

LESSON 26

Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers

GENESIS 45:1 – 46:4



BIBLE TRUTH

BEHIND THE PLANS OF MEN STANDS THE PLAN OF GOD

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. **OPENING REVIEW** **5 MIN**
Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
2. **BIBLE STORY** **10 MIN**
Read Genesis 45:1—46:4 from the Scriptures or read story 26, "Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** **20 MIN**
Forgiveness
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ (optional) cross-cut paper shredder (the kind that cuts the paper two ways leaving only confetti) or scissors
 - ✓ sheets of white paper (one sheet for every four students)
 - ✓ plastic cups (one cup for every four students)
4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** **10 MIN**
5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** **10 MIN**
All Things Work ...
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ pencils, paper
 - ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase markers
6. **WORD BIBLE MEMORY** **5 MIN**
7. **ACTIVITY TIME** **15 MIN**
Brothers Reunited
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ crayons, colored pencils, paper
8. **CLOSING PRAYER** **5 MIN**
9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** **10 MIN**
Remnant
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ a piece of cloth 24 × 40 inches with the word Jesus written in permanent ink in one corner
 - ✓ scissors

TOTAL 90 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Joseph reveals who he is to his brothers—When Joseph tells his brothers who he really is, they are speechless! They already fear being punished or killed. Now they must wonder if Joseph wants to take revenge on them. Instead, Joseph is kind and calls them to draw near. He tries to comfort them, and his tears show that he loves them.

Four times in this passage, Joseph says that God is the One who has directed his life and not the sin of his brothers.

Joseph reveals that God is the Lord of history—Instead of bringing judgment against his brothers, Joseph forgives them. As ruler of Egypt, he could have put them in prison for the rest of their lives. Instead, Joseph embraces his brothers and comforts them. Joseph recognizes that God has been working out a plan to save Israel. It was not hard for Joseph to forgive his brothers because his main concern was the plan and purpose of God.

Joseph completely forgives his brothers—Pharaoh invites all of Joseph's family to return to Egypt. So Joseph sends his brothers back to their father and tells them exactly what to say to him.

But Joseph does not have them mention anything about how his brothers betrayed him. From a human point of view, this is the single most important fact in the history of Jacob's family. But Joseph has so completely forgiven his brothers that it is not even worth mentioning. As a result, all the news that comes to Jacob is good news.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Remnant

In Genesis 45:7 Joseph reveals the Lord's purpose in preserving a remnant of Israel. The word *remnant* means that which remains or is left over. We use it today to describe the piece of carpet that remains unused when a room is recarpeted. In the Bible, God uses this word to describe the portion of Israel that he is going to save. Israel often rebelled against God, but he always saved a portion of Israel so that his promise might be fulfilled.

Romans 9:27–29 tells us that even to the end, the number of the house of Israel will be immense, but only a remnant will be saved. A new remnant, one chosen by grace, is described in Romans 11:5. The remnant, then, consists of those whom God has chosen and will preserve, not by works but by his grace.

WHERE IS JESUS?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read Matthew 26:47–56; Luke 23:33–43.

Joseph was betrayed, thrown into a pit, and sold into slavery by his own brothers. But Joseph was ready to forgive them completely for what they had done to him.

Joseph had grace from God to forgive his brothers, and this gives us a glance forward to Jesus. Jesus was betrayed by his friend, Judas, deserted by all his disciples, and crucified by his own people. He too extends forgiveness to the very ones who hurt him and to anyone else who repents of their sin.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Genesis 45:1—46:4 from the Scriptures or read story 26, "Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 20 MIN

Forgiveness

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ (optional) cross-cut paper shredder (the kind that cuts the paper two ways leaving only confetti) or scissors
- ✓ sheets of white paper (one sheet for every four students)
- ✓ plastic cups (one cup for every four students)

The activity is designed to show the children the power of forgiveness.

Divide the class into teams of four. Give each team a sheet of paper. Tell them to tear the paper into four pieces, one for each person on their team. Have each person write a sin that God has forgiven us for; e.g., lying, rebellion, anger. Have each team collect the papers and bring them up to you together. When all of the teams have completed the assignment and are standing in line, shred each team's papers and give them the remains, one team at a time, in a plastic cup. Be careful to keep them separate.

When all the team's papers have been shredded, tell them they are going to race to see which team can be the first to reconstruct their original sheet of paper like a puzzle. Tell them they have five minutes. The winner will be the team with the most matching pieces.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **Did you think it was difficult to reassemble the paper recording your sin?**
(yes)
- **Who in our story demonstrated forgiveness?**
(Joseph demonstrated forgiveness toward his brothers.)
- **How was Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers 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 their sin up again, but saw it all as a part of God's plan to save his people.)
- **What did the paper shredding exercise help you understand?**
(Shredding the paper was like true forgiveness. It was impossible to put the sheets back together in five minutes. Psalm 103:12 tells us that God has removed our sins as far as the east is from the west. Since east and west are opposites that can never come together, God is telling us that once our sins are forgiven they are gone for good and it would be impossible to bring them back.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 **10 MIN**

All Things Work...

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ pencils, paper
- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase markers

Read through Genesis 45:1–11. Have the children describe how God was working behind the scenes to accomplish his plan in Joseph’s life. Have them make a list of all the different components of the story that seem to be by chance but which are later clearly part of God’s plan.

By chance/God’s plan:

- There was an empty pit to throw Joseph into instead of killing him.
- Joseph was bought by a prominent official.
- Joseph found favor with the man in charge of the prison.
- Joseph had the freedom to talk to the cupbearer.
- The cupbearer remembered Joseph.
- Joseph was still in the same prison as before so he could be found when the Pharaoh looked for him.

Have the children individually write down as many as they can think of, and then come together as a class and write a list on the whiteboard. Talk about what this reveals about God working behind the scenes.

Ask the children if they know a Bible verse that talks about God’s sovereignty and providence to work out his plan. (Examples: Proverbs 3:5–6; 16:9; Romans 8:28)

Ask the children if any of them have a testimony where they saw God’s hand working all things together for good in their lives.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY **5 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

Brothers Reunited

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ crayons, colored pencils, paper

Have the children draw a picture of Joseph's reunion with his brothers.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Remnant

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a piece of cloth 24 × 40 inches with the word Jesus written in permanent ink in one corner
- ✓ scissors

Use this exercise to show how God always preserved a remnant that would one day lead to Jesus.

Fold the cloth in half (12 × 40 inches), then again (6 × 40 inches), and a third time (3 × 40 inches). Remember which side has the word Jesus and keep it hidden from the class. Tell the class that the cloth represents God's people. Tell them that when God's people sinned, he often allowed their sin to divide them like with Noah and the flood. Cut the cloth in two and throw away the half *without* the word Jesus. Tell the class that God preserved Noah and his family. Cut off a third and tell them that at the Tower of Babel, God confused their languages but then he called out a man named Abram. Cut the cloth in half and throw away the half *without* the word Jesus. Tell them the leftover piece represented Noah and his family. Tell them that in the future, Israel would disobey but God would always save a remnant. Cut off most of the cloth and throw all away but a small folded piece with the name Jesus on it.

Finally say that God always preserved a remnant, a small group of Israel, who would multiply (unfold the cloth once) and multiply (unfold the remnant a second time) and multiply (unfold the cloth a third time). Until one day Jesus would be born to save the world. (Show them the word Jesus on the cloth.)