

Youth Ministry 2:2
Bible discussion lessons for youth groups
from the Old and New Testaments

Bible 101 – year 2

The Life of Joseph



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All Scripture used in this Lesson Guide is from the New International Version of the Bible (NIV).

All in the Family

Genesis 37:1-11, 1 John 4:7-12

1. What makes a perfect family?

2. What problems were there in Joseph's family (Genesis 37:1-11)? *Check the correct answers.*

☐ tattling ☐ depression
☐ favoritism ☐ hatred
☐ pride ☐ loneliness
☐ jealousy/ comparing



☐ drugs
☐ put-downs
☐ envy
☐ failure

What does 1 John 4:7-12 say about love?

'Dear friends, since God so loved us, we ought to _____' (v. 11)

3. What are ways that we can better love our parents?

The Word for the Family:

1. Reread Genesis 37:1-11
2. Reread 1 John 4:7-12
3. Ephesians 6:1-4
4. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
5. Proverbs 17:21,25
6. Proverbs 23:22-25
7. Genesis 37:12-36

"My brother for a buck"

Have a great week!!!

How can you be more loving toward your brothers and sisters?

1. There are no perfect families because they are made up of _____ people.

2. You can make your family _____.

4. How can you try to show love to your family this week? Be specific.

All in the Family (Family relationships – Genesis 37:1-11; 1 John 4:7-12)

Importance for Teens

As they reach this new stage of development, teens begin to notice flaws in their family that they hadn't seen before. Sometimes kids become very critical of their family. They need to understand that no family is perfect and that they can do a lot to improve their relationships at home.

1. Hook

Divide the kids into groups of 3-4; it's good if each group has a leader or an older student. Give each group a sheet of paper and markers and ask them to write down what makes a perfect family. Then summarize all their answers on the board. Possible answers to the question: love, communication, trust, cooperation, kind words, forgiveness, understanding, time together, sharing, etc.

2. Book – Genesis 37:1-11; 1 John 4:7-12

Today we begin a new series on the life of Joseph in the book of Genesis. He came from a family with lots of problems. Ask, 'What problems were there in Joseph's family?' Read Genesis 37:1-11 and have the kids mark answers on the handout.

Answers: tattling (v. 2), favoritism (v. 3), hatred (vv. 4-5), put downs (v. 4), pride (v. 7), envy (v. 11), jealousy/ comparing (v. 11).

Joseph's family was far from perfect. If there were so many problems in Joseph's family, why was their story included in the Bible? *(You can ask this question and expect some answers if your kids are familiar with the Bible. If not, you can tell them the answer right away).*

This family was chosen by God; He wanted to bless the whole world through them. This family grew into the people of Israel, who received commandments and promises from God and displayed what it looks like, and what it does NOT look like, to be God's people. Eventually, Jesus came into the world through this family. Joseph became one of the better examples in the Old Testament of a person who trusted in God, He is also one of the 'prototypes' of Jesus in the Old Testament – someone whose life had many similarities with the life of Jesus. Over the next few lessons, we will look at Joseph's life.

As we have already seen, the relationships in Joseph's family were very dysfunctional. The Bible *reports* real life, even when it's messed up, but it always *supports* what is good and right. In 1 John 4:11, we read about what God wants in our relationships: 'Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.' (Underlined words should be written by the kids on their handouts.)

Read 1 John 4:7-12 and ask what does this passage say about love?

Answers: it comes from God (v. 7); God is love (v. 8); God showed His love for people by sending His Son to earth (v. 9); God loves us, so we should love one another (v. 11); If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us (v. 12).

Therefore, even if our family is imperfect, we can become messengers of God's love. We can love like Jesus by putting others' needs above our own, making sacrifices, and obeying God.

Leader's Guide

Love is communicated in our actions, not just in our feelings.

3. Look

Ask, 'What can we do to love to our parents better?' Summarize their answers on the board.

Possible answers: obey them; tell them you love them; tell them about your life; show interest in their affairs/their lives, help them around the house, etc.

Then ask, 'How can you be more loving toward your brothers and sisters?'

Write down their answers again.

Possible answers: do something nice for them; forgive them; take them somewhere with you; encourage them, listen to them talk, play a game with them, etc.

Remind teens of the following ideas:

1. There are no perfect families because they are made up of imperfect people. We are all sinners, and sometimes (or even often) we do wrong. Joseph was abused by his brothers and trafficked for money! Joseph's family was messed up, but Joseph still trusted God and God worked out some amazing things out of his family's problems.

2. You can help make your family better. When you show love to your parents, brothers, and sisters, your family becomes better.

****NOTE: If there is any chance you are in danger in your family and you can't change it, this is a serious thing. This is not what God wants for your family. You should talk to an adult about this situation.**

4. Took

Ask, 'How can you show love to your family this week? Be specific.' Kids can choose from the answers written on the board, or add their own answers, and write them down. Ask if anyone wants to share what they plan to do this week to improve their family relationships.

End with a prayer for families.

Leader's Guide

Dealing with Obnoxious People

Genesis 37:12-36; James 1:2-5

1. How do your younger brothers/sisters annoy you (get on your nerves)?



And how do you usually react?

2. Genesis 37:12-36

Are there any similarities between how Joseph and Jesus were betrayed?

Joseph	Jesus
The initiator of the betrayal was Judah (vv. 25-26). Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver (v. 28). Joseph was betrayed by his brothers (v.18)	

The word on unpleasant people:

1. Reread James 1:2-5
2. Reread Genesis 37:12-36
3. Matthew 5:43-47
4. Luke 6:27-31
5. Luke 6:32-36
6. Ephesians 4:2
7. Genesis 39: "Fire Escape"
See you next week!

According to James 1:2-4, how can unpleasant people be good for us?

According to James 1:5, what should we do if we don't know how to deal with annoying people?

3. How do your classmates annoy you?

How should you deal with them?

4. ___'X'___ is an unpleasant person in my life.

Action: With God's help, I will pray for 'X' and _____.

Dealing with Obnoxious People

(Unpleasant people – Genesis 37:12-36; James 1:2-5)

Importance for your kids:

Teens can be very cruel to each other, insulting, gossiping, and even bullying. Encourage your students that God can turn these trials into something good for them, and that He wants us to try to do good to those who hurt us.

1. Hook

Sometimes we get really annoyed by our younger brothers, sisters, relatives, or neighbors. Ask, 'How do your younger brothers or sisters (or other kids) annoy you?'

Possible answers: they make noise; they go through my things; they accuse me of something I didn't do; they embarrass me.

Then ask, 'How do you usually respond to them?'

Possible answers: complain to my parents; hit them; do the same thing back to them; go to my room and shut them out, etc.

2. Book – Genesis 37:12-36; James 1:2-5

Last week, we saw that Joseph had an imperfect family. Today we will see how Joseph annoyed his brothers and how they decided to teach him a lesson. Read Genesis 37:12-36 in roles: 1. Narrator; 2. Jacob (Israel); 3. Joseph; 4. man from Shechem; 5. Reuben; 6. Judah; 7. everyone else can be the other brothers.

In the story, we saw three plans for teaching Joseph a lesson. Plan #1 was to kill Joseph, throw his body into one of the empty wells, and tell their dad that a wild animal had devoured him (vv. 18-20).

The oldest brother, Reuben, had his own plan to save Joseph and send him back to their father (vv. 21-22).

But the plan that actually happened was that they threw him alive into an empty well, and then sold him to merchants passing by on their way to Egypt (vv. 25-28). Human trafficking!

Ask, 'Think about Jesus – he was betrayed, too. 'Are there any similarities between how Joseph and Jesus were betrayed?' Fill in the right-hand column of the table. Interestingly,

1) Jesus' betrayer was named Judas (like Judah)

2) Judas sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15)

3) Jesus was also betrayed by his brothers—his own people (the Jews)

According to another scripture (James 1:2-4), how can unpleasant people be good for us?

Answers: trials of faith produce perseverance (v. 3); trials help you become mature and complete (v. 4)].

And ask, 'In the next verse, James 1:5, what does it say we should do if we don't know how to deal with annoying people?'

Answer: ask God what to do; ask Him for wisdom.

3. Look

Ask, 'How do your classmates annoy you?' Write their answers on the board.

Possible answers: they ignore me; they avoid me; they mess with my stuff; they gossip about me; they say untrue things about me; they laugh at me; they send me nasty text messages, they bully me.

Leader's Guide

Now let's see how we can deal with those who bother us.

Divide the kids into groups of 2-3 people. Each group should prepare two short skits. One person in the skit does something unpleasant to someone else. They can choose one of the behaviors they came up with (written on the board), or come up with something new. The first scene shows a wrong reaction to the behavior and the second shows a better one. Act out the scenes and then discuss them if necessary.

How should we deal with unpleasant people? Make a list of all the solutions the kids came up with in their skits.

4. Took

'Everyone has people who bother them. Let's call them "X." We will not name them: you and God know who they are.'

'A good way to put this lesson into practice is to pray regularly for this person and do something kind when there is an opportunity. If you have an idea for the coming week, write it down on the handout.'

'If our kind actions aren't received well and the person is really hurting us, we may have to back away. But we can keep praying and truly hoping for the best for a person who bothers us.'

End with a prayer for help in our relationships with those who annoy us.

Leader's Guide

Just say, 'Not Now,' or 'Not With You!'

Genesis 39:1-23; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20



1. 'Should I or Shouldn't I' (activity)

2. Genesis 39:1-23

Potiphar's wife (wanted Joseph)	Joseph (wanted to obey God)
1. Persistent (vs. 7,10,12)	1. (vs. 8,9)
2. Ungodly (v. 9)	2. (vs.10-12)
3. Two-faced (vs. 14-20)	3. (vs.20-23)

Honor God with our _____.
(1 Corinthians 6:20)

3. What are some good reasons to avoid sex with someone you aren't married to?

The Word on Sexual Temptation

1. Reread 1 Corinthians 6:12-20
2. Reread Genesis 39:1-23
3. 2 Timothy 2:22
4. 1 Corinthians 10:12,13
5. Ephesians 5:3-10
6. Psalm 119:9,11; Hebrews 2:18
7. For next time: Genesis 40:1-23

How can a person overcome sexual temptation?

Realize that not everyone is _____.

Set standards of behavior _____.

Flee or avoid _____ situations.

Other ideas: _____

4. The key to waiting for sex until the commitment of marriage:

My relationship with God must be more important to me than ...

- 1) my physical desires
- 2) the expectations of others
- 3) keeping the person who wants sex interested in me

Just say, 'Not Now or Not with You!'

(Sexual Self-Control – Genesis 39:1-23, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20)

Importance for teens

Our teens live in a world saturated with sex. It's in songs, movies, advertising, and all around them at school. Many of their peers are already having sex. It's a counter-cultural idea that it's God's plan to keep from having sex outside of a marriage commitment. If your group is too young to discuss this topic, simply skip this lesson.

1. Hook

Divide the group in half. Have one half write down 3 or more things a person might say to convince someone to have sex with them. The other half should write down 3 or more responses a person might give who doesn't want to have sex. Pass the lists to the group leader to read out loud.

2. Book - Genesis 39:1-23; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

This story about Joseph is a great example of what to do when faced with sexual temptation. It also shows that God gives males and females equal responsibility in the area of sexual self-control.

Read Genesis 39:1-23, discuss what you have read, and fill in the table. We see that Potiphar's wife wanted to get Joseph to have sex with her, but Joseph refused, wanting to obey God.

Mrs. Potiphar was 1) **persistent** (vv. 7, 10, 12). She was after Joseph because of his success, youth, and good looks. Most likely, she did not know him very well. But Joseph was: 1) **courageous** (vv. 8, 9). He said, 'no' and called it, 'evil.' The reason he refused was because he feared God. Discuss bad excuses, perhaps even ones your group came up with!

For example: 'I am still too young,' 'I am afraid of...' 'We are almost strangers.'

Potiphar's wife's behavior was 2) **ungodly** (v. 12). She wanted to cheat on her husband. Joseph's God was not important to her. But Joseph's behavior was 2) **careful** (vv. 10-12). He ignored what she said (today, she would probably have sent him texts). He tried not to be near her, and he physically ran away from her when there was no other way out.

Potiphar's wife was 3) **two-faced** (vv. 14-20). When he said 'no,' she turned against him. This proves that she didn't really care about Joseph; she was only seeking her own satisfaction. But Joseph was 3) **faithful to God** (vv. 20-23), even though he would be punished because he did what was right in God's eyes.

In the end, God rewards faithfulness. If the situation seems difficult or unfair, wait for God. His ways are best and often beyond our understanding!

Leader's Guide

Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. We are to flee sexual immorality and instead honor God with our bodies. Even without the New Testament, Joseph knew that sex with Potiphar's wife was not what God wanted and he needed to flee. Sex is somehow connected to our relationship with God, and inappropriate sex somehow damages it.

3. Look

Ask, 'What are some good reasons to avoid sex with anyone you are not married to?' Write the kids' answers on the board. You can refer back to their answers in question #1. Possible answers: God commands us in the Bible to keep our bodies pure (see our text today); premarital sex destroys trust in our relationship with God (1 Cor. 6:19, 20); once you start having sex, it is more difficult and painful to break up the relationship (just as it is more difficult to turn a car around at full speed); premarital sex can cause you to lose your self-respect, etc.

Ask, 'Why is it difficult to wait?'

Possible answers: media and society act like it's normal and expected; you might really like the other person and don't want to lose them; pressure from other peers; physical desire; etc.

Ask, 'How can a person overcome sexual temptation?' Here are a few ideas.

1. Realize that not everyone is doing it. You are not the only one committed to waiting. 2. Set standards of behavior ahead of time. Know where you will draw the line in your physical relationships. It's hard in the moment of passion to make that decision.

3. Flee or avoid compromising situations: parties where people are hooking up; drinking; unsupervised activities; situations that just feel uncomfortable; etc.

Ask your kids if they have any other ideas.

On the other hand, many kids (more than in the past) face no temptation because they lack opportunity. This can lead to weakness if an opportunity presents itself. It's good to understand this and plan to resist sexual temptation when it does come.

4 Took

In the end, the key to keeping sex for marriage is to decide, 'My relationship with God must be more important to me than 1) my physical desires, 2) what others expect or think of me, and 3) keeping the person who wants sex interested in me.'

It's not easy, but God wants to give us the courage and wisdom we need to control ourselves. He is not against your sexual desires; he just wants them expressed in the right time and place. Just say, 'not now' or 'not with you.'

End with a prayer for God's help in our relationships with the opposite sex.

Down ... but Not Out

Genesis 40, Romans 8:28

1. Have you ever suffered for doing the right thing?

2. Genesis 40

What did Joseph do in prison?

(Select the correct answer)

- ☐ Worked hard
- ☐ Dug a tunnel to escape
- ☐ Used his administrative talents
- ☐ Watched television
- ☐ Felt sorry for himself
- ☐ Interpreted dreams



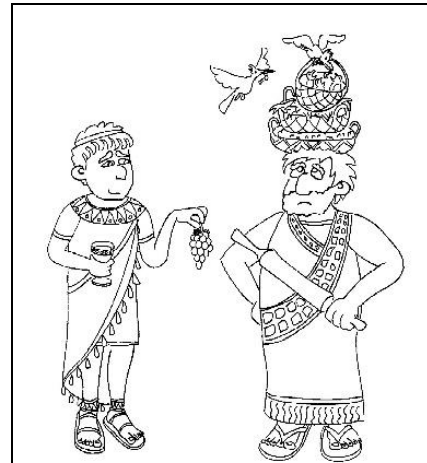
According to verse 8, what was Joseph's view of God?

3. Why do bad things happen to good people?

What difficulties have you faced in the last two years?

How can God turn our difficulties into something good?

4. Write Romans 8:28 in your own words:



**Dream #1 Dream #2
Cupbearer and
Baker**

Down ... but Not Out (Faithful in Difficulties – Genesis 40, Romans 8:28)

Importance for teens:

Teens have reached a new intellectual stage—self-awareness. They often feel that their experiences are unique, that only they suffer from loneliness, misunderstanding, unrequited love, parental divorce, etc. Our task is to let them know that everyone goes through difficulties and that God is with them at these times. He can work out their difficulties into something for their good.

1. Hook

Ask, 'Have you ever suffered for doing the right thing?' Let the kids share their experiences.

2. Book – Genesis 40; Romans 8:28

Ask, 'Which biblical character are we studying about now?' (Joseph). Briefly repeat the story of Joseph and what you have already learned.

Continue on, 'But now Joseph is in prison for something he did not do. Joseph did everything right, but Potiphar did not believe him and threw him into prison. What did Joseph do in prison?' Read Genesis 40 together and have the kids mark the correct answers.

Correct answers: he worked hard; he used his administrative talents; and he interpreted dreams. He did not feel sorry for himself.

Ask, 'According to verse 8, what was Joseph's view of God?'

Answer: He knew God knew the interpretation of dreams, and revealed them to him.

While in prison, Joseph interpreted two dreams for other prisoners. Discuss these dreams and their interpretation.

God puts His players in place, like pieces on a chessboard. In prison, Joseph was in the right place to save the ancient world from famine, as we will see next time. And in Joseph's story, we see a biblical principle: If a person loves the Lord, God can work out even a bad situation into something good, even if it takes time. Read Romans 8:28.

3. Look

Ask the question: 'Why do bad things happen to good people?'

Possible answers: so that they can mature; so that they can understand and help others; so they understand the reality that they live in a sinful world; to show God's power; to help them see they need God. Many times, we don't know why we are going through a hard time.

Ask, 'What difficulties have you faced in the last two years?' (If this is too personal a question, you can ask what difficulties people you know have faced). Write their answers on the board.

Then ask, 'How can God turn these difficulties into something good?'

Possible answers: we grow in humility, in compassion for others, in greater trust in God, we become stronger, etc.

Going through a trial, it can be difficult to see that good can come from it, but in any difficult situation, we can trust God.

4 Took.

In conclusion, ask the students to write Romans 8:28 in their own words. Ask some of them to read their versions aloud. Pray that in difficult situations we will look to God, and also pray for the kids in the group who are going through difficulties.

Investing in the Future

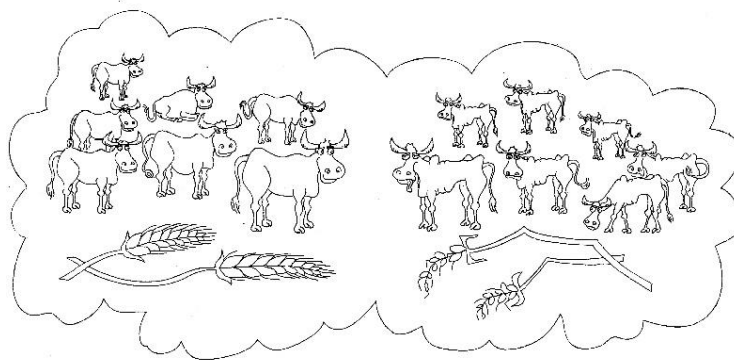
Genesis 41, Matthew 6:19-21

1. If you won 20 million dollars, what would you do with it?

2. Genesis 41 – The Future of Egypt

Genesis 41: 1-16, 25-40, 46-49, 50-52, 56-57

Pharoah's Dreams



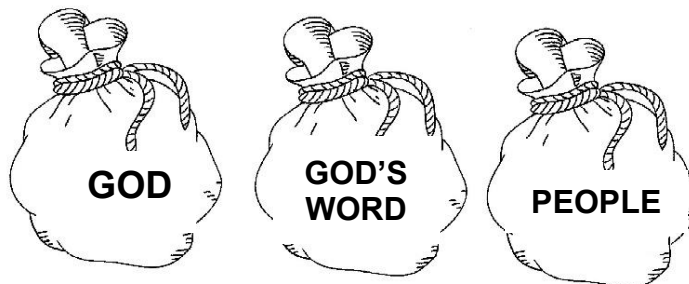
Meaning of the dream: _____ of abundance (v. 29) and _____ of famine (vv. 30-31).

Solution: gather up _____ of the harvest from the good years (vv. 33-36).

3. Our Future

Store up treasures in _____ (Matthew 6:19-21)

Three investments that yield eternal dividends:



in God?

What are ways we can invest ...

In God's Word?

in people?



Sound Investment

1. Reread Matthew 6:19-21
2. Reread Genesis 41
3. Mark 9:41
4. Proverbs 30:25
5. Matthew 25:14-30
6. Matthew 24:35
7. Genesis 42 – "You are spies!"

Investing in the Future (Eternal Things) – Genesis 41, Matthew 6:19-21)

Importance for teens

Teens are beginning to think about their path in life. They can choose to accumulate money and possessions and become rich here on earth, or they can gather treasures for themselves in heaven. It is never too early to start investing!

1. Hook

Ask, 'If you won 20 million dollars, what would you do with it?' Have the kids write down their answers and share them.

Possible answers: cars; houses; financial investments; give to others; tithing, etc.

Write their answers on the board in two columns: 'Now' (spending it now) and 'Later' (invest in something that will be worth more later). Do not argue with them about which column to place their answers in: 'Now' or 'Later' — many things can be classified in either way (for example, buying a house). If you want, you could put an answer in both columns.

2. Book – Genesis 41; Mathew 6:19-21

Quickly review the sections of the Old Testament. Ask: 'What does 'Genesis' mean?' (Answer: 'Beginnings. 'It is a book about how everything was in the beginning).

Ask, 'Who is Pharaoh?' (Answer: The king of Ancient Egypt). In this part of Joseph's story, we once again encounter dreams. This time, it is Pharaoh who has dreams. His dreams told him something about the future of Egypt.

Read the passages: Genesis 41:1-16, 25-40, 46-49, 50-52, 56-57, or you can tell the story or watch a video about Pharaoh's dreams.

Discuss Pharaoh's dreams and their meaning (fill in blanks on the handout):

The meaning of the dream: 7 years of abundance (v. 29) and 7 years of famine (vv. 30-31). Solution: gather up 1/5 of all the harvest from the good years (vv. 33-36).

We see how God used Joseph to save the ancient world. Once again, Joseph is something like Jesus who, having suffered, saved the whole world.

There is another biblical principle here: we must invest what we have today in the future.

3. Look

But how can we invest in the future? Read Matthew 6:19-21. We can invest in the future by storing treasures in heaven.

(See handout) There are three investments on earth that yield eternal dividends: God, God's Word, and people. According to the Bible, all of these will last forever, so if we invest in them, our 'treasure' will not be lost; it will be there ahead of us. Ask how we can invest in each of these and list their answers on the board. The kids can also copy them on their handouts.

Ask, 'How can we invest in God?'

Possible answers: prayer; time with God; seeking His will; knowing His voice.

'And how can we invest in God's Word?'

Possible answers: live it out (obey it); memorize it; study it; read it; listen to it; meditate on it; share it with others

<p>Ask, 'How can we invest in people?'</p> <p>Possible answers: encourage them; share the gospel with them; be friends with them; help them; spend time with them; let them into your life; let them help you.</p>	<p>4 Took:</p> <p>Pray for wisdom on how to live now so that you may be ready for the future and for eternity.</p>
<p><i>Leader's Guide</i></p>	

'Forgive Them?!'

Genesis 45:1-15

1. Should Noah forgive his father? Why or why not?

2. Genesis 45:1-15

Joseph reveals himself to his brothers

What offense(s) did Joseph need to forgive his brothers for?



Forgiveness means letting go of the desire for _____.

Joseph – Genesis 45:5,7,8

Paul – 'Do not repay anyone evil for evil' – Romans 12:17-19

Jesus – 'Forgive seventy times seven' – Matthew 18:21-22

Two sides of every situation	
Human evil	God's perfect _____

3. The progression of unforgiveness:

Offense		Emotion		Thought		Result
Loss (of a father, friend, reputation, etc.) Injustice Betrayal	→	Grief Pain Anger	→	Constant thoughts/ preoccupation	→	Bitterness

4. Is there someone you need to forgive? _____

Remember that forgiveness can sometimes take time.
Be patient and ask God to help you.
The most important thing is to know that God can be trusted.

Steps to Forgiveness

- Acknowledge that you are hurt by this person.
- Figure out why you are hurt (someone we don't need can't hurt us).
- Meet with the person who hurt you (if possible) or write them a letter, even if you don't send it.
- Tell them how you feel. Be honest, but don't attack the offender.
- Don't expect your offender to change or admit they were wrong.
- Forgive the person who hurt you.

Dear Dad,

It hurts me deeply that you left us. It's so unfair that I have to suffer because of this, and you don't. Dad, I don't understand why you did it, but I still love you. It hurts me so much to hear you repeat over and over that it's better this way. But really, what's so good about it?!

You also say that you don't like the fact that we rarely see each other now. You may be surprised, but I don't like it either. Besides, if you didn't want to leave me, then why did you divorce Mom?!

I miss you very much and would like to see you more often.

I will always love you.

Your son,
Noah

PS – I will love you no matter what.

The Word on Forgiveness

1. Reread Genesis 45:1-15
2. Matthew 6:14-15
3. Colossians 3:13
4. Ephesians 4:31-32
5. Matthew 18:21-22
6. Luke 6:37
7. Luke 23:33-34

'Forgive them?!' (Forgiveness – Genesis 45:1-15)

Importance for teens:

One of the most important lessons in life that a person can learn is how to forgive those who have hurt them. Jesus showed us this through His life. An inability to forgive can lead to bitterness, broken relationships, and even divorce and other serious consequences.

1. Hook

Read the following situation:

Noah's father left the family when Noah was five years old. He rarely sees his father, who doesn't even remember Noah's birthday or other important dates. He often doesn't pay child support. Noah sees how negatively this affects the family and that his mother has to work hard to avoid getting into debt. His father has remarried, and his visits with Noah have become even more rare. As he grows older, year after year, Noah becomes increasingly angry with his father and refuses to forgive him for what he has done.

Ask, 'Should Noah forgive his father? Why or why not?'

2. Book – Genesis 45:1-15

Today we will see how Joseph revealed himself to his brothers and then forgave them. Forgiveness follows pain. The stronger the love for a person, the sharper the pain of resentment toward them. And Joseph's pain was very deep because it came from his brothers.

Ask, 'What offense(s) did Joseph need to forgive his brothers for? What do you remember from previous lessons?'

Possible answers: his brothers hated him (37:4, 5, 8); They could not speak to him kindly (37:4); they resented him (37:11); they began to plan how to kill him (37:18, 19); they took the beautiful coat, which their father had given to Joseph (37:23); they threw him into a pit (37:24); they ignored his pleas for help (42:21); they sold Joseph to foreigners, for 20 pieces of silver (37:28).

After all this, how could Joseph forgive them? Discuss the question, 'What does forgiveness mean?'

According to the Bible, forgiveness means letting go of the desire for revenge. Read Genesis 45:5,7,8. Joseph showed no desire for revenge.

In the book of Romans, Paul wrote, "Repay no one evil for evil" (Romans 12:17-19). And Jesus said, "Turn the other cheek" (Matthew 5:38-42). *If time permits, read these verses from Romans and Matthew.*

There are two sides to every situation: human evil and God's perfect will. We must focus our attention on seeing where God might be at work. God will carry out His plan in our lives, but we can't always see it. Jesus accepted betrayal as the cup His Father gave Him. Joseph did not know what the outcome of his problems would be, but he had trusted God. When he started to see God working out His purpose in it all, he said to His brothers, "God sent me before you to preserve your lives (v. 5)" and, "It was not you who sent me here, but God (v. 8)." Joseph never said that what his brothers did was 'okay.' But he saw both sides – their offenses and God's purposes in what happened to him – and was able to forgive his brothers.

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3. Look:

Ask, 'What can unforgiveness lead to?' We observe the following progression: it all starts with an offense (loss, injustice, betrayal). This causes pain and anger. If we are unable to let go of these thoughts and feelings and constantly dwell on them, we will end up feeling bitter, which may affect our health and lead to broken relationships, divorce, revenge, violence, etc.

But how can we forgive someone who has caused us so much pain? Read the "steps to forgiveness" on the handout one by one. Also read Noah's letter to his father.

4 Took:

Finally, ask the question, 'Is there someone you need to forgive?' Give them time to think about their answer, but don't discuss it. Reassure them that sometimes forgiveness takes time. If someone needs support and wants to pray, they can approach the leader after the lesson and talk to them about their situation. End with prayer.

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