

But forgiveness is with you—that's why you are honored. (Psalm 130:4)

Joseph Saves the Day – Genesis 41:1-57

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: Reconciliation

When we left Joseph last week, he was still in prison. Joseph had correctly interpreted a dream for the pharaoh's cupbearer two years earlier. Joseph asked the cupbearer to remember him and tell the pharaoh about him when the cupbearer returned to work, but the cupbearer forgot.

The pharaoh began to have dreams he did not understand. He knew the dreams were important, but none of his advisors or religious leaders could tell him what the dreams meant. The cupbearer remembered Joseph and told the pharaoh how Joseph had correctly interpreted his dreams when he was in prison.

The pharaoh summoned Joseph from prison. Before Joseph heard the dreams, he told the pharaoh that God sent the dreams, and it was God who would provide the interpretation, not Joseph. Pharaoh's dreams included seven fat cows followed by seven skinny cows, and seven healthy stalks of grain followed by seven weak stalks of grain. Joseph informed Pharaoh his dreams meant God was going to send seven years of abundance followed by seven years of severe famine. He offered advice to the pharaoh and recommended a wise person be appointed to take charge of the grain harvest.

Pharaoh took his advice and appointed Joseph to be second-in-command to insure the people were taken care of in the years of famine. Joseph did not know events would soon take shape that would give him and his brothers a chance to reconcile.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

Have you had hurts you have been unable to get rid of? Grab a bottle of bubbles and think of a hurt you have and the person who gave it to you. As the bubbles float away, imagine your hurts floating away. Pray that God will help you forgive.

Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, seven small toy cows*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 1 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4). Place the seven cows inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 1 Faith Word Poster, and invite the children to wonder about what the word *reconciliation* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: Our story today is about how Joseph saved the day.

ASK: Do you remember what happened to Joseph in last week's story?

- Take a few minutes to talk about last week's Bible story.
- We recommend reading a story each week from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary kid to read, "Joseph Saves the Day" (pp. 46–47), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, Joseph helped others. Guide us to help others too. Amen.

Joseph Saves the Day – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons, pencils*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy Reproducible 3A for each preschooler.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture. Invite elementary kids to help the preschoolers follow the directions on the page.

SAY: God thought Joseph was special. God thinks you are special!

Pharaoh's Dream – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Pharaoh's Dream" (Reproducible 3B) for each child.*

SAY: Pharaoh had a confusing dream. Joseph helped Pharaoh "decode" the confusing dream. Use the code key at the bottom of this page to help Joseph.

- Allow the kids to work on the page. The kids may work together.

ASK: What message did you find?

SAY: Pharaoh had strange dreams. In his dreams, he saw seven fat cows. Then he saw seven thin cows. These dreams had an important meaning. We'll learn more about what the dreams meant in today's session.

The Dream Team – Older Elementary

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils, crayons or markers

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "The Dream Team" (Reproducible 3C) for each child.

SAY: In today's Bible story, Joseph became the second-in-command in Egypt! Design a poster promoting Pharaoh and Joseph as "The Dream Team."

- Allow the kids to work on their posters.
- After the kids have had time to work, invite them to share their posters.

Egyptian Hieroglyphs – All Ages

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, paper, card stock, crayons, colored pencils, markers, scissors, banner paper and way to hang it on classroom walls, posterboard

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Egyptian Hieroglyphs" (Reproducible 3D) for each kid in your class. Gather supplies. You do not necessarily need to include all these supplies. This will be an open art activity where the kids can decide what kind of art they wish to make.

SAY: Ancient Egyptians used a kind of writing called *hieroglyphs*. Hieroglyphs use word pictures as a large alphabet for writing things down. Use the hieroglyphs on the page to make your own piece of art.

- Make the art materials available to the class.
- Invite the kids to make a hieroglyph piece of art on paper or card stock. You may also invite a group of kids to hang a large sheet of banner paper on the wall.
- Allow the kids to work on their art.

SAY: In ancient Egypt, these pictures were a way of writing down ideas.

ASK: What do you think the different word pictures mean?

- Invite the kids to make guesses about what the word pictures might mean.
- Encourage the kids to take their hieroglyph art and reference sheets with them today and make more projects at home.

Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy today's Take-Home Pages from the Reproducible Kids' Book, 3F–3G (pp. 75–76). "Joseph Saves the Day" is written in short sections that are one to three sentences long. Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time. Display the Unit 1 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15).

- Read through the story.

ASK: What do you think will happen to Joseph next?

Share a Story

Supplies: Celebrate Wonder DVD, TV, DVD player

- Invite the children to join you, sitting in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 3 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors

Prepare Ahead: Lay out the Unit 1 Wonder Story Mat (Class Pack—pp. 7 & 18). Cut out the two remaining Unit 1 story figures (Class Pack—p. 6), if not already done.

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 1 Wonder Story Mat.

SAY: In this unit, we are using this definition for *reconciliation*: to bring peace between persons who have disagreed.

- Point to the words on the Unit 1 Wonder Story Mat.

SAY: This word is *reconciliation*, which means to bring peace to people who disagree. This word is *forgiveness*. *Forgive* means to let go of any bad feelings about another.

WONDER together:

- How did Joseph's interpretation of the pharaoh's dream help the pharaoh and Egypt?
- Why did Joseph tell the pharaoh his gift of interpreting dreams came from God?
- Which of these words would you use to describe today's Bible story?

- Place the Bible story figure of Pharaoh on the Wonder Story Mat.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the seven cows.

WONDER: Why are there seven cows in the Wonder Box?

Experience Wonder

Fat Cows, Thin Cows

SAY: Pharaoh had strange dreams. In his dreams, he saw seven fat cows. Then he saw seven thin cows.

- Invite the kids to sit on the floor.
- Demonstrate how to act like a fat cow. Have the kids puff their cheeks up with air.
- Next, demonstrate how to act like a thin cow. Have the kids suck in their cheeks.
- Invite the class to close their eyes. When you say, "Go," the kids should act like fat cows or thin cows. Instruct them to stay that way until you say, "Open."
- As they open their eyes and look around the room, have them continue to stay "fat" or "thin" as you count. Did you have more fat cows or thin cows?
- Continue playing the game as time allows.

SAY: Pharaoh's dreams had a meaning. We will learn more about what his dreams meant in today's session.

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 1 Bible verse is Psalm 130:4. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Psalms in the Old or New Testament? (*Old*) Where is Psalms located in the Old Testament? (*about the middle of your Bible*) In what chapter of Psalms is our verse located? (*130*) What is the verse number? (*4*)

- Gather the kids around the Unit 1 Bible Verse Poster. Read it together.

ASK: What is the reference for our verse? (*Psalm 130:4*)

SAY: Our Bible verse helps us understand that forgiveness comes from God. We will learn about forgiveness and reconciliation as we hear more about Joseph's story.

Bible Verse Puzzle Pieces

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, white or colored card stock, laminator and laminating supplies, one or more shallow containers, play sand or small pebbles, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy one or more copies of “Bible Verse Puzzle Pieces” (Reproducible 3E) onto white or colored card stock. You may choose to make one or more sets of the puzzle pieces depending on the size of your class.

- Cut out the puzzle pieces from Reproducible 3E. Laminate the pieces, if possible.
- Place each set of laminated pieces in a shallow container filled with play sand or pebbles. The kids in your class will enjoy taking turns pulling the pieces out of the container and putting the verse in the correct order.
- You may choose to group younger and older kids together. Younger kids may enjoy finding the puzzle pieces. Older kids may enjoy figuring out the correct order for the verse.
- Instruct the kids to refer to the Unit 1 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15) to put the puzzle pieces in order.

SAY: Our Bible verse says, “But forgiveness is with you—that’s why you are honored” (Psalm 130:4). We will learn more about how forgiveness is a big part of Joseph’s story this month.

Tip: Save this activity to use again next week.

Peaceful Place

Supplies: Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, suggested book: “I Love My New Toy!” by Mo Willems, seven cows and seven grains (pictures or toys), containers with different grains, glue, paper, sand tray

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Let the children feel the grains and glue the grains on paper to make a picture.

Tip: All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional. Choose what you want or add your own ideas.

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Reconciliation Through Forgiveness

Supplies: bottle of bubbles with wand

SAY: A spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to God. Reconciling with and forgiving others helps us grow closer to God. It can be hard to forgive others when we have been hurt, but that is what God wants us to do. God always forgives us, no matter what we do

- Guide the children through this spiritual practice:
 - Have the children stand in a circle and close their eyes. Have them each think of someone who has hurt them.
 - Give the bubbles to the first child.
- SAY:** Blow a bubble. As the bubble drifts away, say, “I am forgiven, so I forgive.”
- Have the children pass around the bubbles, so everyone has a chance to forgive.
- PRAY:** Repeat after me: “God, I am thankful you forgive me. Help me to forgive others. Amen.”
- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: “May you always carry forgiveness in your heart. God bless you.”

Family Spiritual Practice

SAY: Let’s take a look at your Take-Home Pages for today (*Reproducibles 3F–3G*). Ask your family to participate in this week’s spiritual practice.

Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Retell the Story with Song

- Have the children interact with the Unit 1 Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 6) as you sing the song.
- Sing the verse to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell.”

SING: Oh, Joseph helped the pharaoh. / Oh, Joseph helped the pharaoh. / Pharaoh asked for Joseph’s help. / And Joseph helped the pharaoh.

SAY: After Joseph was in prison for thirteen years, the pharaoh finally freed him. Joseph could have been mad at the pharaoh, but he helped him instead. It didn’t take Joseph long to forgive the pharaoh.

WONDER: Do you think Joseph thought about his brothers? Do you think he would forgive them?

Early and Older Elementary – Gather and Save

Supplies: two small buckets for each team, spoons, beads or gems, masking tape, timer

Prepare Ahead: Use masking tape to create a start line and a finish line for each team. Place a bucket with beads at the start line for each team (buckets should have fairly even amounts) and an empty bucket at the finish line for each team.

SAY: In the Bible story, Joseph interpreted Pharaoh’s dream that there would be seven years of good harvest and seven years of famine. So, Joseph knew they needed to save grain while they could. Let’s play a gather-and-save relay race.

- Split the children into teams and have each team line up at its start line.
- Give the first child in each team a spoon.
- Have the child use the spoon to get a scoop of beads, carry them to the finish line, pour them into the empty bucket, and return to the start to give the spoon to the next child on the team.
- Set a timer for five minutes.
- Make sure the children are lined up in their places. Then count back from five, start the timer, and say, “Go.” The team with the highest level of beads or gems in their finish line bucket, wins.

Intergenerational Activity – Food Collection

- This week work on the food drive for your church that you may have started last week.
- If you haven’t done so already, make photocopies of Reproducible 2E and hand them out to your class and to other members of the church.
- Plan how the food drive will work. For example, you might invite church members to bring food donations to your church building for the next few weeks. Then decide if a food pantry or other group will receive your donations.
- There are different ways you may choose to organize the food drive donations:
 - Divide the kids, youth, and adults into several groups. Invite the groups to sort the items into similar categories.
 - Have your class sort the items. Then have youth and adult volunteers deliver the items to a local food pantry.
 - If you have a food pantry in your church, teams of volunteers can work together to bring the items to the pantry.