had for him.

Genesis 28:20-22

Then Jacob made this vow: "If God will indeed be with me and protect me on this journey, and if He will provide me with food and clothing, ²¹and if I return safely to my father's home, then the LORD will certainly be my God. ²²And this memorial pillar I have set up will become a place for worshiping God, and I will present to God a tenth of everything He gives me."

As Jacob continued his journey down the path to the strange, new, far-off land, Jacob felt like a different person inside because God had told him He would never leave him (vr 15). He knew that he was not alone anymore.

When you sin against someone, it's not enough to ask forgiveness from that person. You won't feel completely restored until you hear from God and know that He loves you and forgives you. That's why it's so important to remember our memory verse for this week! *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to*

cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9) God is ready and able to forgive you. All you need to do is tell Him all about it. He already knows everything about you anyway. He's just waiting for you to come to Him and ask for His forgiveness. And you will be cleansed! When God forgives your sins, He remembers your sin no more. He forgets about it as far as the East is from the West. You may remember it, but God will see you as if you'd never done it! He loves you with an everlasting love!

Let's pray....

CLOSING PRAYER

Father thank You for Your love. Thank You that we are never alone. Even when we're naughty, You never leave us. Thank You that You are always willing to forgive us. Help us to learn our memory verse this week so that we will always remember how faithful You are towards us. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

GAME CENTER

Big Question Mark —

On a big poster board, make a huge question mark with little slits. In the slits place small coin-shaped pieces that have point values on them. For every correct answer, the team gets to choose a piece for points. Zonk! Means none.



Or use the following review questions in another game of your choice:

Review Questions

1. Who was the first Jew? (Abraham)
2. What was the promise God made to him? (That his descendants would be a great nation)

3. Who was Abraham's first descendant? (Isaac)
4. Who were Isaac's descendants? (Esau and Jacob)
5. Which one of the twins did the blessing go to? (Jacob)
6. Did Jacob deserve to be blessed by God? (No!)
7. What's that a picture of? (None of us deserves God's blessings, but we get them anyhow because God chooses to love us in spite of the fact that we fall short of perfection.)
8. Why did Jacob have to flee from home? (His brother, Esau, wanted to kill him.)
9. When Jacob was traveling to Haran, what did he use for a pillow one night? (A stone)
10. What did Jacob dream about that night? (A ladder was set up on earth that reached to heaven and angels were going up and down the ladder.)
11. Where did the dream stairway lead up to? (Heaven)
12. Who was on the stairway in the dream? (Angels)
13. What were the angels on the stairway doing? (Ascending and descending; going up and down.)
14. Who was at the top of the ladder? (God!)
15. Where was the bottom of the stairway? (On earth.)
16. Who talked to Jacob in his dream? (The Lord God.)
17. How did God identify himself to Jacob? That is, who does God say that He is? (The Lord, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac.)
18. What did God say that He would give to Jacob? (The land on which he was lying.)
19. What did God promise that Jacob's descendants would be like? (The dust of the earth.)

20. Who will be blessed through Jacob? (All peoples on earth everywhere.)
21. Who was with Jacob while he was running from home? (The Lord God.)
22. How did Jacob feel when he woke up from the dream? (Afraid)
23. What is our Memory Verse for today?
24. What are two of the three ways that Jacob described the place where he dreamed. (Awesome; the house of God; and the gate of heaven.)
25. In the morning, what are the two things Jacob did with the stone he had slept on? (Set it up as a pillar; poured oil on it.)
26. What are the two important things that Jacob vowed or promised to God? (The Lord will be his God; he will give God a tenth of all that God gives him.)
27. What two things did Jacob expect God to give him on his journey? (Food and clothes.)
28. Where did Jacob expect God to bring him back to? (His father, Jacob's house.)
29. How did Jacob feel when he awoke from the dream? (He felt loved and forgiven by God. He felt like a new person inside because God had told him he was not alone.)

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Jacob Gets Two Wives

(Genesis 29:1-30)

Introduction

Have you ever played a trick on someone? (Let the children tell a few instances of tricking someone or being tricked.) Was it a funny trick or a nasty trick? Sometimes when you play a trick on someone it is funny – but sometimes it isn't funny. Sometimes it really hurts.

Remember that Jacob tricked his brother, Esau, into selling him his birthright and then he tricked his father into giving him the birthright blessing instead of giving it to Esau. Those were not funny tricks, were they? Esau was so angry, in fact, that he planned to kill Jacob.

This morning we'll be learning that the tables get turned on Jacob and a very mean trick is played on him.

Opening Prayer

Lord, thank You for giving us these interesting stories in the Bible. Help us to learn the lessons You have for us this morning as we study Your word. Don't let us go away from here without changing us in some way. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

Lesson

We've been learning about the Fathers of our Faith. [Teacher, review the lesson series up to this point.]

Last week we left the story off with Jacob traveling to Haran to look for his uncle Laban.

Open your bibles to Genesis 29.

Genesis 29:1-3

Then Jacob hurried on, finally arriving in the land of the east. ²He saw a well in the distance. Three flocks of sheep and goats lay in an open field beside it, waiting to be watered. But a heavy stone covered the mouth of the well. ³It was the custom there to wait for all the flocks to arrive before removing the stone and watering the animals. Afterward the stone would be placed back over the mouth of the well.

Many different shepherds brought their flocks to this well for water.

Genesis 29:4-6

Jacob went over to the shepherds and asked, "Where are you from, my friends?" "We are from Haran," they answered. ⁵"Do you know a man there named Laban, the grandson of Nahor?" he asked. "Yes, we do," they replied. ⁶"Is he doing well?" Jacob asked. "Yes, he's well," they answered. "Look, here comes his daughter Rachel with the flock now."

God had guided Jacob directly to his uncle Laban's village. Isn't it wonderful to know that God is always leading us and guiding us through every day?

Genesis 29:7-9

Jacob said, "Look, it's still broad daylight--too early to round up the animals. Why don't you water the sheep and goats so they can get back out to pasture?" ⁸"We can't water the animals until all the flocks have arrived," they replied. "Then the shepherds move the stone from the mouth of the well, and we water all the sheep and goats." ⁹Jacob was still talking with them when Rachel arrived with her father's flock, for she was a shepherd.

Jacob, being a good shepherd himself, wondered why they were all waiting at the well when there was still daylight for feeding the sheep. They explained that they did not remove the cover from the well until all the herds had arrived.

Genesis 29:10-12

And because Rachel was his cousin--the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother--and because the sheep and goats belonged to his uncle Laban, Jacob went over to the well and moved the stone from its mouth and watered his uncle's flock. ¹¹Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and he wept aloud. ¹²He explained to Rachel that he was her cousin on her father's side--the son of her aunt Rebekah. So Rachel quickly ran and told her father, Laban.

Jacob's eyes popped out when he saw how beautiful Rachel was; and when Jacob told Rachel he was her cousin, she ran home to get her dad. Laban came hurrying out to welcome Jacob and took him home.

Genesis 29:13-15

As soon as Laban heard that his nephew Jacob had arrived, he ran out to meet him. He embraced and kissed him and brought him home. When Jacob had told him his story, ¹⁴Laban exclaimed, "You really are my own flesh and blood!" After Jacob had stayed with Laban for about a month, ¹⁵Laban said to him, "You shouldn't work for me without pay just because we are relatives. Tell me how much your wages should be."

After Jacob had helped Laban with his sheep for about a month, Laban offered to pay Jacob.

Genesis 29:16-18

Now Laban had two daughters. The older daughter was named Leah, and the younger one was Rachel. ¹⁷There was no sparkle in Leah's eyes, but Rachel had a beautiful figure and a lovely face. ¹⁸Since Jacob was in love with Rachel, he told her father, "I'll work for you for seven years if you'll give me Rachel, your younger daughter, as my wife."

It was customary in those days, and in that culture, for a man to present a gift to the family of his future wife. This was to pay the family for the loss of the girl. Since Jacob had no money, he offered to work for Laban for seven years without pay for Rachel's hand in marriage.

Genesis 29:19-21

"Agreed!" Laban replied. "I'd rather give her to you than to anyone else. Stay and work with me." ²⁰So Jacob worked seven years to pay for Rachel. But his love for her was so strong that it seemed to him but a few days. ²¹Finally, the time came for him to marry her. "I have fulfilled my agreement," Jacob said to Laban. "Now give me my wife so I can marry her."

When the 7 years were up, Jacob could hardly wait to marry Rachel. So, Laban arranged for a great marriage feast, but he also planned to play a mean trick on Jacob.

Genesis 29:22-24

So Laban invited everyone in the neighborhood and prepared a wedding feast. ²³But that night, when it was dark, Laban took Leah to Jacob, and he slept with her. ²⁴(Laban had given Leah a servant, Zilpah, to be her maid.)

Imagine Jacob's surprise in the morning!

Genesis 29:25-27

But when Jacob woke up in the morning--it was Leah! "What have you done to me?" Jacob raged at Laban. "I worked seven years for Rachel! Why have you tricked me?" ²⁶"It's not our custom here to marry off a younger daughter ahead of the firstborn," Laban replied. ²⁷"But wait until the bridal week is over, then we'll give you Rachel, too--provided you promise to work another seven years for me."

While it was dark, Laban brought Jacob his bride. But when the next morning dawned, Jacob found that the woman he had married was not Rachel, but Leah, Rachel's older sister. You can imagine how angry Jacob was when he found that his bride was Leah!

But Laban told Jacob if he let Leah have the first week alone with him, he could have Rachel as his wife, too.

Genesis 29:28-30

So Jacob agreed to work seven more years. A week after Jacob had married Leah, Laban gave him Rachel, too. ²⁹(Laban gave Rachel a servant, Bilhah, to be her maid.) ³⁰So Jacob slept with Rachel, too, and he loved her much more than Leah. He then stayed and worked for Laban the additional seven years.

Let's discuss the story:

1. Where did Jacob first meet Rachel? (By the well, vs 2.)
2. When Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac, where did he meet Rebekah? (By the well!)
3. What did Jacob do to help Rachel water her sheep? (He rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well, vs 10.)

4. Jacob stayed with Laban and worked for him for about a month when Laban said it wasn't right for Jacob to work without wages. So, Laban asked Jacob what his wages should be. What did Jacob suggest as his "wages"? (He would work for 7 years without pay for Rachel's hand in marriage, vs 18.)
5. How long did Jacob have to work to get Rachel's hand in marriage? (14 years, vs 20 & 27.)
6. How long did Jacob have to wait to marry Rachel after he found out that he had married Leah? (7 days, vs 27.)
7. Why did Laban trick Jacob into marrying Leah? (Laban's excuse was that the older daughter should be married first according to the local custom, vs 26.)
8. Why didn't Jacob know he married the wrong girl? (According to custom, it was arranged that the bride should go in to the groom on the wedding night, veiled and perhaps when the room was in darkness. In those days, and in that culture, a wedding feast was a men's party; the bride was not present. The festivities lasted seven days and there was much drinking and merry making. Jacob's senses were probably dulled by the seven days of jubilee and the darkness.)
9. What lesson did God use Uncle Laban to teach Jacob? (Jacob learned how his brother and father must have felt when he tricked them. He found out that it doesn't feel good to be cheated! God wanted Jacob to see his own sin so he would be humble.)
10. Why was it that Jacob did not pay Laban back for the mean trick he played on him? (God was helping Jacob grow spiritually. He recognized his own sin and it caused him to be humble.)

Let's pray...

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, we don't want to follow Jacob and Laban's example of lying and cheating. Help us to be kind to everyone we meet along the path of each day. We always want to follow the Golden Rule and do to

others what we would have them do to us. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

GAME CENTER

Battle of Knowledge —

Materials: Masking tape, bean bag,

Procedure:

1. Cut out 8 red circles and eight black circles.
2. Write 16 Review questions.
3. Create a sixteen-sectioned grid on the floor with the masking tape, four sections wide and four sections deep.

●	●	○	○
●	○	○	○
●	●	○	○
●	●	●	○

4. Divide the class into two teams – the Reds and the Blacks
5. To win the game, your team must get four circles in a row. Taking turns each team throws the bean bag into an unoccupied square. If the team answers a Review Question correctly, they get to put one of their circles in that square. If the team answers incorrectly, the other team gets a chance to answer the same question. If the other team answers correctly, they get to put one of their circles in the square. Once a circle is in a square it cannot be removed.
6. Teams can work together to answer the question, but each team member must take a turn throwing the bean bag.

Or, use the following questions in another game of your choice:

Review Questions

1. Where did Jacob meet Rachel? (At a well in the field near Haran)
2. What was on the mouth of the well? (A large stone)
3. There were shepherds with their flocks waiting at the well. What were they waiting for? (When all the flocks were gathered together, they would remove the stone and water all of the flocks.)
4. What was Rachel doing when Jacob met her? (She was bringing her father's sheep to the well.)
5. What did Jacob do when he saw Rachel and the sheep? (He rolled the stone from the well and watered the sheep. Then he kissed Rachel, wept, and told her that he was Rebekah's son.)
6. How did Laban receive Jacob? (He ran to meet him, embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house.)
7. Laban had two daughters. What were their names? (Leah and Rachel)
8. Which daughter did Jacob love? (Rachel)
9. Jacob stayed with Laban and worked for him. What kind of work did he do? (He cared for Laban's flocks of sheep and herds of cattle.)
10. What did Laban agree to pay Jacob for his work? (Laban agreed to give Jacob his daughter, Rachel, for a wife.)
11. How many years did Jacob work for Rachel? (Seven)
12. Laban tricked Jacob. Whom did he give to Jacob instead of Rachel? (Leah)
13. What excuse did Laban give Jacob? (That Rachel could not be given in marriage until Leah was married because Leah was the firstborn.)
14. Laban gave Rachel to Jacob one week after he married Leah. How many more years did Jacob work for Rachel? (Seven more)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]

Sowing and Reaping

If I sow orange seeds I will get an orange tree, not green beans. Our words and actions are types of seeds, and through them we also reap what we sow. Use the codes on these seeds to find the names of Bible people, what they sowed, and what they reaped.

Person

What Sowed

What Reaped

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$$\odot \triangle 8 8$$



You Reap What You Sow!

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. (Gal 6:9)

Jacob Leaves Laban

(Genesis 30-31)

Introduction

Do you have a bad temper? Have you ever gotten angry with someone? What happens when you get mad at somebody? Do you yell at them or call them names? Have you ever said something that later you wished you hadn't? Is it hard for you to say, "I'm sorry"? What's the best thing to do when you are angry? (Ask God to help you control your feelings, and talk to the person that you are angry with. Listen to their side of the story. Try to see the situation from their side.)

Today we're going to see how Jacob handles his anger against Laban.

Opening Prayer

Father, it's important for us to learn how to properly deal with our anger. You don't want us to lose control nor do You want us to say things or do things that would disappoint You. Help us to pay attention this morning to see how Jacob handles his anger in such a patient and gracious way. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

*Don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.
(Ephesians 4:26-27)*

Lesson

We've been learning about the Fathers of our Faith. [Teacher, review the lesson series up to this point.]

Today we're going to pick up the story in Genesis 30, verse 25. It's been 14 years since Jacob arrived in Haran. By now Jacob has 11 sons and 1 daughter and he's ready to move back to his homeland.

Genesis 30:25-26

Soon after Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Please release me so I can go home to my own country. Let me take my wives and children, for I have earned them by serving you, and let me be on my way. You certainly know how hard I have worked for you."

But Laban didn't want to lose his free laborer. So he begged Jacob to stay and told him he'll pay him anything he wants.

Genesis 30:31-32

"What wages do you want?" Laban asked again. Jacob replied, "Don't give me anything. Just do this one thing, and I'll continue to tend and watch over your flocks. Let me inspect your flocks today and remove all the sheep and goats that are speckled or spotted, along with all the black sheep. Give these to me as my wages."

Jacob tells Laban that he doesn't have to pay him money. He says he'll continue tending Laban's flocks and herds for no pay if Laban would give him the speckled, spotted, or black sheep. Jacob is willing to leave all the pure white ones for Laban.

Genesis 30:33

In the future, when you check on the animals you have given me as my wages, you'll see that I have been honest. If you find in my flock any goats without speckles or spots, or any sheep that are not black, you will know that I have stolen them from you."

Jacob is saying that Laban will know whether or not he is stealing sheep from Laban's flocks because the sheep will be color-coded. If Laban finds any pure white ones among Jacob's flock, he'll know Jacob was dishonest.

Genesis 30:34

"All right," Laban replied. "It will be as you say."

So Laban agreed to the bargain.

Genesis 30:35-36

But that very day Laban went out and removed the male goats that were streaked and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted or had white patches, and all the black sheep. He placed them in

the care of his own sons, who took them a three-days' journey from where Jacob was. Meanwhile, Jacob stayed and cared for the rest of Laban's flock.

Laban separated out the speckled, spotted, or black sheep. So, Jacob continued to keep Laban's flock which started out with all pure white sheep. But God caused the females to give birth to young that were streaked, speckled, and spotted. As a result, Jacob became very wealthy, with large flocks of sheep and goats, male and female servants, and many camels and donkeys.

God blessed Jacob for all of his honest, hard work for Laban by multiplying his flocks. But Laban's sons became jealous of Jacob's prosperity and began to grumble and complain to their father.

Genesis 31:1-2

But Jacob soon learned that Laban's sons were grumbling about him. "Jacob has robbed our father of everything!" they said. "He has gained all his wealth at our father's expense." And Jacob began to notice a change in Laban's attitude toward him.

Ask: Have you ever felt jealous? (Teacher, let the children talk about what jealousy is, how it feels, and give examples.)

Jealousy always causes trouble among people. Jacob's cousins were greedy. They felt that the flocks that Jacob had should be theirs. But Jacob and Laban had made an agreement. Those sheep were Jacob's pay for all those years of free labor. However, Laban's sons felt cheated out of what they thought should be their inheritance.

But God was taking care of Jacob just like He had promised to take care of Jacob's grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac. As we shall see, God used Laban's son's anger against Jacob to make him decide it was time to move away from Laban and go back to the land of his own father.

Sometimes God uses uncomfortable circumstances in our lives to get us to move on and change directions in life. Just like the way Jacob got his sheep to move on with the use of a staff and rod, God

sometimes uses hard times in our lives to get us to move on to new places.

Genesis 31:3

Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your father and grandfather and to your relatives there, and I will be with you."

Jacob talked to his wives Leah and Rachel and they decided to go back to the land that Jacob had come from. So one day while Laban was busy shearing sheep, Jacob and his wives and sons and camels left without telling Laban.

But Laban chased after Jacob and caught up with him.

Genesis 31:26

"What do you mean by stealing away like this?" Laban demanded. "How dare you drag my daughters away like prisoners of war?"

Jacob got angry that Laban chased after him like a criminal.

Genesis 31:41-42

Yes, for twenty years I slaved in your house! I worked for fourteen years earning your two daughters, and then six more years for your flock. And you changed my wages ten times! In fact, if the God of my father had not been on my side—the God of Abraham and the fearsome God of Isaac—you would have sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen your abuse and my hard work. That is why He appeared to you last night and rebuked you!"

Evidently God had spoken to Laban in his dreams that night and told him to let Jacob leave. So, Jacob and Laban made peace and they parted ways the next morning on good terms.

Genesis 31:55

Laban got up early the next morning, and he kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then he left and returned home.

It is always good to make up with people you are unhappy with. The Bible tells us not to let the sun go down on our anger. It also tells us that God doesn't even want us to pray to Him or worship Him until we have gone to the person that has offended us and make up with him or her. It doesn't matter whose fault it is. Don't wait to solve differences between you and someone else. Even if the other person is in the wrong, go to him or her and make it right between you as soon as you can. Matthew 5:9 says, "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*" We must be quick to forgive so that anger does not fester. The devil would like to take advantage of our anger, but the Holy Spirit can give us power to rise above it.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, teach us to be peacemakers like Jacob. Help us to be quick to forgive people when they treat us wrong or disappoint us. Give us the power of the Holy Spirit to rise above our anger. Help us to make it a policy to not let the sun go down on our anger. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

GAME CENTER

Who Am I?

Pin the names of the characters we have been studying about on the backs of the children. Each child has to guess who they are by asking yes or no questions of the other children. Use the following names:

- Abraham
- Sarah
- Isaac
- Rebekah

- Jacob
- Esau
- Rachel
- Laban

Alternatives to this game would be as follows:

- a. Let the class give the child clues to what character they are.
- b. Let the child have the class guess who he is: you can give copies of the questions that follow to the child and let him ask the class those questions.
- c. Or, divide the class into teams and ask the following questions of the teams for points.

Ask the following questions until the children guess who you're talking about:

Abraham:

1. My father's name was Terah. We lived in a city called Ur. Who am I?
2. One day, God told me to take my family and leave our home in Ur to go to a place that He would show me. I did not know where we were going, but I wanted to obey God. We left Ur and started a long journey. Who am I?
3. On the way to the land God had promised me, we stopped in Haran. My father died there. Soon, God told me this was not the place He had prepared for us, so we left and started out once more. We came to a land called Canaan. God told me that this was the land He had promised to me. Who am I?

4. One day, Sarah, my wife, had a baby at the age of 99! Who am I?

Sarah:

1. God told my husband and I to go to a new land. We didn't know where it was. We had to travel a long way from our home in Ur to get there. Who am I?
2. God promised my husband that if we would trust Him and go where He told us, that He'd make our descendants a great nation. Who am I?
3. I was very old when I had my first child. I thought it was pretty funny that God would give me a child at the age of 99, so I named him "Laughter." Who am I?

Isaac:

1. My father was a very important man. He was rich and had many herds and cattle and camels. My mother and father were very old when I was born. I made them very happy. Who am I?
2. My father and mother and I lived in a land called Canaan. In this land there were many people who worshiped idols. My parents did not want me to marry anyone from this land. They wanted me to love and serve God with my wife. They sent a servant to Haran to look for a wife for me. Who am I?
3. Our servant went to Haran. He asked God to help him find me a good wife. A girl came to the well and gave him and his camels a drink of water. She was very kind. Who am I?

Rebekah:

1. I am a young and beautiful shepherdess. One day I went down to the well to draw water for my sheep. I noticed a man who looked like he'd been traveling a long, long time. Who am I?

2. I offered the stranger some water and asked him if I could water his camels, as well. Who am I?
3. I took the stranger home with me and he gave me lots of gold jewelry and asked if I would go to a far away place with him to be the wife of his master. Who am I?

Jacob:

1. I had a twin brother. He was very different than I was. I like to stay close to home, but my brother liked to hunt and be outdoors. Who am I?
2. One day I saw my brother coming in from hunting. He was very hungry. I told him if he would give me his birthright, I would give him a bowl of stew. He was so hungry he thought he was going to die, so he gave away his birthright. Who am I?
3. When my father was very old and nearly blind, my mother and I made a plan to make him think I was my older brother. I put animal skins on my hands and arms. Mother made a stew that tasted just like the stew my brother made for him. He thought I was my older brother and gave me the blessing. Who am I?
4. My brother was very angry when he found that I had gotten the blessing. My mother was afraid for me and sent me away to Haran to her brother's house. I had a dream on the way. I saw angels going up and down on a ladder that reached from the ground to Heaven. I knew that God wanted me to serve Him. I promised to follow Him from then on. I never forgot my promise. Who am I?

Esau:

1. I was a hairy man. One day I was so hungry I was willing to sell my birthright to my brother for a pot of stew. Who am I?

2. Later my brother tricked my dad into giving my younger brother the special birthright blessing that I should have received, because I was the first born. Who am I?

Rachel:

1. My aunt met a man at a well who had come to my village of Haran to find a wife for his master's son. At this same well, some 40 years later, I met my cousin who became my husband. He helped me draw water for my sheep. Who am I?
2. My father made a bargain with my cousin who wanted to marry me. He promised to work for 7 years without pay to get my hand in marriage. Who am I?
3. Then on my wedding night, my dad played a trick on my husband to be. Dad took my older sister to him instead of me. Then my husband had to work another 7 years without pay. Who am I?

Laban:

1. My whole life is stamped by self-centeredness. I made arrangements for my sister to marry a very important man who was rich and had many herds of cattle and camels. Who am I?
2. I used my daughter's lives as bargaining chips to gain more wealth. I tricked a very important man into working for me without pay for 14 years to get my youngest daughter as a wife. Who am I?

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]

Jacob Comes Home

(Genesis 32-33)

Introduction

Have any of you ever had troubles in your life? [Teacher, discuss various trials the children may go through (parents arguing, getting in trouble for things they either did or did not do, pet dying, etc.)] Why do you think God allows us to go through troubles in our lives? God is all-powerful, why doesn't He just make everything always go well? If we can learn to lean on God, it's the trials in life that make us better people. The troubles in our lives make us a person of strong character: someone who is thoughtful and kind, someone who can handle it when disappointing things happen, or someone who can be forgiving and understanding when someone wrongs you.

We've been learning about all the trials Jacob went through in his life and today we'll see how his trials made Jacob a better man.

Opening Prayer

Father, open our spiritual ears this morning and help us to listen with our hearts. We don't want to miss any of the lessons You have for us this morning. We want to learn to become people like Jacob became through his life. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. (James 1:2-3)

Lesson

We've been learning about the Fathers of our Faith. [Teacher, review the lesson series up to this point.]

Today we're going to pick up the story in Genesis 32. Jacob has just gotten away from Laban and he's on his way home to the land where he was born and where his father and brother still live. Jacob knew that when he returned to the land of his father that he'd eventually have to meet up with his brother Esau.

Ask: How do you think Jacob felt, knowing that the last time he had seen his Esau, he wanted to kill him.

He was probably frantic with fear. So, he came up with a plan...

Genesis 32:3-5

Then Jacob sent messengers ahead to his brother, Esau, who was living in the region of Seir in the land of Edom. ⁴He told them, "Give this message to my master Esau: 'Humble greetings from your servant Jacob. Until now I have been living with Uncle Laban, ⁵and now I own cattle, donkeys, flocks of sheep and goats, and many servants, both men and women. I have sent these messengers to inform my lord of my coming, hoping that you will be friendly to me.'"

Jacob decided that he would send some messengers to his brother and tell him that he was coming home. In the message to Esau, Jacob told him how he had been living with Laban all these years and how God had prospered him.

Ask: How do you think Esau felt, knowing he was about to meet the person who had cheated him out of his most precious possession?

[Let the children respond.]

Genesis 32:6

After delivering the message, the messengers returned to Jacob and reported, "We met your brother, Esau, and he is already on his way to meet you—with an army of 400 men!"

Ask: How do you think Jacob felt knowing that Esau was coming with an army of 400 men?

Genesis 32:7-8

Jacob was terrified at the news. He divided his household, along with the flocks and herds and camels, into two groups. ⁸He thought, "If Esau meets one group and attacks it, perhaps the other group can escape."

Jacob was terrified at the news! He thinks Esau is coming against him with a huge army of men. So, he decided to pray, which is always a good thing to do at a time like this.

Genesis 32:9

Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my grandfather Abraham, and God of my father, Isaac—O LORD, You told me, 'Return to your own land and to your relatives.' And You promised me, 'I will treat you kindly.'"

Jacob reminds God that He was the one who told him to go back home. He goes on praying to God...

Genesis 32:10

I am not worthy of all the unfailing love and faithfulness You have shown to me, Your servant. When I left home and crossed the Jordan River, I owned nothing except a walking stick. Now my household fills two large camps!

When Jacob left Canaan as a young man, he had been poor. But he was returning a very rich man.

Genesis 32:11-12

O LORD, please rescue me from the hand of my brother, Esau. I am afraid that he is coming to attack me, along with my wives and children. ¹²But You promised me, 'I will surely treat you kindly, and I will multiply your descendants until they become as numerous as the sands along the seashore—too many to count.'"

Jacob reminds God of the promise that He had made to multiply his descendants. He's saying to God, "*Don't let Esau wipe me and my family out now or Your promise won't come true!*"

So, Jacob decided to send gifts to his brother out of his flocks in hopes that his brother would find favor with him.

That night when it was dark, and he was alone, some very unusual things happened. Jacob suddenly found himself wrestling with God Himself.

Genesis 32:24

This left Jacob all alone in the camp, and a Man came and wrestled with him until the dawn began to break.

Jacob was wrestling with God Himself!

Genesis 32:25-28

When the Man saw that He would not win the match, He touched Jacob's hip and wrenched it out of its socket. ²⁶Then the Man said, "Let Me go, for the dawn is breaking!" But Jacob said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me." ²⁷"What is your name?" the Man asked. He replied, "Jacob." ²⁸"Your name will no longer be Jacob," the Man told him. "From

now on you will be called Israel, because you have fought with God and with men and have won."

So, God changed his name from Jacob which means "deceitful" to Israel which means "one who struggles with God and overcomes." God changed his name because an inner spiritual change had taken place in Jacob's heart. His character had changed.

Now Jacob asks the Man what His name is.

Genesis 32:29-30

"Please tell me your name," Jacob said. "Why do you want to know my name?" the Man replied. Then he blessed Jacob there. ³⁰Jacob named the place Peniel (which means "face of God"), for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been spared."

Jacob had an encounter with God and he was forever changed from the inside out. [Teacher, talk about your encounter with God.]

Jacob had struggled through tough situations and continued to be loyal to God so God changed his name to Israel and he was now ready to meet Esau.

Genesis 33:1-2

Then Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming with his 400 men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and his two servant wives. ²He put the servant wives and their children at the front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last.

Jacob divided the family up in hopes that if there was an attack, not everyone would be wiped out all at once.

Genesis 33:3-4

Then Jacob went on ahead. As he approached his brother, he bowed to the ground seven times before him. ⁴Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him. And they both wept.

And so, Jacob and Esau were reunited and reconciled! Esau and Jacob lived in peace the rest of their lives. God wants us to have forgiving and loving hearts like Jacob and Esau.

Working through tough situations in life gives us stronger character. That's why the Bible tells us to count all of our trials as joy. God allows us to go through hard times because He knows it will make us more loving and forgiving, kind and understanding towards other people.

The difference is how we handle the trials -- will we be like a cork on a rough sea or will we be like a rock? Will we float or sink? If we cling to God and remain loyal to His ways, we will float to the top. [Teacher, as an object lesson, bring in a pale of water, a rock and a cork and let the children see this lesson concept!]

Now don't miss how this lesson applies to our lives: Esau forgave Jacob even though he didn't deserve it. Jacob was guilty; he tricked Esau into giving him Esau's most precious possession. In the same way, God forgives us even though we don't deserve it.

Lamentations 3:22-23

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. (NIV)

We have learned a lot about life through studying Jacob's life. His story is an example of a person that changed from being selfish and greedy to one who has become a true servant of God. Jacob became Israel.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, help us to learn from the life of Jacob. Help us to keep our relationships with our family members healthy and full of love. Keep us honest, Lord. We want to always be loving and forgiving. And, Lord, when things do go wrong in our relationships, help us to be the first ones to be peacemakers. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

GAME CENTER

Categories Game

Preparation:

The game has two variations: *Method #1*: has "questions" on the cards. *Method #2*: has "key words" on the cards. Make at least two cards for each of the following point values: 50, 200, 500, 1,000 for each method.

To play:

1. Divide the class into 2 teams (boys against girls is always fun!)
2. The first child on the first team comes up and picks a method (Question or Key Word) and a point value to go for.
3. **Method #1**: The teacher asks the question and gives the child **10 seconds** to answer. If the child doesn't know the answer, he can ask for clues. For example, if the question is, "*How large was Gideon's army?*" a clue could be "*It was less than 1,000.*" For every clue given, 10 points is taken off the total.

Method #2: The child selects a "key word" card from that point value and has **1 minute** to get his team to guess the mystery word by giving clues to his teammate. He cannot actually say the word nor can he act out the word. For example, if the word on the card is "Esther", a clue could be "*This woman became the Queen of Persia*" or "*She was raised by Mordecai.*" The child has to give the clues quickly; if time is up before the right word is guessed, they get no points.

Note: Only provide one question or key word per point value. Once it has been taken, the next contestant who picks that category has to take one of the other valued questions.

Or use the following review questions in another game of your choice:

Review Questions:

Here are some questions to help us remember some of the lessons we've learned from Jacob's life.

1. Why did God change Jacob's name to Israel? (Jacob means "deceitful" and Israel means, "one who struggles with God and overcomes." This name change portrayed an inner spiritual change that had taken place in Jacob's heart. Working through tough situations in life gives us stronger character.)
2. What did God promise Rebekah concerning her twin sons just before they were born? (They would become enemy nations; and the younger would rule over the older)
3. Why were Jacob's cousins jealous of Jacob? (God blessed Jacob, and his flocks increased in number. They felt that those sheep and goats should have been theirs.)
4. What can we learn from Jacob's sin? (Don't trick people into doing something they shouldn't do. Let God fulfill His great plan for your life in His time and in His way.)
5. What can we learn from Rebekah's sins? (We must wait upon the Lord and not take things into our own hands to try to force God's will to happen.)
6. What can we learn from Esau's sin? (Don't be impulsive. Think before you act. Also, don't treat our birthright as Christians lightly. We need to appreciate our relationship with the Lord and do everything we can to please God.)
7. When Jacob was traveling to Haran, what did he dream about that night? (A ladder was set up on earth that reached to heaven and angels were going up and down the ladder.)
8. What happened to Jacob to teach him how it felt when he tricked Esau and his father? (On his wedding night, Laban brought Leah to Jacob instead of Rachel.)

9. What happened when Esau found out that Jacob got the special birthright blessing? (He wanted to kill his brother.)

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Joseph Sold by His Brothers

(Genesis 37)

Introduction

When others hurt us, it is easy to want to hurt them back. But God says that those who have believed on Him are to be **longsuffering**. [Teacher, write “longsuffering” on the board.] That means we are to patiently accept hurt or trouble for a long time.

Ask: Why would God ask you to do that? How does He expect you to do it?

Today we’re going to learn about a teenage boy who needed to learn to be longsuffering.

Opening Prayer

Lord, we want to do what You want us to do. Teach us what it means to love people who hurt us and are unfair to us. It’s so unnatural to be kind to people who are mean to us. That’s why we need your Holy Spirit to fill us with the strength to be longsuffering. Amen.

Memory Verse

... **love** your enemies, **bless** those who curse you, **do good** to those who hate you, and **pray** for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. (Matthew 5:44)

Let’s talk about how our verse for today applies to our lives:

Enemies

Do you have any enemies? Has anyone ever been mean to you or made fun of you? Those who mistreat you at school or on the playground are like “enemies” to us, but Jesus wants us to have an attitude of love toward our enemies.

Curse

Who are those who “curse” you? Has anyone ever called you a bad name? Those who say bad words to you or about you is an example

of someone cursing you. But God tells us to bless those who curse us. That’s right! Ask God to make their lives better.

Hate

How do others show they hate you? Has anyone ever harmed you on purpose? Is there a bully at school that picks on you? God says we are to do them good, to treat them with kindness and ask God to be good to them.

Spitefully Use

When someone hurts you on purpose, that is an example of someone who is “spiteful” and God tells us to pray for those who spitefully use us and persecute us. The Bible says, “*Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing.*” (1 Peter 3:9a NIV)

When others are unkind, your natural reaction may be to get back at them. But God wants us to be longsuffering.

Lesson

We’ve been learning about the Fathers of our Faith. [Teacher, review the lesson series up to this point.]

At this point, Jacob’s name has been changed from Jacob to Israel and he is back home in the land of Canaan with his wives and children. We are now we are going to turn our attention to one of Jacob’s sons, Joseph, who was Jacob’s 11th son his favorite son.

Let’s pick up the story in Genesis 37.

Genesis 37:3-4

Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So one day Jacob had a special gift made for Joseph—a beautiful robe. ⁴But his brothers hated Joseph because their father loved him more than the rest of them. They couldn’t say a kind word to him.

Joseph was favored by his father because he was the son of Rachel, Jacob’s favorite wife. But his brothers were jealous of him, especially when their father made Joseph the coat of many colors.

One night Joseph had a dream...

Genesis 37:5-7

One night Joseph had a dream, and when he told his brothers about it, they hated him more than ever. ⁶"Listen to this dream," he said. ⁷"We were out in the field, tying up bundles of grain. Suddenly my bundle stood up, and your bundles all gathered around and bowed low before mine!"

[A sheaf is a bundle.] His dream seemed to mean that he would have a place of authority over his older brothers. Let's see how the brothers responded...

Genesis 37:8

His brothers responded, "So you think you will be our king, do you? Do you actually think you will reign over us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dreams and the way he talked about them.

Joseph's older brothers thought that he was being boastful and arrogant to think that he would rule over them. Soon Joseph had another dream...

Genesis 37:9

Soon Joseph had another dream, and again he told his brothers about it. "Listen, I have had another dream," he said. "The sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed low before me!"

Joseph had a second dream that seemed to indicate that he would someday rule over his brothers as well as his mother and father. Let's see how Joseph's father responded...

Genesis 37:10-11

This time he told the dream to his father as well as to his brothers, but his father scolded him. "What kind of dream is that?" he asked. "Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow to the ground before you?" ¹¹But while his brothers were jealous of Joseph, his father wondered what the dreams meant.

Envy and jealousy are wicked things to allow in any relationship. Even though Joseph's brothers hated him and were unkind to him, the Bible doesn't say that Joseph spoke or acted unkindly to them. God was building into Joseph's life the ability to be longsuffering.

God can give you the strength to be longsuffering, too.

Today's verse tells us four things God says you should do when someone is unkind to you:

1. **Love** – Decide to care for that person, even though you may not feel like it.
2. **Bless** – Ask God to bring good things into the life of that person.
3. **Do good** – Be nice to that person.
4. **Pray** – Talk with the Lord about that person.

As you follow these steps this verse teaches, you will be showing longsuffering.

It isn't easy to be longsuffering, but God can help you. In fact, only God can give you the strength on the inside to be longsuffering. And, He wanted to give Joseph that kind of strength.

One day Jacob sent Joseph to check on his brothers who were tending the sheep a long way from home. Joseph's father wanted to know how his other sons and their flocks were doing. Even though Joseph knew his brothers hated him, he obediently walked 65 miles to find them. But when the brothers saw Joseph approaching, they plotted to kill him.

Genesis 37:18-20

When Joseph's brothers saw him coming, they recognized him in the distance. As he approached, they made plans to kill him. ¹⁹"Here comes the dreamer!" they said. ²⁰"Come on, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns. We can tell our father, 'A wild animal has eaten him.' Then we'll see what becomes of his dreams!"

The brother's sinful jealousy was now leading them to do a terrible thing. That is how sin develops. It often begins with just a thought and becomes an action. Sin can lead to terrible actions as it did with Joseph's brothers, who now plotted to kill him.

Genesis 37:21-22

But when Reuben heard of their scheme, he came to Joseph's rescue. "Let's not kill him," he said. ²²"Why should we shed any blood? Let's just throw him into this empty cistern here in the wilderness. Then he'll die without our laying a hand on him." Reuben was secretly planning to rescue Joseph and return him to his father.

Thank goodness Reuben had a good conscience and didn't want to murder his little brother! But, look what they did do to him...

Genesis 37:23-24

So when Joseph arrived, his brothers ripped off the beautiful robe he was wearing. ²⁴Then they grabbed him and threw him into the cistern. Now the cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

They threw him into a dry well. What a terrible thing Joseph's brothers did to him!

Ask: How do you think Joseph felt to be thrown into the pit?

Joseph must have been angry and afraid! But God gave him the strength to be longsuffering. And He can help you to be longsuffering, too.

Joseph certainly needed God's strength in a special way to be longsuffering through his brothers' cruel treatment.

Genesis 37:25-28

Then, just as they were sitting down to eat, they looked up and saw a caravan of camels in the distance coming toward them. It was a group of Ishmaelite traders taking a load of gum, balm, and aromatic resin from Gilead down to Egypt. ²⁶Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain by killing our brother? His blood would just give us a guilty conscience. ²⁷Instead of hurting him, let's sell him to those Ishmaelite traders. After all, he is our brother--our own flesh and blood!" And his brothers agreed. ²⁸So when the Ishmaelites, who were Midianite traders, came by, Joseph's brothers pulled him out of the cistern and sold him to them for twenty pieces of silver. And the traders took him to Egypt.

Before you think well of Judah, look at his motive for not wanting to kill Joseph. He was saying, "There's no profit in killing Joe; we should sell him so we can get some money!"

At least they didn't leave him in the pit to die! But who knows what the Midianite traders would do to him!

Genesis 37:29-30

Some time later, Reuben returned to get Joseph out of the cistern. When he discovered that Joseph was missing, he tore his clothes in grief. ³⁰Then he went back to his brothers and lamented, "The boy is gone! What will I do now?"

Evidently Reuben wasn't around when the other brothers sold him into slavery. When Reuben found out, he was so distressed he tore his clothes as a sign of grief. Then they decided to come up with a plan.

Genesis 37:31-33

Then the brothers killed a young goat and dipped Joseph's robe in its blood. ³²They sent the beautiful robe to their father with this message: "Look at what we found. Doesn't this robe belong to your son?" ³³Their father recognized it immediately. "Yes," he said, "it is my son's robe. A wild animal must have eaten him. Joseph has clearly been torn to pieces!"

They dipped Joseph's beautiful coat into blood and asked their father to identify it. They didn't actually say that Joseph was dead; they led their father to believe he was dead. And, they didn't try to correct his thinking.

Ask: Since the brothers didn't actually kill Joseph and technically, they didn't lie to their father about what happened to him, did they sin?

Yes! They let their father believe a lie and that's just the same as being dishonest!

Genesis 37:34-36

Then Jacob tore his clothes and dressed himself in burlap. He mourned deeply for his son for a long time. ³⁵His family all tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "I will go to my grave mourning for my son," he would say, and then he would weep. ³⁶Meanwhile, the Midianite traders arrived in Egypt, where they sold Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Potiphar was captain of the palace guard.

Think of the sorrow those sons brought to their father! But as we will learn in the next few lessons in the weeks to come, God is at work behind the scenes.

God allows us to go through difficulties in life to help us to become more longsuffering and to teach us to rely on Him for our strength.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, we want to learn to be longsuffering like Joseph was. We want to love people that do us wrong. Please fill us with your Holy Spirit so that we might have the power to overcome our natural reaction to return hurt for hurt. Teach us to love our enemies, to bless them and pray for them and do good to them. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CRAFT CORNER

With plain white T-shirts and fabric paints, let the children make "coats of many colors."

GAME CENTER

Spin for Points

- Print the questions on individual cards (without the answers.)
- Divide the children into two groups.
- Have Team A select a question card to ask of Team B.
- On a correct answer, Team B gets to use a spinner to determine the number of points their team gets.



- Then Team B selects a question to ask of Team A; repeat process.

Or, use the following questions in another game or discussion:

Review Questions:

1. Which son did Jacob love the most and why? (Joseph because he was the son of Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife.)
2. What was Joseph's first dream? (He and his brothers were out in the field binding sheaves, and his sheaf stood up, and their sheaves all gathered around it and bowed low before it.)
3. What was Joseph's second dream? (The sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed low before Joseph.)
4. What did Joseph's dreams seem to mean? (That he would someday rule over his brothers.)
5. How did Joseph react to his brother's hatefulness and unkindness? (The Bible doesn't say that he spoke or acted unkindly to them.)
6. Which brother came to Joseph's rescue when all the other brothers wanted to kill him? (Reuben.)
7. Why did Joseph's brothers sell him?
8. What character trait was God building into Joseph through these circumstances in his life? (Longsuffering.)
9. What 4 things does our verse for today tell us to do when someone is unkind to us? (Love our enemies, bless them, pray for them, and do good to them.)
10. Why were Joseph's brothers jealous of him? (Joseph was favored by his father because he was the son of Rachel, his favorite wife.)

11. How can you do today's memory verse? (Only God can give you the strength on the inside to be longsuffering.)
12. What did his brothers do when they saw Joseph coming out to the fields? (They plotted to kill him.)
13. What did his brothers do instead of killing Joseph? (Threw him into a dry well or pit.)
14. Did his brothers leave Joseph in the pit to die? (No, they sold him to the Midianite traders.)
15. How did Joseph's brothers lead their father to believe Joseph was killed by wild animals? (They dipped Joseph's beautiful coat into blood and asked their father to identify it. They didn't actually say that Joseph was dead; they led their father to believe he was dead. And, they didn't try to correct his thinking.)
16. What does God want you to learn from this lesson? (To be longsuffering like Joseph.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministylessons.com>]

Joseph and His Brothers

(Genesis 37:3-36; 39:1-45:28)

Just imagine! Joseph's older brothers sold him into slavery. Then his master tossed Joseph in prison. But God took care of Joseph. Soon Pharaoh brought Joseph out of prison to explain a dream. Joseph told Pharaoh his dream was a warning from God that a famine was coming.

Joseph told Pharaoh to store the food gathered in the seven good seasons in huge barns. Then people from Egypt and from far away could buy food during the famine. Just imagine! Joseph's hungry brothers rode to Egypt to buy food at Pharaoh's barns.

Just imagine! Joseph saw his brothers for the first time since they sold him as a slave. Did he speak words of hate or words of forgiveness? To read what Joseph told his brothers, match the letter blocks with the blocks of boxes in the puzzle below. Then fill in the letters. One block has been done for you.

A	N	G	R	Y
E	L	V	E	S

S		T	O	
S		T	H	A

M	E		A	H
U	.		G	E

I	T		W	A
	L	I	V	E

E	A	D		
N	.	4	5:	5

S	E	N	T	
O	F		Y	O

F	O	R		S
H	E	R	E,	

T		B	E	
Y	O	U	R	S

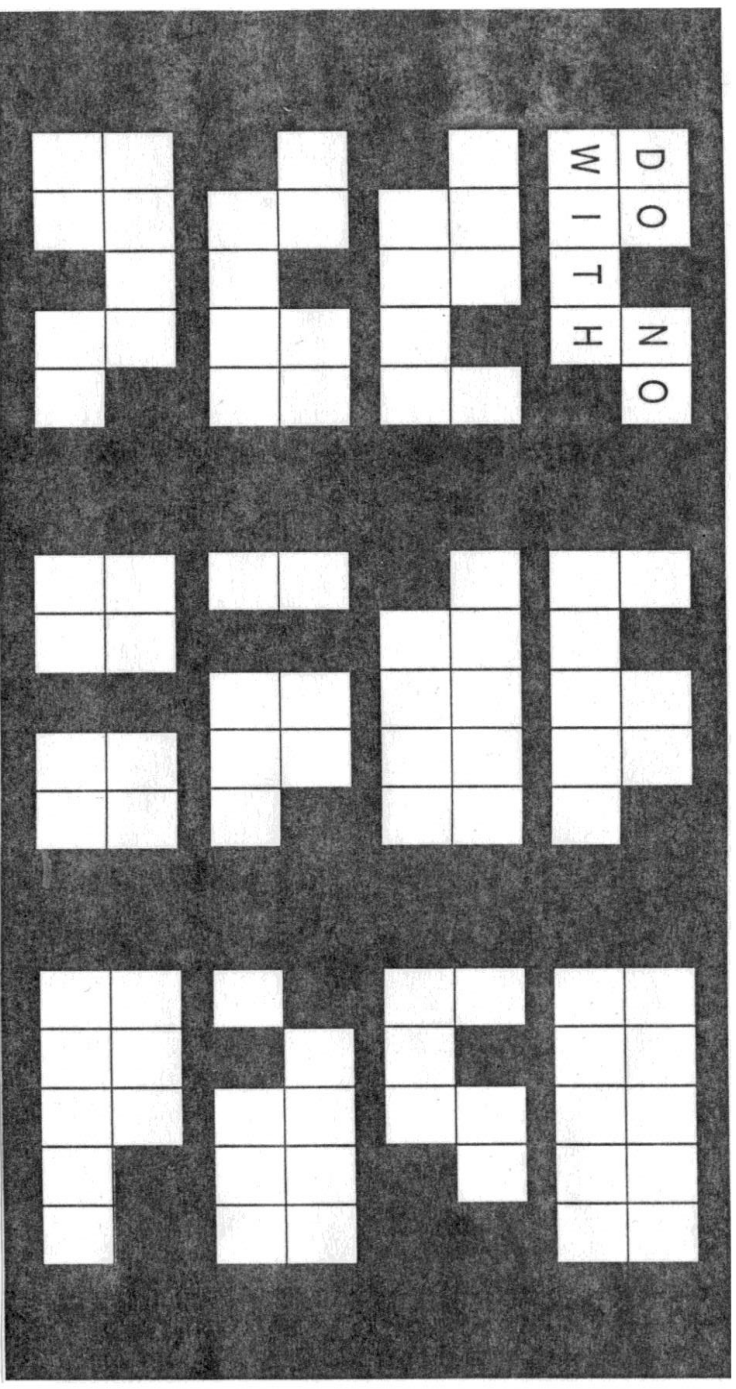
E	L	L	I	N
	B	E	C	A

D	O		N	O
W	I	T	H	

	S	A	V	E
T		G	O	D

G		M	E	
U	S	E		

D	O		N	O
W	I	T	H	



Joseph's Temptation

(Genesis 39)

Introduction

Have you ever been tempted to sin? How do you cope with temptation? What should you do? God wants us to say “No” to sin and He is more than willing to help us if we'll just ask him to.

Opening Prayer

Lord, we know that You hate sin, but every day Satan tempts us to do things that are not pleasing to You! We need to know what to do when that happens. Open our hearts this morning to the lesson and help us to pay attention so that we are prepared before Satan tempts us. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

...the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. (1 John 4:4)

Lesson

We've been learning about the Fathers of our Faith. [Teacher, review the lesson series up to this point.]

Last week we learned how Joseph's brothers were so jealous and hateful they first planned to kill Joseph; then they decided to sell him into slavery.

Let's pick up the story in Genesis 39.

Genesis 39:1

When Joseph was taken to Egypt by the Ishmaelite traders, he was purchased by Potiphar, an Egyptian officer. Potiphar was captain of the guard for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

Joseph's brothers had sold him to the Ishmaelite traders that were heading down to Egypt. The Ishmaelites sold Joseph to Potiphar.

Ask: Can you imagine what Joseph must have felt to find himself suddenly stripped of his freedom?

He had gone from favorite son to slave! When you're a slave you don't get to choose anything for yourself. You must do exactly what your master tells you to do. If he says, “jump,” you say, “how high?” and just do it or else you can get whipped. It just wasn't fair! But you never hear Joseph complaining!

The Lord was with Joseph and gave him favor with Potiphar.

Genesis 39:2-3

***The LORD was with Joseph**, so he succeeded in everything he did as he served in the home of his Egyptian master. Potiphar noticed this and realized that **the LORD was with Joseph**, giving him success in everything he did.*

Joseph made up his mind with God's help, to never do anything that would displease God. And God honored Joseph for that desire; God gave Joseph success in everything he put his hand to.

Genesis 39:4-5

This pleased Potiphar, so he soon made Joseph his personal attendant. He put him in charge of his entire household and everything he owned. From the day Joseph was put in charge of his master's household and property, the LORD began to bless Potiphar's household for Joseph's sake. All his household affairs ran smoothly, and his crops and livestock flourished.

Potiphar was so pleased with Joseph's work that he promoted Joseph to be the “overseer” or “boss” of his house and estate. Joseph was given the highest position to which a household slave could rise. He was responsible for the food, clothes, finances, and property of his master.

Genesis 39:6a

So Potiphar gave Joseph complete administrative responsibility over everything he owned. With Joseph there, he didn't worry about a thing—except what kind of food to eat!

Potiphar trusted Joseph with all that he had! But Potiphar's wife liked him, too! And this was a big, big problem for Joseph.

Genesis 39:6b-7

Joseph was a very handsome and well-built young man, and Potiphar's wife soon began to look at him lustfully. “Come and sleep with me,” she demanded.

Mrs. Potiphar asked Joseph to do a wrong thing! She thought that Joseph was good-looking and wanted him to lie with her in bed. God says in His word that only a man and woman who are married should get in bed together. What she had asked him to do was wrong. Joseph had to decide what to do.

Ask: Have you ever had someone try to get you to do something you knew was wrong? [Let the children talk about specific temptations.]

When someone asks you to do something you know is wrong, you must decide what to do, too.

If you know Jesus as your Savior, the Spirit of God lives in you to give you the power to say "No" to temptation. Satan wants you to do wrong, but you must decide *now* what you will do when you are tempted. Joseph knew what he would do.

Genesis 39:8-9

*But Joseph **refused**. "Look," he told her, "my master trusts me with everything in his entire household. No one here has more authority than I do. He has held back nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How could I do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God."*

Joseph knew God is holy and hates sin. God hates your sin, too. But He loves you and wants you to be successful in everything you do, too. That's why you need to decide now *before* you are faced with the temptation to sin that with God's help you will not think, say, or do anything that will disappoint God. He will give you the power of the Holy Spirit to keep that promise, just like he did for Joseph.

Joseph knew God hates sin and he refused Mrs. Potiphar. But this made her furious.

Genesis 39:10

*She kept putting pressure on Joseph day after day, but he **refused** to sleep with her, and he kept out of her way as much as possible.*

She kept after Joseph, but he didn't give into the temptation.

Genesis 39:11-12

One day, however, no one else was around when he went in to do his work. She came and grabbed him by his cloak, demanding, "Come on, sleep with me!" Joseph tore himself away, but he left his cloak in her hand as he ran from the house.

Joseph was in such a hurry to get away from this woman that he ran away leaving his robe in her hand. Joseph ran from temptation. That is what you can do when someone asks you to do something God says is wrong. God can give you the power to say "No" to temptation. Remember, "... *the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.*" (1 John 4:4)

Genesis 39:13-15

When she saw that she was holding his cloak and he had fled, she called out to her servants. Soon all the men came running. "Look!" she said. "My husband has brought this Hebrew slave here to make fools of us! He came into my room to rape me, but I screamed. When he heard me scream, he ran outside and got away, but he left his cloak behind with me."

Potiphar's wife lied about what happened and falsely accused Joseph of a terrible sin! When she told her husband this lie about Joseph, it made him very angry and he ordered Joseph to be taken to prison.

Ask: Suppose you were put in prison even though you had never committed a crime. How would you feel? What would you do?

How hard it is to be misjudged! Yet God was still with Joseph.

Let's see what Joseph did...

Genesis 39:21-23

*But **the LORD was with Joseph** in the prison and showed him His faithful love. And the LORD made Joseph a favorite with the prison warden. Before long, the warden put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and over everything that happened in the prison. The warden had no more worries, because Joseph took care of everything. **The LORD was with him** and caused everything he did to succeed.*

Even in prison Joseph was so kind, thoughtful and helpful that the jailer put him in charge of the other prisoners. What a fine young man he must have been to have made such a good impression on everybody, no matter where he was, even in prison! God honored Joseph for saying “no” to sin.

The Bible tells us four times that “**the LORD was with Joseph**”. Joseph had made up his mind not to do anything that was displeasing to God. And, God helped him to stay blameless and to keep doing his best in every situation. And, God will help you, too. The Bible tells us twice that Joseph *refused* to sin against God.

Will you choose to say, “No” to sin?

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, Satan wants us to sin because sin separates us from You. That's why You hate sin so much. We always want to stay in close fellowship with You, so I pray that You will give us the desire in our hearts to say “No” to sin before we are even tempted. Then, give us the power of the Holy Spirit to say “No” to sin so that we might be blameless in Your eyes. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CRAFT CORNER

Toss for it —

Students toss a beanbag to earn points for correctly answered review questions.

Place several rows of numbered playing cards face down with a few inches between them to form a grid pattern. (Make sure to put several wild cards or Jokers down, too!) Use masking tape to make a tossing line several feet from the cards.

For a correctly answered review question, a player tosses the beanbag onto a card, reveal the points he received for his team.

- Numbered cards = 50 point
- Face cards = 100 points
- Aces = 200 points
- Jokers = 0 points (or, 150, if you prefer!)

If the child answers incorrectly, give the other team a chance to answer that question. If neither team knows, give the answer and ask that question again later. Have student pick up the card and put it in the team's basket to be counted at the end of the game.

GAME CENTER

1. Who was Joseph? (Jacob's favorite son.)
2. Who was Potiphar? (An Egyptian officer; the captain of the guard for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. See verse 1)
3. How did Joseph end up at Potiphar's house? (His brothers had sold him to the Midianite traders and they sold him to Potiphar.)
4. What was Joseph's job at Potiphar's house? (He was the chief household slave in charge of everything.)
5. Why did Potiphar give Joseph the highest position in his household? (Whatever he was asked to do he did it well and Potiphar was very pleased with Joseph's work.)
6. What wrong thing did Potiphar's wife ask Joseph to do? (Go to bed with her.)
7. What did Joseph do when Potiphar's wife tempted him to do wrong? (He ran away.)
8. What reason did Joseph give for resisting Potiphar's wife? (It would be a great sin against God to do such a wicked thing. Vs 9)
9. What should you do when someone asks you to do something you know is wrong? (Say, “No” to sin and turn away from it.)
10. What did Joseph do when Mrs. Potiphar grabbed him by his cloak? (He tore himself away, leaving his cloak in her hand.)

11. What happened to Joseph when Potiphar's wife lied about what had happened? (Potiphar sent Joseph to prison.)
12. What was Joseph's job in prison? (He was in charge of the other prisoners.)
13. What special power has God given us to say "No" to sin? (The power of the Holy Spirit.)
14. Find a phrase that is repeated in verses 2, 3, 21, and 23. Why was that important for Joseph to know?
15. What happened to Joseph that was especially hard or unfair? (He was sold as a slave and put in prison for something he didn't do.)
16. Why do you think Joseph could do all these good things even when bad things kept happening to him? (He trusted God; he knew God would work things out.)

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<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]

Joseph Interprets Dreams

(Genesis 40-41)

Introduction

Have you ever had a dream that came true just as you dreamed it? [Let the children respond.] Sometimes God speaks to us through our dreams. Today we're going to learn some interesting prophesies that came to Joseph through some other people's dreams.

Opening Prayer

Father, You are so faithful to communicate with us. Thank You that You speak to us as we read the Bible, through advice from other people, and through our dreams. It's comforting to know that You're never far away; that You are always talking to us to lead and guide our every step of life. Help us this morning to listen for Your voice through the study of Joseph's life. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. (Romans 8:28)

Lesson

We've been learning about Joseph who was Israel's 11th and favorite son. Who can tell me what we've learned about him so far?

- His brothers were so jealous and hateful they first planned to kill Joseph; then they decided to sell him into slavery.
- Potiphar was so impressed with Joseph, he put him in charge over his house and estate.
- All went well for Joseph until Potiphar's wife falsely accused him of a terrible sin and Potiphar sent him to prison.

Poor Joseph. He had done nothing wrong! He was falsely accused of wrong doing, just like Jesus was!

Last week we learned that even in prison, Joseph was so well respected that the jailer put him in charge over the other prisoners.

Let's pick up the story in Genesis 40.

One day, two new prisoners arrived.

Genesis 40:1-4

*Sometime later, Pharaoh's chief cup-bearer and chief baker offended their royal master. ²Pharaoh became angry with these two officials, ³and he put them in the prison where Joseph was, in the palace of the captain of the guard. ⁴They remained in prison for quite some time, and **the captain of the guard** assigned them to Joseph, who looked after them.*

[Note: This favorable treatment of Joseph by the captain of the guard shows that Potiphar did not really believe the accusations his wife made against Joseph. We know this because Potiphar himself was the captain of the guard (Genesis 39:1).]

Then one night both prisoners had dreams....

Genesis 40:5

While they were in prison, Pharaoh's cup-bearer and baker each had a dream one night, and each dream had its own meaning.

In the morning when Joseph saw them, he asked, "*What's the matter? Why do you both look so miserable?*"

Genesis 40:8

And they replied, "We both had dreams last night, but no one can tell us what they mean." "Interpreting dreams is God's business," Joseph replied. "Go ahead and tell me your dreams."

They both explained their dreams to Joseph.

Genesis 40:9-11

So the chief cup-bearer told Joseph his dream first. "In my dream," he said, "I saw a grapevine in front of me. ¹⁰The vine had three branches that began to bud and blossom, and soon it produced clusters of ripe grapes. ¹¹I was holding Pharaoh's wine cup in my hand, so I took a cluster of grapes and squeezed the juice into the cup. Then I placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."

God told Joseph the meaning of the cup-bearer's dream:

Genesis 40:12-13

"This is what the dream means," Joseph said. "The three branches represent three days. ¹³Within three days Pharaoh will lift you up and restore you to your position as his chief cup-bearer.

Knowing the cup-bearer was getting out left prison, Joseph asked for his help.

Genesis 40:14-15

And please remember me and do me a favor when things go well for you. Mention me to Pharaoh, so he might let me out of this place. ¹⁵For I was kidnapped from my homeland, the land of the Hebrews, and now I'm here in prison, but I did nothing to deserve it."

Then the baker told Joseph his dream:

Genesis 40:16-17

When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given the first dream such a positive interpretation, he said to Joseph, "I had a dream, too. In my dream there were three baskets of white pastries stacked on my head. ¹⁷The top basket contained all kinds of pastries for Pharaoh, but the birds came and ate them from the basket on my head."

God told Joseph the meaning of the baker's dream:

Genesis 40:18-19

"This is what the dream means," Joseph told him. "The three baskets also represent three days. ¹⁹Three days from now Pharaoh will lift you up and impale your body on a pole. Then birds will come and peck away at your flesh."

[Note: The birds in scripture often represent Satan or evil.]

Joseph told the baker that in three days, Pharaoh would take him out of prison and put him to death.

Everything happened as Joseph had said: Three days later Pharaoh sent for his chief cup-bearer and the chief baker to be brought to him from prison. Pharaoh restored the chief cup-bearer to his former position, but he sentenced the chief baker to be hanged.

But the cup-bearer forgot all about Joseph until two years later.

One night, Pharaoh had a dream. It was very real to him.

Genesis 41:1-4

Two full years later, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing on the bank of the Nile River. ²In his dream he saw seven fat, healthy cows come up out of the river and begin grazing in the marsh grass. ³Then he saw seven more cows come up behind them from the Nile, but these were scrawny and thin. These cows stood beside the fat cows on the riverbank. ⁴Then the scrawny, thin cows ate the seven healthy, fat cows! At this point in the dream, Pharaoh woke up.

Pharaoh awoke feeling very troubled. But he soon fell asleep again and he had a second dream.

Genesis 41:5-7

But he fell asleep again and had a second dream. This time he saw seven heads of grain, plump and beautiful, growing on a single stalk. ⁶Then seven more heads of grain appeared, but these were shriveled and withered by the east wind. ⁷And these thin heads swallowed up the seven plump, well-formed heads! Then Pharaoh woke up again and realized it was a dream.

Pharaoh was bewildered. He called all his advisors together and told them about his dreams. But no one knew what they meant.

It was then that Pharaoh's chief cup-bearer remembered Joseph still in prison.

Genesis 41:14

Pharaoh sent for Joseph at once, and he was quickly brought from the prison. After he shaved and changed his clothes, he went in and stood before Pharaoh.

So, Pharaoh told his dreams to Joseph. And, here's the meaning that God gave to Joseph...

Genesis 41:25

Joseph responded, "Both of Pharaoh's dreams mean the same thing. God is telling Pharaoh in advance what He is about to do.

Skip down to verse 29...

Genesis 41:29-30

The next seven years will be a period of great prosperity throughout the land of Egypt. ³⁰But afterward there will be seven years of famine so great that all the prosperity will be forgotten in Egypt. Famine will destroy the land.

Joseph went on to give Pharaoh some good advice...

Genesis 41:33

"Therefore, Pharaoh should find an intelligent and wise man and put him in charge of the entire land of Egypt.

Skip down to verse 35...

Genesis 41:35-36

Have them gather all the food produced in the good years that are just ahead and bring it to Pharaoh's storehouses. Store it away, and guard it so there will be food in the cities. ³⁶That way there will be enough to eat when the seven years of famine come to the land of Egypt. Otherwise this famine will destroy the land."

Pharaoh thought Joseph had given him wise advice.

Genesis 41:37

Joseph's suggestions were well received by Pharaoh and his officials.

Pharaoh decided to put Joseph in charge over this great plan to store up the food.

Genesis 41:39-40

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has revealed the meaning of the dreams to you, clearly no one else is as intelligent or wise as you are. ⁴⁰You will be in charge of my court, and all my people will take orders from you. Only I, sitting on my throne, will have a rank higher than yours."

Joseph's brothers had sold him as a slave thinking to hurt and humble him. But now he was one of the most powerful men in the world, riding through Egypt's cities in the royal chariot!

Joseph never stopped trusting God through all the years of being a slave and a prisoner. God was with Joseph and gave him success in

everything he put his hand to. God defeated the plots of Joseph's enemies and made everything turn in Joseph's favor. Remember our memory verse for this week: "...*We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. (Romans 8:28).*"

Ask: Do you think you could trust God, even if you were wrongly blamed like Joseph?

Joseph was patient even in prison. He kept trusting God even though he was mistreated. If you keep trusting in Him, God will help you to be brave and do the right things, too.

God does not forget those who love and trust Him. We may suffer hardships, but God will make everything turn out right if we just trust Him and His will for our lives.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, we want to learn how to trust You like Joseph. He never lost faith that You had his life in the palm of Your hand. Even when his brothers tried to kill him and he was sold into slavery, even when he was wrongly blamed for a terrible sin and thrown into prison, he kept on trusting You and loving You. Fill us with the power of the Holy Spirit so we can be strong in our faith in You, like Joseph. In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CRAFT CORNER

Let the children work on the *God's Man and Egypt's Dreamers* word search, or send it home as a "take home" paper.

GAME CENTER**Big Question Mark —**

On a big poster board, make a huge question mark with little slits. In the slits place small coin-shaped pieces that have point values on them. For every correct answer, the team gets to choose a piece for points. Zonk! Means none.



Use the following review questions in another game of your choice:

1. Whose son was Joseph? (He was Jacob's 11th son.)
2. What were the three terrible things that happened to Joseph? (His brothers were so jealous and hateful they first planned to kill Joseph; then they sold him into slavery. Third, Potiphar's wife falsely accused him of a terrible sin and Potiphar sent him to prison.)
3. Who were the two other men that Pharaoh sent to prison while Joseph was there? (The chief cup-bearer and the chief baker.)
4. What was the chief cup-bearer's dream? (He saw a grapevine in front of him. It had three branches. It was full of lovely clusters of ripe grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in his hand and he took the grapes and squeezed the juice into Pharaoh's cup and gave it to him.)
5. What was the meaning of the chief cup-bearer's dream? (In three days Pharaoh would release him from prison to serve the king again.)
6. What was the chief baker's dream? (He saw three baskets resting on his head. The top basket was full of bread and cakes that he had baked for Pharaoh. But the birds were flying down and eating from the basket.)
7. What was the meaning of the chief baker's dream? (In three days Pharaoh would take him out of prison and put him to death.)
8. What was the last thing Joseph said to the chief cup-bearer when he was released from prison? (Remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house.)
9. Tell me about the dreams Pharaoh had? (First, he dreamed about 7 fat cows and 7 skinny cows. The skinny cows ate up the fat cows. Secondly, he dreamed about 7 plump heads of grain on one stock and 7 thin heads of grain. The thin grains ate the plump grains.)
10. What was the meaning of Pharaoh's dream? (7 years of great plenty will come throughout Egypt; but after them 7 years of famine will arise and all the plenty will be forgotten.)
11. What other good advice did Joseph give to Pharaoh? (To select a discerning and wise man and set him over the land of Egypt.)
12. Who did Pharaoh appoint to govern the food storage plan? (Joseph became the highest authority in all of Egypt just under the king himself. No one was greater. He was one of the most powerful men in the world!)
13. Do you think you could continue to trust God like Joseph did if you were wrongly blamed and thrown into prison? [Let the child respond.]
14. What is today's memory verse? We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. Romans 8:28)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>]

Upper Grades _____

God's Man & Egypt's Dreamers

Use the rhyme clues to discover the identity of each Bible story character. If you need help, read the Bible verses. Which one was God's man?

When I was in Egypt's prison
a man was there that knew
The answer to my wine-cup dream.
Hooray! It all came true.

Genesis 40:9-12 _____

My dream had baskets of baked goods,
three of them on my head;
I meant to give them to Pharaoh,
but birds ate them instead.

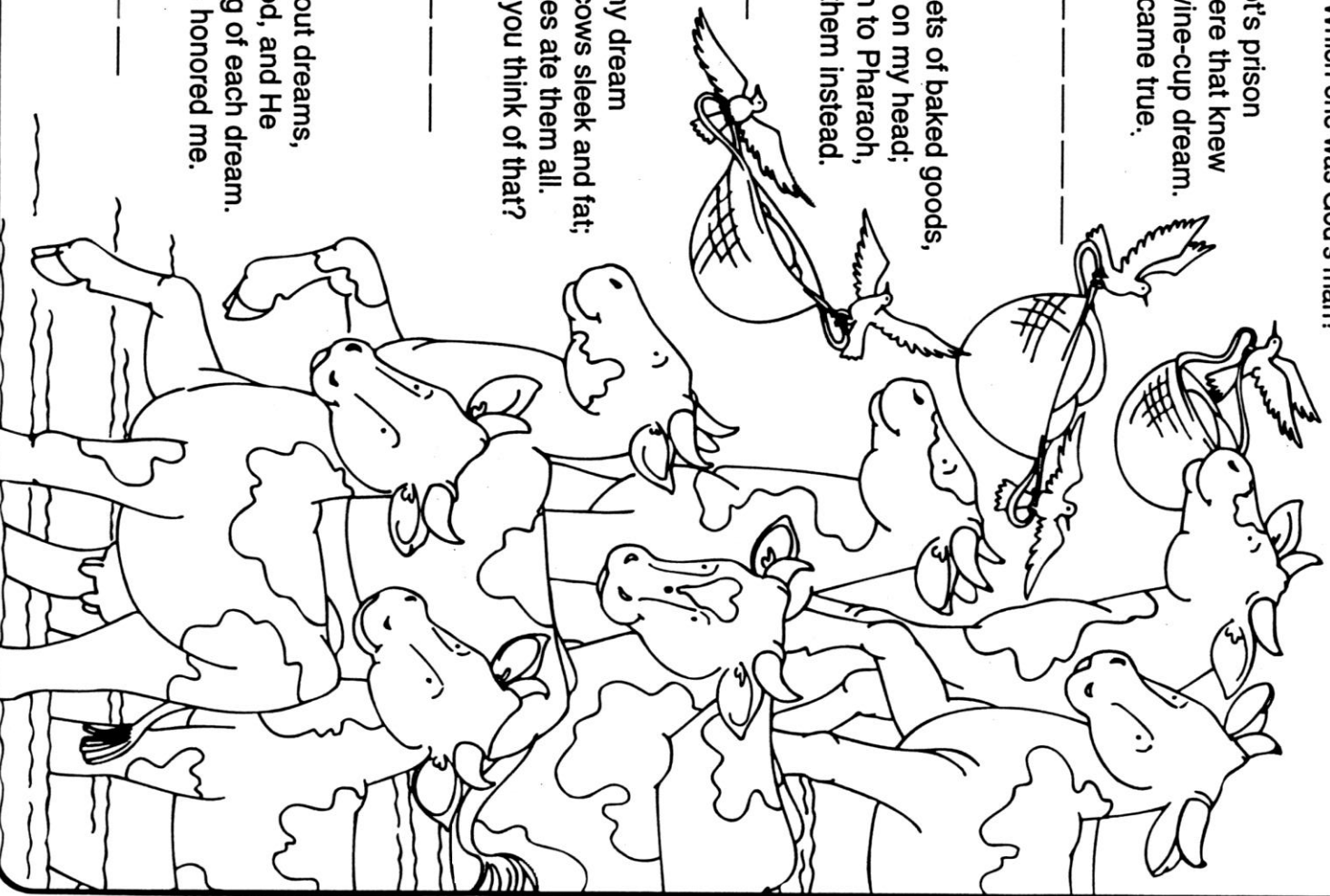
Genesis 40:16-17 _____

Out of the river, in my dream
came seven cows sleek and fat;
Then seven lean ones ate them all.
Now what do you think of that?

Genesis 41:1-4 _____

I had no wisdom about dreams,
but I knew God, and He
Told me the meaning of each dream.
The king then honored me.

Genesis 41:39-40 _____



Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt

(Genesis 41-43)

Introduction

Have you ever found it hard to forgive someone of something? How about when someone has really sinned against you. Has anyone ever played a mean dirty trick on you? Or, has anyone made you a special promise they couldn't keep? Well, we've been learning about Joseph and all the mean things his brothers did to him. They threw him into a deep well and tried to kill him. Then they sold him into slavery. Do you think Joseph had a good reason to bear a grudge against his brothers?

Today we're going to see what Joseph did when he meets back up with his brothers after 20 years.

Opening Prayer

Father, You command us to forgive those who sin against us. Sometimes that's really hard. We can't possibly do that without remembering how much You have forgiven each of us. Help us never to forget how much You have done for us in forgiving our sins and making it possible to come to heaven to live with You. Also, Lord, help us to remember that You have a great plan for our lives and sometimes You have strange ways of accomplishing it! In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Matthew 6:14-15)

Lesson Review

We've been studying the life of Joseph.

1. Whose son was Joseph? (He was Israel's 11th and favorite son.)

2. What did Joseph's brothers do to him? (They were so jealous and hateful they first planned to kill Joseph; then they decided to sell him into slavery.)
3. Who was Potiphar? (The Egyptian official that bought Joseph and put him in charge over his house and estate.)
4. What happened to Joseph when he was working in Potiphar's house? (All went well for Joseph until Potiphar's wife falsely accused him of a terrible sin and Potiphar sent him to prison.)
5. How did Joseph do in prison? (Even in prison, Joseph was so well respected that the jailer put him in charge over the other prisoners.)
6. How did Joseph get out of prison? (He wisely interpreted Pharaoh's dream.)
7. What was Pharaoh's dream? (That there were going to be 7 years of plenty and then 7 years of famine.)
8. What promotion did Joseph get from Pharaoh? (To be in charge of the food storage and distribution plan.)

Joseph's brothers had sold him as a slave thinking to hurt and humble him. But now he was one of the most powerful men in the world, riding through Egypt's cities in the royal chariot!

Lesson

We will pick up the story at the end of Genesis 41. Pharaoh had just made Joseph in charge of the food storage program in Egypt.

Genesis 41:47-49

As predicted, for seven years the land produced bumper crops. ⁴⁸During those years, Joseph gathered all the crops grown in Egypt and stored the grain from the surrounding fields in the cities. ⁴⁹He piled up huge amounts of grain like sand on the seashore. Finally, he stopped keeping records because there was too much to measure.

Joseph was a wise man. He stored up the excess food during the years of plenty.

There's a lesson here for us, too. When we have extra money or supplies, we should save for the times we won't have as much.

Joseph was able to fill all the barns and storehouses in the country during the 7 years of plenty.

Genesis 41:53-55

At last the seven years of bumper crops throughout the land of Egypt came to an end. ⁵⁴Then the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had predicted. The famine also struck all the surrounding countries, but throughout Egypt there was plenty of food. ⁵⁵Eventually, however, the famine spread throughout the land of Egypt as well. And when the people cried out to Pharaoh for food, he told them, "Go to Joseph, and do whatever he tells you."

The brooks dried up and there was less and less water in the wells. The food was almost used up everywhere but in Egypt.

Genesis 41:56-57

So with severe famine everywhere, Joseph opened up the storehouses and distributed grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout the land of Egypt. ⁵⁷And people from all around came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph because the famine was severe throughout the world.

This famine even effected Joseph's father and brothers up in the land of Israel.

Genesis 42:1-4

When Jacob heard that grain was available in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why are you standing around looking at one another? ²I have heard there is grain in Egypt. Go down there, and buy enough grain to keep us alive. Otherwise we'll die." ³So Joseph's ten older brothers went down to Egypt to buy grain. ⁴But Jacob wouldn't let Joseph's younger brother, Benjamin, go with them, for fear some harm might come to him.

Jacob decided to send his sons down to Egypt to get some grain. But he didn't want to send Benjamin along with the older boys. Ben was Jacob's youngest boy and he didn't want anything to happen to him like had happened to Joseph.

Remember, Joseph's father thought that his favorite son had been killed by wild animals and the brothers didn't try to correct their dad's wrong thinking.

Genesis 42:6

Since Joseph was governor of all Egypt and in charge of selling grain to all the people, it was to him that his brothers came. When they arrived, they bowed before him with their faces to the ground.

It had been 20 years since they had sold their little brother as a slave. Now Joseph was a man.

Genesis 42:7-8

Joseph recognized his brothers instantly, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. "Where are you from?" he demanded. "From the land of Canaan," they replied. "We have come to buy food." ⁸Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they didn't recognize him.

The brothers had no idea this man sitting on a throne dressed like an Egyptian prince was their brother. But Joseph knew his brothers at once!

As they bowed before him, Joseph remembered how he had dreamed many years before that his brothers would one day bow down to him.

[Teacher, review Joseph's two dreams in Genesis 37:7 and 37:9.]

Before he let on to his brothers who he was, he wanted to know if his brothers had changed. So, he accused them of being spies sent down from the land of Canaan, just to see what they would do if they were falsely accused.

The brothers said, "No! We have simply come here to buy grain." And, they tried to explain to Joseph who they were.

Genesis 42:13

"Sir," they said, "there are actually twelve of us. We, your servants, are all brothers, sons of a man living in the land of Canaan. Our youngest brother is back there with our father right now, and one of our brothers is no longer with us."

At least they were being honest, but Joseph continued to test his brothers to see if they were changed men.

Genesis 42:16-17

One of you must go and get your brother. I'll keep the rest of you here in prison. Then we'll find out whether or not your story is true. By the life of Pharaoh, if it turns out that you don't have a younger brother, then I'll know you are spies." ¹⁷So Joseph put them all in prison for three days.

After 3 days, Joseph changed the plan...

Genesis 42:18-20

On the third day Joseph said to them, "I am a God-fearing man. If you do as I say, you will live. ¹⁹If you really are honest men, choose one of your brothers to remain in prison. The rest of you may go home with grain for your starving families. ²⁰But you must bring your youngest brother back to me. This will prove that you are telling the truth, and you will not die." To this they agreed.

So, the brothers loaded their donkeys with the grain and headed for home. But, on the way home they were shocked to find something in their sacks besides grain.

Genesis 42:27

But when they stopped for the night and one of them opened his sack to get grain for his donkey, he found his money in the top of his sack.

Joseph had given his servants secret instructions to return his brother's payments at the top of each of their sacks.

Genesis 42:35

As they emptied out their sacks, there in each man's sack was the bag of money he had paid for the grain! The brothers and their father were terrified when they saw the bags of money.

The famine continued; no crops were growing, food was scarce, and the food they brought from Egypt was almost gone. Jacob finally decided they must go back to Egypt to get more supplies.

Genesis 43:12-13

Also take double the money that was put back in your sacks, as it was probably someone's mistake. ¹³Then take your brother, and go back to the man.

So the brothers went back to Egypt a second time. This time they took their youngest brother, Benjamin, and they went before Joseph.

When Joseph saw his brother, he was very happy.

Genesis 43:16

When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the manager of his household, "These men will eat with me this noon. Take them inside the palace. Then go slaughter an animal, and prepare a big feast."

So, Joseph arranged for a feast to be served to his brothers.

Genesis 43:27-28

After greeting them, he asked, "How is your father, the old man you spoke about? Is he still alive?" ²⁸"Yes," they replied. "Our father, your servant, is alive and well." And they bowed low again.

After talking with his brothers, Joseph became so overcome with emotion that he dashed away from the dining room to shed tears of joy! Then he washed his face and came back to the feast.

Genesis 43:34

And Joseph filled their plates with food from his own table, giving Benjamin five times as much as he gave the others. So they feasted and drank freely with him.

He gave Benjamin five times as much food to see if they would still be jealous like they used to be. But the brothers seemed happy that Benjamin had the most food to eat.

Joseph's brothers still did not recognize him. And, Joseph still had one more test he wanted them to pass before he was sure they had really changed. If they passed the last test, then he would reveal to them who he was.

So next week we will pick up the story there. Do you think they passed the test?

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, help us to be people who are quick to forgive others when they sin against us. We don't ever want to hold a grudge and let bitterness take hold in our hearts. We always want to keep in mind just how much You have forgiven us and loved us even when we are naughty or have a bad attitude so that we can be loving and forgiving with all our friends and family members. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CRAFT CORNER

Let the children work on *The Famine* word search, or send it home as a "take home" paper.

GAME CENTER

Dodge the Question —

Divide the children into two groups. Have one group form a large circle and instruct the other group to stand inside the circle. Give the outside circle a nerf ball. Then tell the children inside the circle to dodge the ball. If a child is hit, he must answer one of the review questions and then join the other circle. Play continues in this manner. Groups exchange places when the last child has been hit; winners are those last to be hit.

Use the following review questions in game of your choice.

1. What is a famine? (It's when it stops raining and the crops can't grow. So, food becomes scarce and people begin to go hungry.)
2. If the famine was all over the world, why did Egypt have grain to sell. (Because Joseph was wise enough to store the excess during the years of plenty.)

3. What did Jacob do when he saw that there was grain in Egypt? (He sent his sons down there to buy grain for their households.)
4. Why didn't Jacob want Benjamin to go along with his other sons to Egypt? (Jacob had already lost one son, Joseph. He didn't want to anything bad to happen to Benjamin as well.)
5. When Joseph's brothers came to him in Egypt to buy grain, they didn't know that it was their long-lost brother, Joseph. After all it had been 20 years and they weren't expecting to see him in Egypt with the fancy royal clothes on. When they bowed down to Joseph, what do you think Joseph was remembering? (That he'd had two dreams that indicated that his older brothers would bow down to him.)
6. Why did Joseph act as a stranger to them? (He wanted to test them to see if they had changed from 20 years ago when they were so jealous and hateful to him.)
7. On the way home from Egypt to the land of Canaan, what were the brothers shocked to find in their grain sacks? (Their money.)
8. When the brothers arrived in Egypt for the second time with their little brother, Benjamin, what did Joseph do? (He invited them to his house for a big feast.)
9. Why did Joseph give Benjamin 5 times as much food as the others? (To see if they would still be jealous like they used to be.)
10. What is today's Memory verse?

For more expositional lessons for children, visit
<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com>

The Famine

Genesis 41 to 47

Jacob's son, Joseph, instructed the Egyptians in ways to prepare for the famine. He was able to help his whole family through the seven dry years.

Follow the instructions to find out why Jacob sent his ten sons to Egypt.

JUDAH

Circle the 5th letter

ASHER

Circle the last 2 letters

LEVI

Circle the 2nd and 4th letters

ISSACHAR

Circle the 2nd and 5th letters

SIMEON

Circle the "O"

REUBEN

Circle the 1st letter

DAN

Circle the last letter

BENJAMIN

Circle the last 2 letters

ZEBULUN

Circle the 2nd letter

GAD

Circle the 1st letter

JOSEPH

Circle the 5th letter

NAPHTALI

Circle the "T"

"T _ _ _ _ _

_ _ _ _ _ Y _ _ _ _ "

Joseph Forgives His Brothers

(Genesis 44-45)

Introduction

God has a special plan for your life. He knows how your whole life will go from beginning to end. He has had every day mapped out since before He created the world. Sometimes we don't understand exactly how God will work out His special plan. Sometimes life might seem hopeless. But believe me, things always work out.

Maybe some of you know the verse, "All things work together for good to those who love God..." (Rom 8:28) it was one of our memory verses. This verse has always been true for me.

But, have you ever known God's plan for your life to work out in a strange way? Joseph did.

What bad things happened to Joseph?

- He was nearly killed; but then sold into slavery.
- Potiphar's wife falsely accused him of a terrible sin and he was sent to prison.
- Before Pharaoh's cup-bearer got out of prison he promised to put in a good word for Joseph, but he forgot for 2 whole years.

Life must have seemed hopeless to Joseph at that point in his life.

Today, we're going to continue the story of Joseph and see how God was at work in all of these things.

Opening Prayer

Father, when we can't see how You're working in our lives, help us to be patient, like Joseph was. Help us to remember that You truly do make all things work together for good for those of us that love You and are called according to Your purpose. Help us to learn the wonderful life lessons You have for us in this passage of the Bible. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

*Forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
(Matthew 6:12)*

Lesson

Last week we learned that Joseph's brothers went down to Egypt two times to get grain. The second time they came with their youngest brother, Benjamin, and Joseph gave them a big feast. But they still didn't know who Joseph was!

Today we will pick up the story at Genesis 44. After the big feast, Joseph's brothers were ready to load up the grain they had come to buy and head back to the land of Canaan where their dad was living.

Joseph came up with a final test to make sure his brothers had changed for the better. He wanted to see if they were only pretending to be good. So, he decided to put his own special silver cup in Benjamin's sack to see if they'd be honest.

Genesis 44:1-2

When his brothers were ready to leave, Joseph gave these instructions to his palace manager: "Fill each of their sacks with as much grain as they can carry, and put each man's money back into his sack. ²Then put my personal silver cup at the top of the youngest brother's sack, along with the money for his grain." So the manager did as Joseph instructed him.

The brothers started on their way, happy that everything had gone well and that Benjamin was safe. Suddenly, they saw a horseman galloping toward them. As he came nearer, they recognized the rider as a servant of the governor of Egypt.

When Joseph's servant got there, he accused them of stealing something of great value. But the brothers denied it.

Genesis 44:8-9

Didn't we return the money we found in our sacks? We brought it back all the way from the land of Canaan. Why would we steal silver or gold

from your master's house? ⁹If you find his cup with any one of us, let that man die. And all the rest of us, my lord, will be your slaves."

So they opened their sacks to prove they were not thieves...

Genesis 44:11-12

They all quickly took their sacks from the backs of their donkeys and opened them. ¹²The palace manager searched the brothers' sacks, from the oldest to the youngest. And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack!

They were all heartsick so they went back to town. When they found Joseph, they bowed down before him, just like in his dreams.

Genesis 44:16

Judah answered, "Oh, my lord, what can we say to you? How can we explain this? How can we prove our innocence? God is punishing us for our sins. My lord, we have all returned to be your slaves—all of us, not just our brother who had your cup in his sack."

Judah is so sorry that he offers all of them to become Joseph's slaves. But Joseph says, "No, I only want one slave, Benjamin."

Genesis 44:17

"No," Joseph said. "I would never do such a thing! Only the man who stole the cup will be my slave. The rest of you may go back to your father in peace."

Joseph was testing to see if his brothers were still mean and selfish and would let Benjamin suffer if they could go free.

Well, you can imagine how upset the brothers were. They promised their father that they would keep their youngest brother safe.

Judah stepped forward and pleaded with Joseph.

Genesis 44:33-34

"So please, my lord, let me stay here as a slave instead of the boy, and let the boy return with his brothers. ³⁴For how can I return to my father if the boy is not with me? I couldn't bear to see the anguish this would cause my father!"

Judah is saying, "Let me be your slave instead of Benjamin. My father will die if my youngest brother does not return home."

How different Judah was now from the time when he convinced his brothers to sell Joseph as a slave, and then lied to his father about what happened to Joseph! Now Judah was so concerned for his father and youngest brother that he was willing to die for them.

Joseph now knew his brothers were better men. Their hearts were changed. Joseph knows it is time to reveal to them who he really is.

Genesis 45:1

Joseph could stand it no longer. There were many people in the room, and he said to his attendants, "Out, all of you!" So he was alone with his brothers when he told them who he was.

Joseph had completely forgiven his brothers of all their wrong doing against him.

Genesis 45:3-4

"I am Joseph!" he said to his brothers. "Is my father still alive?" But his brothers were speechless! They were stunned to realize that Joseph was standing there in front of them. ⁴"Please, come closer," he said to them. So they came closer. And he said again, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into slavery in Egypt."

The brothers are stunned! They didn't know what to say!

Genesis 45:5-6

But don't be upset, and don't be angry with yourselves for selling me to this place. It was God who sent me here ahead of you to preserve your

lives. ⁶This famine that has ravaged the land for two years will last five more years, and there will be neither plowing nor harvesting.

God had it all planned. God had seen to it that Joseph became a powerful ruler in Egypt.

God sometimes has strange ways of getting his plan for our lives to work out. There will be times in your life when you are totally surprised by the way God turns the events of your life out for the best. Truly, "All things work together for good." We just have to be patient. Joseph waited over 20 years to see how good could have come out of his being sold into slavery!

Genesis 45:8

So it was God who sent me here, not you! And he is the one who made me an adviser to Pharaoh—the manager of his entire palace and the governor of all Egypt.

Joseph tells them to go get their dad and bring him down to Egypt.

Genesis 45:9

"Now hurry back to my father and tell him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me master over all the land of Egypt. So come down to me immediately!'

Joseph tells them they can live in the land of Goshen. [Teacher, show the children where this fertile, delta land is on a map.]

Genesis 45:11

I will take care of you there, for there are still five years of famine ahead of us. Otherwise you, your household, and all your animals will starve."

Pharaoh heard about Joseph's brothers.

Genesis 45:17-18

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'This is what you must do: Load your pack animals, and hurry back to the land of Canaan. ¹⁸Then

get your father and all of your families, and return here to me. I will give you the very best land in Egypt, and you will eat from the best that the land produces.'"

What happiness there was when Joseph was finally reunited with his father and all his brothers in the land of Egypt.

Sometimes we don't understand why God allows certain things to happen in our lives. But, like Joseph, we, too, must learn to trust God and His perfect timing for our lives. Joseph did, and great was his reward.

Even though many bad things had happened to Joseph, God blessed him. He had learned that no matter what evil happens, God will cause events to turn to good if we desire His will.

Joseph and his brothers stayed in the land of Egypt for many years. But Joseph remembered that someday God would take them back to the land He promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Teacher, as a final thought, discuss how Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers is like Jesus' forgiveness of us:

- Joseph did not hold his brother's sin against them.
- Beyond forgiving them, he poured out undeserving grace in giving them what they needed to survive and conquer death.
- He provided a place for them to go and live free of the fear of death.
- He never brought up their sin again, but saw it all as a part of God's plan to save His people.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, You don't want us to hold bitterness and anger in our hearts towards anyone. Please help us to forgive others when they sin against us, just like Joseph did. We want to live our lives in a way that brings glory to Your name. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

CRAFT CORNER

Word Search:

Have the children work on a word search or cross word in class or send home as a “take home” paper.

GAME CENTER

Charades

Each participant will receive a word (a person's name) taken from the story of Joseph. The clue giver should act out the clues in order that the class might guess, but can say nothing, not even a sound. He or she may encourage the direction of the guessing by nodding or shaking his head. Or, he may use his arms to gesture or his fingers to show numbers. Topics for pantomime or game of charades:

- Joseph
- Baker
- Cupbearer
- Pharaoh
- Potiphar's Wife

Review Questions:

Or, use the following questions in another game of your choice:

1. Why was Joseph in Egypt? (His brothers sold him into slavery.)
2. Why did Jacob send his sons to Egypt? (To buy grain.)

3. Why didn't Joseph's brothers recognize him? (They thought he might be dead by now and they certainly weren't expecting to see him in Egypt dressed as a prince in royal clothing.)
4. Why didn't Joseph tell his brothers who he was right away? (He wanted to see if they were sorry for the wrong they had done.)
5. What was Joseph's final test to see if his brothers had changed after 20 years? (He decided to put his own special silver cup in Benjamin's sack to see what their reaction would be. To see if they'd be honest.)
6. Whose sack was the silver cup found in? (Benjamin's)
7. Judah was so sorry, that he suggested that all of the brothers become Joseph's _____ (slaves.)
8. How Judah had changed from 20 years earlier when he convinced his brothers to sell Joseph into slavery! What was the biggest change in Judah's heart? (Now he was so concerned for his father and youngest brother's happiness that he was willing to die for them.)
9. What did Joseph do when he saw the wonderful change in his brother's hearts? (Joseph made himself known to his brothers; he had completely forgiven them of all their wrong doings against him.)
10. What did Joseph do for his family after he told them who he was? (Invited them to come live in Egypt.)
11. Why did Joseph tell his brothers not to be unhappy about selling him into slavery? (Because it was obviously God's plan.)
12. What did Pharaoh tell Joseph to do regarding their father? (Go get him and bring him and their household to live in Egypt.)
13. They all stayed in Egypt for many, many years. But what land had God promised to the children of Israel? (The land of Canaan.)

Israelites Settle in Goshen

(Genesis 46-50)

Introduction

We have been learning some wonderful lessons from the life of Joseph. The past few weeks we have been learning the importance of forgiveness. We have learned that even when people treat us badly, God wants us to forgive them, just as God forgives us of our sins.

Today we are going to learn that not only do we need to forgive others when they sin against us, but when we sin against someone, we need to ask for forgiveness. First, we need to ask God to forgive us; then, we need to ask that other person to forgive us. It's not enough to do just one or the other; we must seek the forgiveness of both.

The Bible tells us that when we come to God and confess our sins, He is faithful to forgive us and to cleanse us of our sin (1 John 1:9). The Bible also tells us that when God forgives us, He will never think of that sin again. [Teacher, review the Memory Verse for today.] When you truly know and believe that, you can receive God's forgiveness.

In the same way, when you ask a person you have sinned against to forgive you (and they truly do), we need to receive their forgiveness and move on in our relationship with that person.

Sometimes, when we know we have done something really wrong, it is hard for us to forget. Sometimes I'm so ashamed of myself, that I have a hard time even facing a person I have sinned against. But if they have truly forgiven you, then they will also forget about that past sin. The Bible tells us that love keeps no record of being wronged (1 Cor 13:5b). So, we need to humble ourselves and receive their forgiveness.

[Teacher, be careful not to teach the children that they need to forgive themselves. Only God can forgive sin. Rather, we need to teach the importance of appropriating God's forgiveness. If we truly believe that God does forgive sin and will never hold it against us again, then we can know our relationship with Him is restored. That gives us peace.]

Today we are going to finish the story of Joseph and learn that not only did Joseph forgive his brothers, but his brothers finally received his forgiveness and they lived the rest of their lives together in the land of Goshen in peace.

Opening Prayer

Father, we are so grateful to You that when You forgive us our sins, You forget about them as far as the east is from the west. Today, help us to learn how important it is for us to receive forgiveness both from You and from others so that we can live in peace with everyone. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

"And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins." (Jeremiah 31:34)

Lesson

We've been learning about the children of Israel.

- Why was Joseph in Egypt? (His brothers sold him into slavery.)
- Why did Jacob send his sons to Egypt? (To buy grain.)

Last week we left the story off with Joseph bringing his father and brothers and all their children and animals from Canaan to Egypt.

Genesis 45:17-18

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'This is what you must do: Load your pack animals, and hurry back to the land of Canaan. ¹⁸Then get your father and all of your families, and return here to me. I will give you the very best land in Egypt, and you will eat from the best that the land produces.'"

So, Jacob set out for Egypt with all his possession. The first night, God spoke to Jacob in a vision.

Genesis 46:2-4

*During the night God spoke to him in a vision. “Jacob! Jacob!” he called. “Here I am,” Jacob replied. ³“I am God, the God of your father,” the voice said. “Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for **there I will make your family into a great nation.** ⁴I will go with you down to Egypt, and **I will bring you back again.** You will die in Egypt, but Joseph will be with you to close your eyes.”*

Notice that God promised to make his family into a great nation and to bring him back again to the Promised Land; Jacob knew this move to Egypt was only temporary. God had promised to give the land that we know of today as *Israel* to the descendants of Abraham. And God passed that promise down to Isaac and to Jacob.

So, Jacob and his sons, the children of Israel, packed up everything and moved their families to Egypt.

Genesis 46:6

They also took all their livestock and all the personal belongings they had acquired in the land of Canaan. So Jacob and his entire family went to Egypt—

Joseph could hardly wait to see his father after all these years!

Genesis 46:29

Joseph prepared his chariot and traveled to Goshen to meet his father, Jacob. When Joseph arrived, he embraced his father and wept, holding him for a long time.

What happiness there was when Joseph was finally reunited with his father and all his brothers in the land of Egypt.

17 years later, it was time for Jacob to die and he had a special last request.

Genesis 47:30-31

When I die, please take my body out of Egypt and bury me with my ancestors.” So, Joseph promised, “I will do as you ask.” ³¹“Swear that

you will do it,” Jacob insisted. So, Joseph gave his oath, and Jacob bowed humbly at the head of his bed.

Jacob was asking Joseph not to leave his bones in Egypt; he wanted them to be taken back to the Promised Land to be buried in the family burial place.

Genesis 49:31-33

There Abraham and his wife Sarah are buried. There Isaac and his wife, Rebekah, are buried. And there I buried Leah. ³²It is the plot of land and the cave that my grandfather Abraham bought from the Hittites.” ³³When Jacob had finished this charge to his sons, he drew his feet into the bed, breathed his last, and joined his ancestors in death.

After Jacob’s death, Joseph took his body back to the land of Canaan and buried him in the family tomb.

Genesis 50:14

After burying Jacob, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had accompanied him to his father’s burial.

When they returned to Egypt, Joseph’s brothers started to worry that Joseph would now finally take his revenge against them for all the mean things they had done to him.

Genesis 50:15-18

But now that their father was dead, Joseph’s brothers became fearful. “Now Joseph will show his anger and pay us back for all the wrong we did to him,” they said. ¹⁶So they sent this message to Joseph: “Before your father died, he instructed us ¹⁷to say to you: ‘Please forgive your brothers for the great wrong they did to you—for their sin in treating you so cruelly.’ So we, the servants of the God of your father, beg you to forgive our sin.” When Joseph received the message, he broke down and wept. ¹⁸Then his brothers came and threw themselves down before Joseph. “Look, we are your slaves!” they said.

The brothers were still feeling guilty of their sins against their younger brother. But Joseph did not hold a grudge against his older brothers. He could clearly see God’s hand in sending him ahead to Egypt.

Genesis 50:19-21

But Joseph replied, "Don't be afraid of me. Am I God, that I can punish you? ²⁰You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people. ²¹No, don't be afraid. I will continue to take care of you and your children." So he reassured them by speaking kindly to them.

Finally, the brothers received Joseph's forgiveness. Now they truly knew that Joseph did not hold a grudge against them. They all lived in peace together for the rest of their lives.

Genesis 50:22

So Joseph and his brothers and their families continued to live in Egypt. Joseph lived to the age of 110.

The children of Israel stayed in the land of Egypt for more than 400 years. But Joseph knew that someday God would take them back to the land He promised Abraham, Isaac, and his father, Jacob.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, thank You for all the wonderful life lessons we have learned from the life of Joseph. Joseph had made his mind up as a young boy to live his life in a way that pleases You. He was kind, thoughtful and helpful. Joseph was also long-suffering. He didn't hold a grudge against the people who did wrong things to him. He never tried to return hurt for hurt. Nor did he ever complain because he trusted that You had a plan and a purpose for his life. Joseph truly believed that You can make all things work together for good. That's why Joseph found it easy to forgive his brothers! Give us a desire to be more like Joseph. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES**CRAFT CORNER****GAME CENTER*****Name that Word***

Make game cards with "Secret Words" from your lesson. Divide the class into two teams. Each team is given 100 points to start with. First team up chooses a representative who is given a Secret Word. That student must try to get someone on his team to guess what the word is without saying the word. (For example, *camel*/ It has humps. It doesn't need much water. It is hairy.) Subtract from each team's score, the number of clues it took to guess the Secret Word.

Secret Words:

Jacob	Camel	Coat of Many Colors
Famine	Slavery	Jail
Pharaoh	Shepherd	Father

Review Questions:

Or, use the following review questions in another game of your choice:

1. Which son did Jacob love the most? (Joseph.)
2. What did Jacob do for Joseph that made his brothers especially jealous of him? (Made him a coat of many colors.)
3. What did Joseph's big brothers want to do to Joseph? (They plotted to kill him but then decided to throw him into a dry well. Finally, they sold him to some Midianite traders who were heading for Egypt.)

4. Name some things that happened to Joseph while he was living in Egypt. (The Midianite traders sold Joseph to Potiphar; Potiphar made him the manager of his whole estate; Potiphar's wife falsely accused him of a terrible sin and he was sent to prison; the prison warden made Joseph the manager of the whole prison; he interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, warning him that after 7 years of plenty there would be 7 years of famine; Pharaoh made Joseph manager over the whole country of Egypt.)
5. What is a famine? (When no crops will grow.)
6. Why did Jacob send his sons to Egypt? (He'd heard that there was food down there.)
7. Who did they meet when they got to Egypt? (Joseph!)
8. Why were they surprised to meet up with Joseph? (His brothers had led Jacob to believe his favorite son had been killed by wild animals.)
9. Why did Joseph tell his brothers not to be upset or angry for selling him into slavery? (Because he could clearly see God's hand in sending him ahead to Egypt.)
10. Why did Jacob know that the family's move to Egypt was only temporary? (Because he believed God's promise to Abraham to give the land of Israel to his descendants.)
11. Why can we trust God even when bad things happen to us? (God can make all things work together for good. He has a plan and a purpose for each of our lives.)
12. Where did Jacob and his family live in Egypt? (Goshen)
13. Why did God place Joseph in a powerful position in Egypt? (So, he could sustain Jacob's family through the long famine.)
14. How should we handle the pain when someone hurts us? (Take it to God. Don't dwell on it.)
15. Why do we sometimes suffer or endure pain in life? (So, God can use us.)

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