

## GOD CALLED OUR FATHERS

UNIT TWO: Isaac, Jacob, Joseph

**Lesson 7:****Joseph Forgave His Brothers**

## CONTENT:

1. God got Joseph out of prison by giving him the secret of dreams. Joseph told the king's two servants what their dreams meant. What he said came true.
2. Then the king had a dream which no one could understand. Joseph explained that there would be 7 good years of plenty and 7 bad years when there would be no food. The king trusted him and made him governor of the whole of Egypt.
3. For 7 years Joseph supervised the storing of extra grain. Then when the rains failed, he gave out the grain bit by bit so that no one was hungry. Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy grain. Joseph forgave them and welcomed the whole family to live in Egypt.
4. Jesus also forgave those who had treated him badly. He taught us to pray in the 'Our Father': 'As we forgive those who trespass against us.' With God's help we can forgive those who sin against us.



REFERENCES: Genesis 39:21-23; Chapters 40-46 (In brief); CCC 2842.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts; colouring sheet 'DREAMS', colours.

HOME ASSIGNMENT: Read the handout. Do something nice for the person who has hurt you.

**I. STARTER:**

- Where was Joseph when the story stopped last time? [*In prison in Egypt.*]  
Even though he was in prison he knew that God was good and had not forgotten him. Let's say the Joseph rhyme to remind us of the story till now. [*Children do the first 5 verses of the 'Joseph Rap'.*]

**II. DEVELOPMENT:**

Let's see if God really had a good plan! Joseph was far from all his friends and family. It looked as if he would grow old and die there in the prison. But God did something! One day two of the king's servants were sent to the same prison as Joseph. One was the king's wine waiter. His job was to serve wine to the king. The other was the king's baker. He used to bake cakes for the king. The king had sent both of them to prison because he was angry with them.

One morning, both the king's servants woke up looking upset. The wine-waiter said, "What a funny dream I had last night! I dreamt that I saw 3 bunches of grapes. I crushed the grapes with my hand and gave the cup of juice to the king. What could my dream mean?"

Joseph said, "I can tell you what it means! The 3 bunches of grapes means 3 days. After 3 days the king will give you back your job again." The wine waiter was very happy.

Then the baker said, "Now tell me what my dream means, since you're so clever. I dreamt that I had 3 baskets of cakes on my head. But birds kept coming and eating the cakes."

Joseph said, "The 3 baskets mean 3 days. After 3 days you will die and the birds will eat you up!"

Every one waited to see what would happen. After 3 days, Joseph's words came true. It was the king's birthday. He said, "Send my wine waiter back to serve me. But the baker must die."

After many months someone else had a dream which he couldn't understand. [*Can you guess who?*] The king himself! He woke up and called all his wise men. He said, "Tell me what my dream means. I dreamt that I was standing next to the river and out of the river came 7 fat cows. They ate the grass next to the river. Then suddenly 7 other cows came out of the river. They were thin and ugly. The thin cows ate up the fat cows, but even after that they remained thin."

All the wise men thought and thought, but they couldn't understand the dream. Then the wine-waiter remembered Joseph. He said to the king, "I know someone who will tell you the secret of your dreams! There's a young man in prison called Joseph who told me what my dream meant, and it came true!"

The king said, "Bring this young man to me!" They quickly got Joseph washed and dressed and brought him to the king. The king asked him, "Can you tell the secret of dreams?"

"I can't, but God will tell me what your dream means." So the king told him his dream. Joseph listened to God's voice in his mind and then he said, "O King, God wanted you to know what is going to happen to your land. The 7 fat cows are 7 good years when there will be good rain and plenty of food. And the thin cows mean that after the 7 good years there will be 7 bad years. There will be no rain and no food for anyone. I have an idea! Why don't you collect the extra grain for the 7 good years and then you can give it out to the people when there is no food."

"Wonderful!" the king said. "God has shared his secrets with you and has made you very wise. You are the best person to look after my country!"

The king took off the ring from his finger and put it on Joseph. He put a gold chain round his neck. He even gave his daughter to Joseph to be his wife. He said, "From now on everyone must listen to Joseph. He is the Governor of Egypt. Do whatever he tells you!"

[Give out the colouring page 'Dreams'. The children fill in the missing words; join the dots; and colour the pictures.]

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#### NEXT CLASS:

Last time we heard how Joseph got out of prison and became the Governor of Egypt. He was now in charge of everything. Joseph remembered what God had told him about the king's dream. He built big store-houses. For 7 years there was plenty of rain and plenty of food, just as he had said. He told the people to bring the extra grain to his store houses and there he kept it safely. Then after 7 years, the rain did not fall. Nothing could grow. Joseph opened the storehouses and started giving grain to the people to eat little by little, so no one was hungry in Egypt.

But in the other places round about people were hungry, because there had been no rain there too. Back home, Jacob and his family were in trouble too. There was no grass for the sheep and no grain for the people. Everyone became hungry. Then someone told them, "There is plenty of grain in Egypt." Jacob called his sons and said, "Take some money and some empty bags and donkeys and go to Egypt. See if you can buy grain for us."

So Joseph's brothers travelled to Egypt. When they reached there they asked the people, "Where can we buy grain?" The people said, "Go and ask the Governor."

The brothers went to Joseph's palace. When they entered and saw the big, tall man dressed in grand clothes, they didn't recognise him. They bowed down with their heads to the ground and said, "Please sir, will you let us buy some grain for our family?"

Joseph, of course, recognised his brothers. As they bowed down, he remembered his dreams about the 11 sheaves and 11 stars bowing down to him. But he pretended that he didn't know them.

He shouted, "Who are you? Where have you come from? I think you have come to spy on our country so that you can attack us!"

"Oh no! We are good men!" the brothers said. "We only came to buy grain from you, because we are hungry and have nothing to eat."

Then Joseph couldn't bear it any more. He sent his servants out of the room. When the doors were closed, he cried and cried. He shouted, "Don't you know me? I am your brother Joseph!"

The brothers were so shocked, they couldn't say a word. They thought, "Now we're finished! If this is really Joseph, he will kill us because of what we did to him." They all looked frightened and kept quiet.

Then Joseph said, "I am really Joseph. Don't be upset that you sold me to the traders. Actually it was God's plan to send me here so that I could save you all. There will be no food for 5 more years. All of you must come and live here and I will take care of you." He opened his arms and hugged and kissed his brothers.

The brothers went home and told their father the wonderful news. Jacob shouted with joy, "My son is alive! My son Joseph is alive!"

The whole family: the brothers, their wives and children with their servants and animals packed up and went to Egypt. They lived there happily for hundreds of years.

*[Give out handouts and read the top portion. Do the rest of the 'Joseph Rap']*

### III. REFLECTION & PRAYER:

- How good Joseph was! Even though his brothers had been so mean and cruel, he still loved them and forgave them. (Forgive means to say, 'It's all right. I am not angry with you anymore. We can be friends again.')
- Jesus also forgave those who were cruel to them. Do you remember what he prayed when he was on the cross? *[Children could look at the handouts for Les 9] [He said, 'Father forgive them!']*
- Jesus wants us to forgive those who are mean to us or hurt us. That's why he taught us to say in the 'Our Father': 'As we forgive those who trespass against us.' It is very difficult to forgive those who hurt us. But with God's help we can do it.
- Think of someone who has hurt you in some way: shouted at you, made fun of you, stopped being your friend, hit you. Now draw yourself and the person holding hands. *[Children draw themselves and the person whom they need to forgive.]* As you draw, ask God to help you forgive that person. Don't tell your friend about it. Draw quietly, without talking.

*[Children draw, then all pray the prayer together.]*

Jesus, with your help, I forgive \_\_\_\_\_.  
Please bless him (or her) and make him happy.

**Home assignment:** Read the handout. Do something nice for the person who has hurt you.