

Grade 1—Unit 14

Faithful in a Strange Land

The story of Joseph is a story of growing in wisdom and maturity through God’s love. Through years of hardship, an over-indulged child became a gentle, kind, and forgiving man. Joseph held firm to the faith of his fathers. He acknowledged God’s hand at work in all circumstances of his life.

LESSONS

1. A Special Gift
2. Joseph Has Dreams
3. Joseph Goes to Egypt
4. Joseph Depends on God
5. Rags to Riches
6. Famine Begins
7. Joseph Forgives, Part 1
8. Joseph Forgives, Part 2

Unit 14: Faithful in a Strange Land

Unit Information

SUMMARY

This unit continues with family stories by relating accounts of Jacob's children, particularly the story of Joseph. Joseph was Jacob's favorite son, and his jealous brothers sold him to be a slave in Egypt. Though Joseph faced many adverse situations, eventually God used Joseph to save his father Jacob's family.

KEY BIBLE TEXTS

Genesis 37-46*

Genesis 50:15-21*

Psalms 126:3 (main memory verse)

Isaiah 55:7*

Jeremiah 3:12*

Micah 7:18-19* (memory verse)

Luke 6:27-28 (memory verse)

**texts used in lessons*

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

The Favored Son

After Jacob and Esau reconciled, Jacob settled in the land of Canaan with Leah and his children. Rachel, Jacob's dearly loved wife, had died giving birth to Benjamin before the family arrived in Canaan. Joseph was the firstborn son of Rachel. Benjamin was the youngest.

Jacob showed love for Joseph by making him a special coat (Genesis 37:3-4). The coat was long, with sleeves. It was a dress coat and not meant for work. The traditional sleeveless, short tunic was functional. The brothers were furious at this sign of favoritism. Their lazy brother did not have to carry his share of the work. Perhaps the coat was seen as a sign that Jacob intended on giving the birthright, with its economic ramifications, to Joseph and not to the oldest son, as tradition demanded.

Joseph was a dreamer. Dreams were prophetic in that culture, recognized as a way that God communicated with people. Joseph, however, was imprudent in sharing his dreams. His early dreams were symbolic, as contrasted to the clear vision Jacob had at Bethel of angels going to heaven. He dreamed that his family would one day bow down before him.

It's not surprising that Joseph's dreams aroused strong feelings among his brothers. To them, Joseph's dreams revealed his true aspirations. He appeared quite presumptuous for one eleventh in line. How could the next-to-youngest in a long line of sons receive the respect and honor reserved for the oldest son?

In that culture, dreams held much meaning. Joseph's brothers may have been fearful that his dreams would come true.

Jacob's family was semi-nomadic, as was Abraham before them. Their main

camp was near Hebron. When Jacob sent Joseph to find his brothers, he sent him to Shechem, about 60 miles north of their home. When he got there, they had moved their flocks. Joseph had to go 20 miles further north, to Dothan.

A Slave in Egypt

When Joseph found his brothers in Dothan, their anger and frustration crystallized. They were far from home. Finally, they could deal with their brother as he deserved. The oldest brother, Reuben, kept the others from killing Joseph. They compromised by throwing Joseph into an empty cistern.

Traders came by and, recognizing a good deal, bought Joseph for 20 shekels of silver. Joseph, oldest son of Jacob and Rachel, was sold into slavery for the price of ten good rams.

The traders took Joseph to Egypt. There, Joseph encountered many new things: strong weapons, chariots, and magnificent homes with tables, chairs, and beds. Egyptian estates were small communities in and of themselves, complete with stables, bakeries, grain silos, slaughterhouses, and slave quarters.

Joseph was sold to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, and soon Joseph demonstrated great ability to organize. It wasn't long before he was put in charge of the household. This position of authority did not change his status as a slave. He was thrown in jail when accused of seducing Potiphar's wife. In prison, Joseph again showed organizational abilities. The warden placed Joseph in charge of all prisoners.

Dreams continued to play an important part in Joseph's life. He interpreted correctly the dreams of two fellow prisoners. He was able to interpret the Pharaoh's dreams.

From Rags to Riches

Joseph was either enslaved or in jail for about 13 years. He was 17 when his father made him the beautiful coat and 30 when he entered Pharaoh's service.

After interpreting the Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph advised him to select a man who was both discreet and wise to oversee the stockpiling of food during the years of plenty. Joseph suggested that Pharaoh collect twenty percent of the food during the seven years of plenty and set it aside for the seven years of famine.

Pharaoh chose Joseph himself to fill the role. Pharaoh was wise to give the initiator of the idea the role of completing the task. After all, farmers would probably have complained about giving up one-fifth of the crop, seven years in a row. One can imagine that by the third or fourth year people would have scoffed at the idea of a famine. By putting Joseph in charge, Pharaoh would not bear the burden of the farmers' discontent.

Joseph's life changed dramatically when he became one of Pharaoh's top officials. He was given fine linen clothing, dress worn by all those in the Pharaoh's court. He was given a signet ring, which was considered the badge of authority. He also received a gold necklace as payment for his services.

A Family Reunited

As Joseph had predicted, years of famine followed the years of plenty. Egypt felt the effects later than neighboring lands, but soon the famine spread to all the world (Genesis 41:57). Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, and sent his sons to buy some. Joseph recognized his brothers and began a series of tests. They confessed their guilt in selling their brother into slavery (Genesis 44:16).

Judah pled to be held hostage instead of Benjamin (Genesis 44:18-34), and hunger kept the brothers returning to Egypt for food.

Finally, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers and wept. The brothers were slow in accepting the forgiveness offered. But Joseph insisted that God's hand was at work. The events were directed by God, not humans. Through Joseph, God preserved life for the Egyptians and for the family that carried forward the promise given to Abraham.

When Pharaoh heard of Joseph's family reunion, he invited the whole family to come to Egypt. They were given land in the area of Goshen, a fertile region in the Nile Delta. It offered excellent grazing areas and was suitable for the lifestyle of this semi-nomadic clan of people.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- Anyone can feel jealous and angry, but we can choose how to respond.
- Joseph was faithful to God, even though he was in a strange land.
- Joseph forgave his brothers, and we can forgive others, too.

WORSHIP

1. Lesson 3 includes writing simple poetry about the presence of God. Use this as worship time. (Poems will be hung on the bulletin board.)
2. Look at texts that highlight God's promise to be with us: Psalm 5, Psalm 23, Psalm 136.

BULLETIN BOARD IDEA

In Lesson 3, student-written poems about the presence of God will be posted on the bulletin board. These will also be used in Lesson 4.

MEMORY PASSAGES

This unit offers the following verses for students to memorize. You may copy and clip the following verses for students to take home.

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.
Psalm 126:3

But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.
Luke 6:27-28

Who is a God like you, who pardons sin . . .? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

Micah 7:18-19

MEMORY VERSE CONNECTIONS

Make this memory verse connection during Lesson 8, activity sheet:

Read Psalm 126:3, “The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.”
What great things did God do for Joseph? What great things has God done for you?

ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING

Observing students and their interactions is one of the best ways to discover if students are practicing the lessons. Look to see if they cooperate with each other, if they use caring words, and if they practice peacemaking skills.

A quiz is also included, at the end of the unit.

Faithful in a Strange Land

LESSON 1: A SPECIAL GIFT

Objective

Students will recognize what it is to feel special.

Key Concepts

- Joseph was more special to Jacob than Jacob’s other children.
- Jacob showed his love by giving Joseph a special coat.
- We are special.
- We can show others that they are special.

Text: Genesis 37:1-4

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Special treat for each child (snack, pencil, pen, sticker, etc.)
- Students’ illustrations of Jacob and Esau story from Unit 13, Lesson 6
- Bible
- Paper grocery bags (1 for each student) to make special “coats”
- Crayons, markers
- Lace, fabric and paper scraps, buttons, glitter, and other decorative items
- For Extend the Lesson: paper, pencils

Teacher Preparation

- Pre-cut armholes and neckholes in the paper-bag “coats.”

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Hand out special treats, giving one to each student. As you hand the children the treats, tell them that they are special: “Jason, you are special, because you’re good at drawing,” or “Katrina, you’re special because you’re a fast runner.” Tell the class that everyone is special. The gift today is just a token to show how special each of them is.

LESSON STEPS

1. Review the students’ illustrations of the story of Jacob and Esau from the last lesson (Unit 13, Lesson 6). Remind the children that Jacob had a large family—12 sons and one daughter. Talk about how the brothers might have gotten along. Ask the following questions: Do you sometimes play with your own brothers, sisters, or cousins? Do you sometimes quarrel with them? How would it be if you had 12 brothers and sisters? Would you play together? Quarrel? Allow time to imagine what it would be like and give responses.

2. Jacob gives Joseph a special gift. Explain to the students that Jacob thought his son Joseph was more special than the others. Ask if any of the children know

what Jacob did to show Joseph he thought he was special. After any responses, read Genesis 37:3. (Note that God had changed Jacob's name to Israel.) Ask the students how Joseph must have felt after receiving the coat. (Any response is fine, but one might be that Joseph felt special and knew he was loved.)

3. Jealous brothers. Ask the children how they think Joseph's brothers would like this. Read Genesis 37:4. Why were the brothers so upset? (Any response is fine, but it might be because of jealousy, and wanting attention from their father, too.)

Emphasize that feeling jealous or upset is not always bad. But if we hurt someone because we are jealous or upset, that is wrong.

4. Make special coats. Hand out the paper grocery bags with the pre-cut neckholes and armholes. Have the students decorate their bags with the materials provided, to make beautiful coats. Wear them for the day. *Option: You may use fabric instead of paper bags. Cut the fabric into long rectangles and cut a hole in the center for the student's head. This will look more like a tunic. Use fabric markers to decorate, and glue on sequins, lace, or other items that are light enough to stay on fabric with glue.*

5. All are special. End the lesson by reminding the students that each one of them is special. Praise their unique, decorative coats, which show that all are special in their own ways.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **Talk about jealousy.** Have the students ever been jealous? How did they act? How did it make others around them feel? Emphasize that we should not respond to these feelings in hurtful ways.
- **Special treatment.** Jacob treated Joseph in a special way when he gave him a fancy coat. It usually feels good to get special treatment. Think together of ways to treat each other in a special way during the day.

Faithful in a Strange Land

LESSON 2: JOSEPH HAS DREAMS

Objective

Students will recognize that sometimes we get angry.

Key Concepts

- Joseph had dreams.
- Joseph’s brothers did not like him.
- Sometimes we get angry at others.

Text: Genesis 37:5-11

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Bible
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: *Let’s Talk About Feeling Angry* by Joy Berry
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: “Joseph’s Dreams” activity sheet (p. 331)

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the Bible story from Genesis 37:5-11 in your own words, or use the paragraphs in lesson step 1.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option two, make copies of the “Joseph’s Dreams” activity sheet, one per student.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Remind the students about the coat that Jacob gave to Joseph. Why did he give it? (*Because he thought Joseph was more special than his other children.*) What did Joseph’s brothers think about that? (*They were jealous and didn’t like Joseph.*)

Ask the children if they ever remember dreams that they have at night. Allow time for responses.

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the Bible story. Explain that Joseph had some dreams and remembered them very well. Open the Bible to Genesis 37:5-11 and tell the story in your own words, or use the following:

Joseph had a dream that he was working with his brothers in the fields, binding wheat into sheaves. (*Explain that wheat is gathered together and tied together in bundles.*) In Joseph’s dream, suddenly his sheaf (or bundle) stood up straight and the sheaves of his brothers bowed down to it. (*Ask what it means to bow down. Students might remember that Jacob bowed to Esau, because that is what servants did to the king.*)

Joseph’s brothers did not like his dream. They asked Joseph if he thought he was going to rule over them. They hated Joseph even more.

But Joseph had a second dream. In this dream, the sun, moon, and 11 stars all bowed down to Joseph. (*Point out that there were 11 stars. How many brothers did Joseph have?*) Joseph told his brothers and his father about his dream. Jacob questioned the dream. “Does this mean that your mother and I and your brothers will all bow down to you?” he asked. Jacob remembered Joseph’s dream. But Joseph’s brothers were mad at him.

2. Act out the story, with the students doing motions as you read or tell about Joseph’s dreams again. As each item or character enters the story, the students will become that item or character. For example, all will be Joseph at the same time, dreaming about binding wheat into sheaves. Then all will be Joseph’s brothers, tying wheat. Next, they will become sheaves that bow. Do the same for the second dream. Have the students think about (become) the shape of the sun, moon, and stars as they act out those portions of the story.

3. Talk about anger. Joseph’s brothers were angry with him. Ask if it’s okay to be angry. Then ask if it’s okay to hurt someone when we’re angry. (Responses will vary.) Then ask what kinds of things make the children angry. How do they respond if they are angry?

4. Handling anger. Talk about ways to resolve anger, so that no one gets hurt. Suggestions may be to walk away, find something else to think about or do, work on a hobby, talk with someone, or forgive (as Esau forgave Jacob).

Encourage the children to think about these ways to handle anger the next time they feel themselves getting mad.

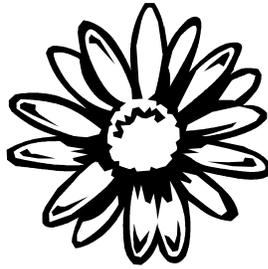
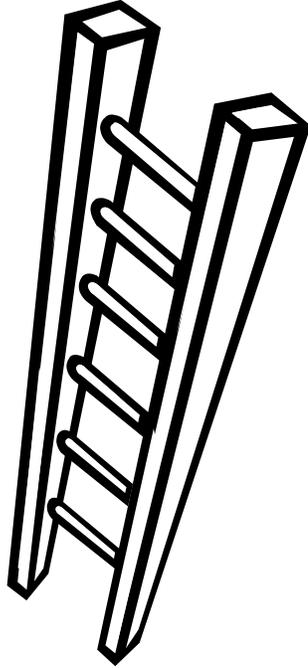
EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **Read and discuss the book**, *Let’s Talk About Feeling Angry*, by Joy Berry.
- **Joseph’s Dreams.** Hand out the activity sheet from page 331 and instruct the students to circle the items from Joseph’s dreams and color them.

Joseph's Dreams

Circle the items that appeared in Joseph's dreams. Color them.



Faithful in a Strange Land

LESSON 3: JOSEPH GOES TO EGYPT

Objective

Students will recognize that everyone feels jealous, sad, or angry at times.

Key Concepts

- Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery.
- Everyone sometimes feels jealous and angry.
- God is with us all the time.

Text: Genesis 37:12-36

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Bible
- Posterboard (one piece)
- Writing paper
- Drawing paper
- Crayons, markers
- For Extend the Lesson: *How Would You Survive as an Ancient Egyptian?* by Jacqueline Morley

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the story from Genesis 37:21-36 in your own words, or using the paragraphs from lesson step 1.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Review the story from the last lesson. Say the following words and have the students tell why this word was important in the story:

- Dream (*Joseph had dreams.*)
- Wheat (*In Joseph's dream, his sheaf of wheat stood tall while his brothers' sheaves bowed to it.*)
- Sun, moon, and stars (*All bowed down to Joseph.*)
- Anger (*Joseph's brothers felt angry when he told them his dreams.*)

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the Bible story. Explain that as the story begins, Joseph's brothers are still angry. Opening the Bible to Genesis 37:21-36, tell the story in your own words, or use the following:

One day, Jacob wanted Joseph to make sure that everything was okay with his brothers and their sheep. Joseph set out to find his brothers, so he could report back to his father.

Joseph's brothers saw him walking towards them. They were not happy at all with Joseph. In fact, they were still pretty angry. They started saying mean things about him. When Joseph got closer, they grabbed him and put him into a deep hole, so he couldn't get out and go home to their father.

After Joseph was down in the hole for a while, his brothers saw some men riding towards them on their camels. The men were traders on their way to Egypt, taking slaves to sell to the rich people there. Joseph's brothers decided to get him out of the hole and sell him to the men. After the traders arrived in Egypt, they sold Joseph to Potiphar as a slave. Potiphar was captain of the guard for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

Back with the sheep, Joseph's brothers knew that they would have to tell their father something about Joseph. So they took Joseph's fancy coat and dipped it in goat's blood. When Jacob saw the coat he thought that a wild animal had killed Joseph! He cried for many days, and no one could comfort him.

2. Talk about the feelings in the story. Have the students show with their facial expressions how the characters must have felt:

- Joseph, when asked to do a special errand by his father
- Joseph's brothers, when they saw Joseph coming towards them
- Joseph, when they grabbed him and put him into the deep hole
- Jacob, when he mourned the death of this son

Ask the children to tell times when they feel these emotions. How do they act at those times? Allow time for a few stories.

Reassure the children that though Joseph was sold and taken to a country far away from his family, God was still with him and had big plans for him. Add that when we feel angry or sad or jealous or confused or lonely, God is still with us and sometimes has big plans for us!

3. Write simple poems about God being present. This may be done individually or as a class. Begin by writing on a posterboard, "God is with me when . . ." Students may add one or two words to finish this sentence, either directly on the posterboard or on paper to be added to the poster board later.

4. Illustrate the poems, either on individual pieces of paper or on a collective mural. Hang the poem and illustrations on the bulletin board. The bulletin board will be referred to in Lesson 4, Introducing the Lesson.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **Look at a book.** Learn about Egyptian culture by looking together at the book, *How Would You Survive as an Ancient Egyptian?*
- **List new experiences.** Joseph would have experienced many new things in Egypt. As a class, identify some of these new things and make a list: new food, new people, new language, etc.

Faithful in a Strange Land

LESSON 4: JOSEPH DEPENDS ON GOD

Objective

Students will recognize that everyone needs to depend on God.

Key Concepts

- Joseph had some difficult experiences.
- Joseph depended on God.
- God took care of Joseph.

Text: Genesis 39–40

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Bible

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the story from Genesis 39–40 in your own words, or use the paragraphs from lesson steps 1 and 3.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Look at the bulletin board with the poems and illustrations from the last lesson. Review how God was with Joseph, even though bad things happened to him.

Ask if any of the children have ever been accused of something they did not do. Perhaps you have a story to share from your own experiences. Allow time for sharing stories.

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the Bible story, part 1. Remind the students that at the end of the last story, Joseph had been sold as a slave to Potiphar, who was captain of the guard for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Open the Bible to Genesis 39–40 and tell the story in your own words, or use the following:

God was with Joseph as he worked for Potiphar. Potiphar noticed that Joseph was a good worker and took care of things in his big house. Potiphar gave Joseph a lot more responsibilities because he knew he would do things well. God blessed Potiphar because of Joseph. Potiphar's household ran smoothly, and he had more livestock and land. Potiphar was happy, because with Joseph in charge, he didn't have to worry about anything.

All of these good things changed, though, the day that Potiphar's wife told a lie about Joseph. Potiphar believed his wife and was furious with Joseph. He was so mad that he put Joseph in jail!

But God was with Joseph in jail, too. The guard noticed that Joseph was a responsible man, so he put Joseph in charge of other prisoners and over the

many things that happened in the prison. And because God was with Joseph, the jail ran smoothly.

2. False accusations. Pause in the story and ask the students to remember what it was like when they were accused of something they didn't do (refer to comments from Introducing the Lesson). Remind them that it is good to remember that God is still with them, even if they don't understand what is happening, or why.

3. Tell the Bible story, part 2. Ask the children to listen for ways that God took care of Joseph, even when he was in jail. Continue the story in your own words, or use the following:

One day in jail, Joseph noticed that two prisoners looked troubled. He asked them what was wrong. The prisoners said that they had some disturbing dreams the night before. What could the dreams mean? *(Ask if the students can remember dreams that Joseph had—wheat sheaves bowing to him, and the sun, moon, and stars bowing to him.)*

Joseph listened to the men's dreams and explained what they meant. The dreams meant that these men would soon get out of jail. Joseph asked them to remember him after they were released from prison.

The men's dreams came true, and they were released from jail, just as Joseph had told them. But they forgot about Joseph.

4. Compare Joseph's life in Potiphar's house to his life in jail. At the end of this story, Joseph is still in jail. Remind the children that even though Joseph's life had changed dramatically, God still loved Joseph and continued to take care of him.

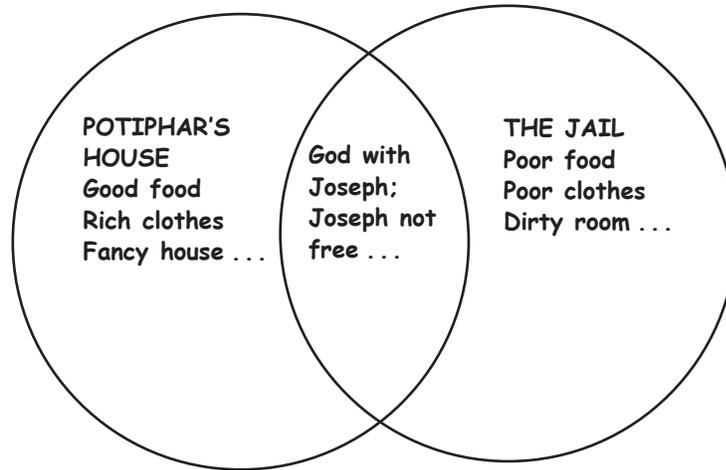
5. Do role plays of situations in which students might find themselves treated unfairly:

- Everyone in the class has gone to recess except you. Your teacher said you can have recess once you have finished your work for the morning. There's only one problem. You don't understand how to do the only thing you have left to do.
- You spent hours creating an incredible structure with your block set. Along comes your younger brother or sister, who bumps into it. The creation you spent hours making is ruined. What should you do?
- You have asthma. When you run and play hard, it is especially hard to breathe. You are not allowed to take gym class because of it. When the other children play tag or basketball at recess, you feel like you're not included. How do you handle it?
- One of your friends keeps telling you that he/she will invite you to spend the night soon. Your friend keeps talking about all the fun you will have playing games, watching movies, and staying up late. But you never get an invitation. What do you think?

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **Do a pantomime** of jobs that Joseph might have done in Potiphar's house. Have students take turns doing a pantomime while others guess.
- **Draw a Venn diagram** on the blackboard. In one circle, write the students' ideas describing Potiphar's house. In the other circle, write the students' ideas describing the jail. In the part that overlaps, write any similarities between Potiphar's house and the jail.



Faithful in a Strange Land

LESSON 5: RAGS TO RICHES

Objective

Students will recognize that God is faithful.

Key Concepts

- Joseph was released from prison.
- Pharaoh trusted Joseph.
- God was faithful to Joseph.

Text: Genesis 41

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Bible
- For making necklaces: old newspapers, gold glitter, pans for glitter, cardboard or card stock, glue sticks, yarn (metallic or glittery is best)
- For Extend the Lesson: dried fruit, such as apricots and apples

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the story from Genesis 41 in your own words, or using the paragraphs in lesson step 1.
- Set up a necklace-making area, spreading newspapers on a table and placing pans with gold glitter on the newspaper.
- Cut cardboard circles about 4" in diameter (1 for each student) and punch a hole near one side. Cut a length of yarn for each student to make a necklace.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Talk about the dreams the children have heard about in recent lessons. Allow them to remember them and share with the class. (*Jacob dreamed about a ladder; Joseph dreamed about wheat, and the sun, moon, and stars.*) Remind the children that in Bible times, dreams were seen as messages.

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the Bible story. Introduce the story by saying that dreams were important to Joseph. Joseph had important dreams himself, and he was even able to tell other people what their dreams meant. In today's story, Joseph's ability to find a message in a dream came in handy. Open the Bible to Genesis 41 and tell the story in your own words, or use the following:

After telling the two prisoners what their dreams meant, two years went by. Those two years seemed long to Joseph, especially because he hadn't heard anything from the two prisoners he asked to remember him when they got out of jail!

Then Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had some puzzling dreams. In one dream, he saw seven fat cows eating along the banks of a river. Then seven skinny cows came along and ate the fat cows! This was a strange dream! In the second dream, seven heads of dried-up grain ate seven heads of plump grain.

Pharaoh was so mixed-up about these dreams that he called for his advisors to come and tell him what the dreams meant. But the advisors couldn't help Pharaoh. Then one of them remembered that when he was in prison, a man named Joseph had explained what his dream meant!

Pharaoh sent for Joseph immediately, and told him about his dreams. Joseph explained the dream. He said God was telling Pharaoh there would be difficult times for their land. For seven years, the fields would grow lots of food and people would be happy. But during the next seven years, there would be a famine. The crops would not grow and so people would be hungry.

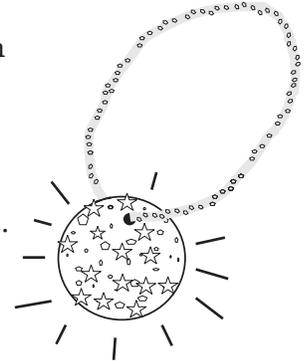
Joseph added that Pharaoh should put someone in charge of saving food during the seven good years, so that everyone would have something to eat during the seven years when there was no food.

Pharaoh listened carefully to Joseph and put him in charge of the project. In fact, he said everyone had to obey Joseph except the Pharaoh himself! Pharaoh gave Joseph a special ring to wear to show that people needed to obey him, and a royal gold chain to wear around his neck. In one day, Joseph had gone from prison to the palace!

2. God is faithful. Remind the students that even though bad things happened to Joseph, God was faithful to him. In fact, if some of the bad things had not happened, there might not have been anyone in Egypt who knew about the upcoming famine. They might not have stored food for hungry years.

List some of the bad things that happened to Joseph. (*His brothers didn't like him and sold him as a slave. He was in jail.*) Ask why these things may have needed to happen (*to get Joseph to Egypt and to have Pharaoh learn about his dream-telling ability*).

3. Make gold necklaces to look like the one Pharaoh may have given Joseph. When students wear them, they can remember that God is faithful. Invite small groups of students, in turn, to spread glue onto their cardboard circles, using a glue stick. Sprinkle glitter on the circles while holding them over the pan. Shake off excess glitter. Children may return to their seats to string yarn through the hole in the circle. They may need help in knotting the yarn to complete their necklace.



EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **Storing food.** Joseph's new job was to store food for the years of famine. Think of ways we store food today. Talk about growing seasons, and canning, freezing, and drying vegetables and fruit. Show some canned items (store-bought or home-canned) to illustrate this point. Mention that farmers have barns, sheds, and silos to help with food storage. Would any of these have been available in Joseph's time?
- **Enjoy a snack of dried fruit.** Talk about how this is one way to store fruit.

Faithful in a Strange Land

LESSON 6: FAMINE BEGINS

Objective

Students will understand the value of sharing.

Key Concepts

- Joseph stored food in preparation for the famine.
- Joseph shared food with others who did not have food.
- God wants us to share with others who do not have food.

Text: Genesis 41:53-57; 42:1-2

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Bible
- World map
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: 2 growing pans, soil, easy-to-grow seeds (such as marigolds or carrots)

Teacher Preparation

- Check newspapers, magazines, and online for information about current famines.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option two, invite someone who works at a food pantry to talk with your class.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Introduce the word “famine.” Does anyone know what it means? Allow time for response. You might need to give more information, noting that a famine is when there is not enough food for people to eat. Sometimes this is caused by a lack of rain to grow crops. Sometimes war has damaged the land so that crops cannot be grown. Sometimes people do not have enough money to buy food. Wonder about how life would change for the children and their families if they experienced a famine.

LESSON STEPS

1. Read the Bible story, part 1, from Genesis 41:53-57. Explain that because Joseph was responsible with his job, he had saved a lot of food. People knew that he had buildings full of grain saved from the seven good years, so they came from all over to see if they could buy food. Joseph shared what he had stored.

2. Look at a world map. Point out where you live, then point out Egypt, where this story took place long ago. Tell the students that famines still happen today. Point out on the map where there is currently a famine. Explain that people are hungry today, perhaps because of a lack of rain, perhaps because they do not have enough money to buy food or perhaps because there is a war and people lose their homes, family members, and their money.

3. Hungry people around us. There might be famine in a land far away, but some people are also hungry right in our own communities. Ask the students to think of ways to help people who don't have enough food. They might suggest donating items to a local food pantry, or raising money for a relief and development organization such as Mennonite Central Committee. You might want to plan a future field trip to a food pantry or other local organization that helps those who are hungry. Add that, just like Joseph, we can learn to share the plenty that we have with others who need it.

4. Read the Bible story, part 2. Continue the story by reading Genesis 42:1-2. If students are not familiar with the story, can they predict what might happen next?

5. Sharing with others. We can share food with those who are hungry. What other ways can people share together? Responses will vary. Tell the students that Joseph sets a fine example about how we are to share with others.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **Create a "famine."** Plant some easy-to-grow seeds, such as marigolds or carrots, in two different pans. Consistently add water to one pan, but do not add any water to the other pan. Watch over the next few weeks. What happens to the plants that are watered? What happens to the plants that are not given water?
- **Learn about a local food pantry.** Your community might not be experiencing a famine, but there are people in your community who do not have enough food to eat. Invite someone who works at your local food pantry to share with the class about hungry people in your community. Make plans to collect canned goods for the food bank.

Faithful in a Strange Land

LESSON 7: JOSEPH FORGIVES, PART 1

Objective

Students will recognize the importance of forgiveness.

Key Concepts

- Joseph forgave his brothers.
- We can forgive others.

Text: Genesis 42–50

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Bible
- Name cards (1 per student) with names of characters from recent stories: Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Esau, Rachel, Joseph, Benjamin (several cards may have the same name)
- For Extend the Lesson: lemons, water, sugar, juicer

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the story from Genesis 42–45 in your own words, or use the paragraphs in lesson step 1.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Responding to unkindness. Ask the students to think about a time when someone did something mean to them. (There is no need to share responses, just think about it.) How did they respond to the person who was mean? How did they act the next time they saw the person?

Remind the children that at the end of the last lesson, Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to buy food. Who was in charge of selling the food in Egypt (*Joseph*)? And what had Joseph's brothers done to him before (*sold him as a slave*)? Why were Joseph's brothers mean to him? (*They didn't like that Jacob favored him; they didn't like his dreams that showed his brothers would one day bow down to him.*)

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the Bible story. Open the Bible to Genesis 42–45 and tell the story in your own words, or use the following as a guide:

Jacob sent all of his sons except the youngest, Benjamin, to Egypt to buy grain. Because Joseph was a governor in Egypt and the one in charge of the grain, the brothers went to him. They bowed before him.

The brothers did not recognize Joseph. Joseph recognized his brothers right away, but he pretended not to know them. He asked them where they were from. The brothers answered that they were from Canaan and that they wanted to buy grain.

Joseph remembered the mean things his brothers had done to him. So he accused them of being spies! The brothers insisted that they were just hungry and needed grain. They explained that they had a father and brother in Canaan, waiting for them. Joseph continued to pretend that his brothers were spies. He made up a test. He said that one of the brothers must stay in jail while the others returned home with grain for their families and then returned with their younger brother.

The brothers started talking among themselves. They said this must be happening to them because of what they had done to their brother Joseph so many years ago!

Joseph ordered his servants to pack sacks of grain, but also gave them secret instructions to give the grain money back to the brothers. When the brothers stopped for the evening, on their way home, they opened their grain sacks and discovered the money. They were afraid, because they didn't understand what was going on.

When the brothers got home, they told Jacob all that had happened. Now Jacob was afraid! He didn't want Benjamin, his youngest son, to go to Egypt. But the famine continued and the brothers' grain was soon almost gone. They needed more food. And so Jacob gave instructions to take gifts to the man in Egypt, as well as lots of money. Benjamin also had to go along.

Joseph saw his brothers coming and saw that Benjamin was with them. He had his servants prepare a big feast for them. The servants took the brothers into the palace, and they were really afraid. They tried to return the money that had been put into their grain sacks, but the servants wouldn't let them. The servants said that their God must have been taking care of them.

The brother who was in prison was released and joined the other brothers in the palace. Joseph arrived, and the brothers bowed low before him. Joseph asked about their father, and the brothers bowed again when they said that their father was alive and well. When Joseph saw Benjamin, he had to leave the room to cry.

When he entered the room again, he ordered the feast to be served. The brothers were surprised when they were assigned seats and noticed that they sat in the order of their birth—from oldest to youngest. They ate and drank and enjoyed the feast.

After they were finished eating, Joseph gave orders to his servants to once again return the money the brothers had given him, and this time to hide a silver cup in Benjamin's sack.

The brothers started out on their journey home. As they left the city, Joseph's men caught up with them and accused them of stealing a silver cup. They said that whoever had the cup would become a slave, but the others could go home. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack! The brothers knew that Benjamin must return home to their father!

So all of the brothers returned to Joseph. They bowed before him and asked what he was trying to do. The brothers insisted that Benjamin must go back to their father. One brother begged to be a slave instead of Benjamin.

Joseph could stand it no longer. He ordered his servants to leave him alone with these men. And then Joseph began crying. He cried so loudly that everyone in the palace heard him.

In between his sobs, he told the brothers that he was Joseph and asked about their father. The brothers were surprised and speechless! Joseph repeated

what he had said. “I am Joseph, the one who you sold into Egypt. Don’t be angry, because God put me here to save your lives.”

Joseph told his brothers to go home, get their father Jacob, and return to Egypt. He invited all of his family and their children and grandchildren to move to Egypt, where there would always be plenty of food and land for them. Joseph’s brothers began crying and talking. They quickly returned home, to move their wives and children to Egypt. And Jacob was very happy that his son Joseph was still alive!

2. Think about the story. Ask the students to think about what it meant for Joseph to treat his brothers kindly. They had done very mean things to Joseph, and yet Joseph gave them plenty of food and lots of land. Joseph even believed that God had put him in Egypt just for that purpose!

Add that Joseph forgave his brothers for the mean things they had done to him. Even though Joseph had some hard times and sometimes felt like no one cared, his story had a happy ending.

Remind the students that at the beginning of the lesson they thought about times someone treated them in a mean way. Can they think of ways they could treat those who were mean to them kindly? (It is not necessary to dwell on this point or to encourage verbal student responses. Simply ask these questions as a way to tie the story of Joseph to their own lives.)

3. Remembering story characters. Give each student a card with a character name from the recent stories. (Students with the same name should form a group.) Ask each group to tell a little bit about their character. They might prefer to act out a portion of the story that highlights the character. What do they remember about this character? What is something special about the person? (Save the cards to use again in Lesson 8.)

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **Talk more about forgiveness.** Joseph forgave his brothers. Can we also forgive those who have been mean to us?
- **“Turning lemons into lemonade.”** Explain this expression to the children. Lemons can be sour to eat by themselves, but we can use their juice to make a sweet drink. Sometimes when life is hard (sour), we can try to find the good in the situation—like turning lemons into lemonade. This is what Joseph did. What were the “lemons” in his life? How did he turn them into “lemonade?” Make lemonade together. Let the children taste a bit of lemon with no sugar. Then enjoy the sweet drink you made.

Faithful in a Strange Land

LESSON 8: JOSEPH FORGIVES, PART 2

Objective

Students will recognize the importance of forgiveness.

Key Concepts

- Joseph forgave his brothers.
- We can forgive others.

Text: Genesis 50:15-21; Isaiah 55:7; Jeremiah 3:12; Micah 7:18-19

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Character name cards from Lesson 7
- Skit props: sacks, silver cup, play money (1 set per group)
- Bible
- Half-sheets of paper, 1 for each student
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: name cards with names of characters in Genesis (Adam, Eve, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Esau, Leah, Rachel, Joseph, etc.)
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: Memory Verse Activity Sheet (p. 346), crayons, markers

Teacher Preparation

- If using Extend the Lesson, option two, make copies of the activity sheet, one per student.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Hold up the character name cards as a quick review. Have the students call out something about the character on the card. Then divide students into small groups and allow time for them to prepare skits of the story from the last lesson. Share the skits with the class.

LESSON STEPS

1. Read the Bible story. Continue Joseph's story of forgiveness by reading Genesis 50:15-21 from the Bible. Add that Joseph chose to forgive his brothers for the wrong things they did to him. God also forgives people when they do wrong things.

2. Read the following texts: Isaiah 55:7, Jeremiah 3:12, and Micah 7:18-19. What do these words tell us about God?

Add that God forgives, Joseph forgave, and we also can forgive others. One reason Joseph forgave is because he could see God at work, in spite of the mean things his brothers had done.

3. Continue the story of Joseph by telling this brief summary:

Long ago, God had promised Abraham that he would have many children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and that they would be a great nation. Abraham and Sarah had a son, Isaac, who had twin sons, Jacob and Esau. Jacob had 12 sons and one daughter. The sons became heads of different tribes (groups of people). God changed Jacob's name to Israel, and his 12 sons' names were the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. God kept his promise to Abraham by giving him many children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. And his family became a great nation, just as God had promised.

Joseph forgave his brothers, because he recognized that God had a big purpose. If Joseph had not been sold into Egypt, he might not have been there to save food for the famine. And if he had not saved food for the famine, his family might have died! But because his brothers did mean things, Joseph was able to help bring about God's promise to Abraham to build a great nation.

4. Forgiving others. Have the students think of something they want to forgive. Hand out half-sheets of paper for them to briefly write it down or draw a picture. Then, as a class, crumble up the papers and throw them away as a symbol of the forgiveness the children will offer.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **Review the stories of Genesis.** Hand out the cards on which you have written the names of the characters in the book of Genesis. Have the students stand in sequential order according to their characters.
- **Put Psalm 126:3 in the correct order** by completing the Memory Verse Activity Sheet (p. 346). Provide crayons and markers for the children to draw a picture of a time when they were filled with joy.

Memory Verse Activity Sheet

Name _____

The words to the memory verse are all mixed up! Write them in the correct order. Then draw a picture of a time when you were filled with joy.

we filled Lord done joy The great has
with for us things and are Psalm 126:3

Unit 14 Quiz

Name _____

Yes or No:

- _____ 1. Jacob had lots of children.
- _____ 2. Joseph's brothers liked him.
- _____ 3. Joseph did bad things in Potiphar's house.
- _____ 4. God was always present with Joseph.
- _____ 5. God is always present with us.

Circle the best answer:

6. There are lots of _____ in the stories about Joseph.
- a. Camels
 - b. Dreams
 - c. Friends
 - d. Books
7. Joseph went from prison to the _____.
- a. Palace
 - b. Lake
 - c. Mountains
 - d. Temple
8. Joseph _____ his brothers.
- a. Disliked
 - b. Lied to
 - c. Forgave
 - d. Jailed

Answers to Unit 14 Quiz:

1. Yes
2. No
3. No
4. Yes
5. Yes
6. b. Dreams
7. a. Palace
8. c. Forgave