

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

Joseph and His Brothers – Genesis 37

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: RECONCILIATION

This unit we will focus on the spiritual practice of exploring reconciliation through forgiveness. The definition for reconciliation we will use is to bring peace between persons who have disagreed. The Bible is full of stories about disagreements and conflict, as well as forgiveness and reconciliation. Throughout Unit 1, we will talk about the conflict between Joseph and his brothers, and their final reconciliation.

The father of Joseph, Jacob, had twelve sons. Jacob considered Joseph the favorite of all his sons. He gave Joseph a special robe that we often refer to as “the robe of many colors.” It was beautiful, and it had long sleeves. During Bible times, long-sleeved garments were for the privileged. Workers couldn't wear long sleeves because they would get in the way of their work. Joseph's brothers worked in the field with short-sleeved garments. Seeing Joseph with his long-sleeved robe filled the brothers with jealousy. They believed he was privileged since he did not have to work in the fields like they did.

The special robe was not the only reason the brothers resented Joseph. Joseph also had a gift for dreaming and interpreting dreams. He told his brothers of a dream where they bowed down to him. That was the last straw. They decided to get rid of Joseph. The brothers decided to sell Joseph to a slave trader on his way to Egypt.

The brothers were jealous of Joseph, which led to conflict. Joseph may have added to the conflict by acting smug. There doesn't seem to be reconciliation in this Bible story. Reconciliation can take a long time. We have several more Bible stories about Joseph and his brothers. Look for signs leading to reconciliation as you read them.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

Joseph may have felt thankful his brothers didn't kill him, or he may have been mad at his brothers for selling him. Who has hurt you? Lie on your back and place your hand on your tummy. As you breathe in say, “I forgive (name of the person).” Breathe out and say, “I forgive (name of the person).”

Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, robe with long sleeves, green cloth, battery-operated candle*

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 robe 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: This month we will be hearing stories about a man named Joseph. Our story today is about Joseph and his twelve brothers.

ASK: Do you have any brothers? Do you have any sisters?

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, “Joseph and His Brothers” (pp. 42–43), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for giving us families to love. Thank you that we can love our families. Amen.

“Joseph and His Brothers” Coloring Page – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids’ Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy Reproducible 1A for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture. Share that Joseph had a special coat that was very colorful!

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

Joseph’s Coat – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids’ Book, crayons*

Prepare: *Photocopy “Joseph’s Coat” (Reproducible 1B) for each child.*

SAY: In today’s Bible story, Jacob gave his son, Joseph, a robe to wear. Use the number code on the page to color Joseph’s robe.

- Instruct the kids to use the number code to color in the spaces on Reproducible 1B. Provide assistance as needed. Preschoolers and older-elementary children may enjoy coloring the page as well.

Joseph's Brothers Word Search – Older Elementary

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils or markers

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Joseph's Brothers Word Search" (Reproducible 1C) for each child.

SAY: In today's Bible story, Jacob gave Joseph a special robe. Jacob's other sons were jealous. Joseph was Jacob's favorite son. Find the names of Joseph's brothers hidden in the word search. One brother's name is missing. Follow the directions at the bottom of the page to see which name is missing.

Stars and Snack – All Ages

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, hand-washing supplies, cereal with marshmallow shapes, medium-sized bowls, blue disposable plates, ladles or serving spoons

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "September Stars and Constellations" (Reproducible 1D) for each kid in your class.

- Invite the kids to wash their hands.
- Pour some cereal with marshmallow shapes into several medium bowls.
- Hand each kid a blue or dark blue disposable plate.
- Hand out a copy of Reproducible 1D to each child.
- Invite the kids to use the ladles or serving spoons to put one scoop of cereal on their plates.

SAY: In today's Bible story, Joseph has a special dream about the moon, the sun, and the stars of the night sky. Look at the star pictures on your sheet. Arrange the stars (or other marshmallow shapes) into star pictures like these.

- Help the kids as needed. When they are done "drawing" star pictures with the cereal, the kids may eat the cereal and marshmallows.

SAY: You can take your star sheet home and look for these stars in the sky!

Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy today's Take-Home Pages from the Reproducible Kids' Book, 1F–1G (pp. 71–72). "Joseph and His Brothers" 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 1 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 five Unit 1 Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 6).

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 1 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 1 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4).

SAY: *Reconciliation* is a big word! *Reconciliation* means to bring peace between persons who have disagreed.

- Point to the words on the Wonder Story Mat as you say them.

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 person after that person has hurt you.

WONDER together:

- What does jealousy feel like?
- Place the figure of Joseph in his long robe and the figure of his five brothers on the Unit 1 Wonder Story Mat.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the robe.

WONDER: Why is a robe important in today's Bible story?

Experience Wonder

Joseph's "Bad Day" Game

Supplies: clean bathrobe, Hula-Hoop, office chair with wheels

Prepare Ahead: To set up the game, provide a clean bathrobe or similar garment. Next, place a Hula-Hoop in the room. Finally, provide an office chair with wheels.

- Today your class is learning about a very bad day for Joseph. To help the kids in your class learn what happened to Joseph, play this roleplay game.

SAY: In this game, you will pretend to be Joseph. Joseph had a very bad day!

- Choose one player to begin the game. Invite the player to put on the bathrobe. Then invite other kids in the class to (gently) remove the robe. This simulates Joseph's special robe being taken from him.
- Next, have the player jump into the Hula-Hoop and jump out. This simulates Joseph being thrown into a cistern.
- Last, have the player sit in the office chair. Invite one or two kids to slowly roll the chair to one end of the classroom. This simulates Joseph being taken away to Egypt.
- Have the player get out of the chair, and invite the others to roll the chair back where it had been.
- Play the game, allowing each kid who wants to participate to have a turn.

SAY: Joseph had a bad day. We'll learn more in our Bible story today.

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*)

ASK: In what chapter 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 this month as we hear more about Joseph's story.

Peaceful Place

Supplies: Leader Guide—p. 113, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, suggested book: "We All Need Forgiveness" by Mercer Mayer, fabric scraps, glue, paper, crayons

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy the Unit 1 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 113) for each child. Make extra copies of the Unit 1 Faith Word coloring sheet to leave in the Peaceful Place this month.

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Show the children how to glue fabric scraps onto paper.
- Give each child a piece of paper and have each child draw his or her favorite part of the story.
- Have each child color the Faith Word coloring sheet.

Tip: All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Reconciliation Through Forgiveness

Supplies: Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy the “Celebration Chart” (p. 111) and the “Family Letter” (p. 112). Make a copy of both for each child.

SAY: A spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to God. This week we talked about the conflict between Joseph and his brothers. We also talked about forgiveness. *Forgiveness* means to let go of any bad feelings about another person after that person has hurt you.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice.

SAY: Lie down and place your hands on your tummy.

SAY: Say, “I’m mad,” as you exhale and watch your tummy get small. Say, “I forgive,” as you exhale and watch your tummy grow with God’s love.

PRAY: Repeat after me: “God, help me to forgive myself and 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 (*Reproducibles 1F–1G*). Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week’s spiritual practice with you. There’s an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

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 these verses several times to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell.”

SING: Joseph had a robe. His brothers, they were mad. / Joseph had a robe. His brothers, they were mad. / The robe had many colors because of Joseph’s special robe. / Joseph had a robe. His brothers, they were mad.

SAY: We know that Joseph’s brothers were mad that Joseph had a dream that his brothers bowed down to him. That made them very angry!

WONDER: What do you think a dream showing the brothers bowing down to Joseph might mean? Why would that dream make his brothers mad?

Early Elementary – Robe Relay

Supplies: one short robe and one long robe for each team, masking tape

Prepare Ahead: Use masking tape to create a start line and a finish line for each team. Place a short robe at the start line for each team and a long robe or tunic at the finish line for each team.

SAY: In the Bible story, Jacob gave Joseph a special robe. Usually, men would wear short robes with short sleeves so they could easily get their work done. Only women would wear long robes with long sleeves. When Jacob gave Joseph a long robe, his brothers were not only jealous because it was beautiful but because the long robe meant that Joseph would not be expected to work. Do you think it would be harder to work in a long robe than a short robe?

SAY: Let’s have a relay race.

- Split the children into teams, and have each team line up behind the start line you create. Give these directions:
 - Put on the short robe at the starting line.
 - Walk/jog to the finish line.
 - Take off the short robe and leave it there. Put on the long robe.
 - Walk/jog to the start line and take of the long robe.
 - Tag the next child to start his or her turn in the relay by putting on the long robe.

- Make sure the children are lined up in their places. Then count back from five and say, "Go." The first team to finish the relay with every team member wins.

Older Elementary – Magnet Science

Supplies: magnets

Prepare Ahead: Be sure to try your magnets ahead of time to make sure they work to display the message you are hoping for.

WONDER: What does it feel like to be in conflict with someone else?

- Use the magnets to show how conflict can turn us apart and reconciliation or forgiveness can bring us back together in relationship again by holding the magnets up, showing opposing ends that push against each other.

SAY: This might be an example of us and others in conflict. Notice the two magnets push each other away. *(Use the magnets to demonstrate.)* Now, if one is willing to turn from conflict and offer reconciliation, then you will see that both people are now drawn together. *(This should also work if both begin to turn.)*

ASK: What surprised you about what you saw the magnets do? What does this activity tell you about reconciliation? Have you ever resolved a conflict and felt closer to the other person than before?

- Let the children discuss, as time permits.

Intergenerational Activity – Shirt of Many Colors

Note: Each week we will feature a special intergenerational activity. Plan to invite youth and adults to join you for these special activities.

Supplies: See Reproducible 1E.

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy Reproducible 1E to give to each group.

- This week make tie-dye shirts together! Invite all participants to wear old clothes or provide smocks for them to wear. Provide the materials outlined on "Shirt of Many Colors" (Reproducible 1E). Make sure to pre-wash the T-shirts.
- Invite other adults to help you set up the activity in an outdoor area or other place where making a mess is allowed.
- Group the kids in your class with youth and adults. Make sure each group has a good mix of young and old from your church.

SAY: Joseph was given a colorful or highly decorated coat to wear. Use the directions on your sheet to make colorful tie-dye shirts!

- Invite the groups to make their tie-dye shirts. Shirts should be given time to air-dry before taking them home.