

God Sees Joseph Forgive

Genesis 42:1-8; 43:16; 45; 46:5-7

The Bible tells us God was with Joseph when his brothers wanted to hurt him, while he was a slave in Egypt, while he was in jail, and when he worked for the king. God gave Joseph what he needed every day: his care and help to work well and use what he knew to help others.

God showed Joseph what the king's dream meant and how to take care of the people during the seven bad years. During the seven good years, everything happened just like God said. Grain and food grew and the people had more than they could eat. They stored the extra in big barns. Joseph rode all over Egypt making sure that grain was being saved.

Then came the seven bad years. The grain and food stopped growing. The people got hungry. Joseph opened the buildings and there was enough grain for everyone. They could buy as much grain as they needed. God gave Joseph what he needed: a plan to provide for the people during the seven bad years. There was so much extra grain that Joseph was able to sell grain to people from other countries who also were going through seven bad years.

In Canaan, where Joseph's family lived, they were also having 7 bad years where no grain or food would grow. But they had not saved grain from the good years. Jacob, Joseph's father, heard that there was grain in Egypt, but he did not know it was because God had given Joseph a plan for providing for his people. Jacob sent 10 of Joseph's brothers to Egypt to buy grain and food.

The brothers traveled a long way to Egypt and went to see the leader who was selling the grain. The brothers did not recognize Joseph because he wore Egyptian clothes and spoke the Egyptian language. They were not expecting to see their brother ever again! Joseph recognized his brothers! He knew who they were right away. He remembered how they had treated him many years ago. Because of them, he was put in a deep hole, sold as a slave and even put in jail. But he didn't tell them who he was – not yet!

Joseph sold them grain and sent them home again. They returned to their home but soon they used all the grain. Still no food or grain was growing in Canaan. Jacob told the brothers to go back to Egypt and buy more grain. This time when the brothers arrived in Egypt, Joseph could not keep his secret any longer. He invited them to dinner and sent everyone else away. Joseph said, "I am Joseph, Is my father still alive?"

When the brothers heard this, they were very afraid! They remembered how they were jealous and angry and how they wanted to kill Joseph. They remembered that they sold him as a slave. They wondered what he would do to them and they were very worried. But Joseph said, "Don't be afraid or even angry with yourselves because of what you did to me. You sold me as a slave, but God was with me. He gave me everything I needed every day, including a plan to save many people from hunger during these seven bad years. God sent me here so He could save you and your families. Now I am a very important man here."

Joseph hugged his brothers and forgave them for everything. He sent them home with grain and told them to come back with Jacob and all of their families and live with him in Egypt. And they did!

God saw what was happening to Joseph every day and He was always with Joseph. He helped him provide for the people. He also helped Joseph forgive his brothers and get along with them even though they had treated Joseph badly. Joseph learned that he could depend on God for everything, even to forgive his brothers and show them love.

Joseph probably had trouble forgetting what his brothers did to him. But he did what we have to do, depend on God to help us forgive. We can even ask God to help us forget! Maybe we will forget and maybe not, but God will help us forgive and show love when we are upset with someone.

August Bible Verse:

Be strong and courageous!
Do not tremble or be dismayed
for the Lord your God is with you
wherever you go. Joshua 1:9

Joseph forgives his brothers.

Genesis 42:1—45:28



Learning Activity (Craft)

Joseph's Headdress

Materials: *master of headdress copied on cardstock and cut out
 *small paper plates – one per child
 *craft stick – one per child.

Tell the children that in the lesson today, Joseph has an important job. Joseph helped the king save the people by planning for seven years with no rain and nothing growing. In his job He wore a "hat" that looked like the hat we are going to make for our Joseph puppet. Let the children color the headdress. Help them glue the headdress to the back of a paper plate and draw on a face. Help them attach a craft stick. Joseph's plan to save grain for the dry years caused his brothers to travel to Egypt. Joseph was able to see them again, forgive them and they became a family again.

