

## Lesson 48

# Joseph Forgives His Brothers

Joseph tested his brothers and forgave them.

# Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

## Introduction

### Slide #3

Refer to Lesson 47 Theme Poster. Last week we saw how God took Joseph from the prison to the palace of Pharaoh.

What happened to Pharaoh one night while he was sleeping? He had some upsetting dreams.

Pharaoh dreamed about fat cows and skinny cows and fat heads of grain and skinny heads of grain. But no one could tell him what these dreams meant.

Who worked for Pharaoh and remembered Joseph from the prison? The chief cupbearer.

What was Joseph able to do? Interpret Pharaoh's dreams.

What was the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams of the seven cows and seven heads of grain? Seven years of plenty would be followed by seven years of famine.

Joseph told Pharaoh what his dreams meant and suggested a plan to store grain for the famine. Pharaoh liked Joseph's plan and made him a powerful ruler—the second in command over Egypt. Joseph was in charge of collecting and storing grain during the seven good years of farming, and then he was in charge of selling it when the famine started.

## Joseph's Brothers Go to Buy Grain

Pass out the [Class Notes \(PDF\)](#) to the students.

The famine wasn't just in Egypt; the people in countries around Egypt didn't have enough food for themselves or their animals either. Egypt was the only place with grain to sell.

What is grain? Small, hard seeds from plants such as wheat, corn, oats, and rice often used in cereal and in flour for baking.

Grain is an important food for people all around the world. We use many different grains in a lot of different foods.

How many of you like oatmeal? Rice? Bread? Cereal? Popcorn? Show of hands.

Well, all of these things are made from grains. I brought some samples of grains to show you today. Bring out samples of grains, cereals, and flour you brought. Allow students to touch, smell, and maybe even taste some of the samples. Be aware of any allergies.

The famine we've been talking about was so bad that none of the grains or fruits and vegetables could grow. But God gave Joseph the plan to gather grain for seven years. Since grain could be dried, it would stay fresh until the famine began. Then Joseph could sell it to the people so they could cook it and grind it into flour for bread.

The Bible tells us that the famine spread all the way to Canaan, where Joseph's father and brothers lived. So what do you think Joseph's father, Jacob, would have to do so his family could have food? Allow discussion.

Jacob knew that his family needed grain, so he sent his sons to Egypt. But he didn't let his youngest son, Benjamin, go on the journey. He had already lost Joseph, and he didn't want something bad to happen to Benjamin, too. So the ten older brothers started out for Egypt to buy grain for their family.

## Genesis 42:6–8

Slide #4

Slide #5

Let's read in Genesis 42 and find out what happened when they got there. Who would like to read verses 6–8 for us? Assign readers.

Encourage your students to bring their Bibles to class. If appropriate, have them read the lesson Scriptures.

Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him and asked to buy grain. Does this remind you of something? Like maybe a dream Joseph had? Which dream was that? His dream at age 17 about his brothers' sheaves of grain bowing to his sheaf.

Joseph's dream was actually happening right there before him as his brothers bowed down. But this happened more than 20 years after he dreamed it.

Joseph recognized his brothers, but why do you think they didn't recognize him? How do you think he might have changed during his years in Egypt? Allow discussion.

It had been over 20 years since Joseph was sold by his brothers. They probably thought Joseph was a slave somewhere or maybe even dead. By this time, Joseph looked and sounded like an Egyptian. His clothes and hair looked Egyptian, and he was speaking Egyptian. Plus, Joseph was a powerful ruler, and even had an Egyptian name!

Instead of telling his brothers who he was, Joseph decided to test them to see if they had changed their ways. Joseph did several things to test his brothers.

## Joseph Tests His Brothers

First, Joseph spoke harshly to his brothers and accused them of being spies looking for a way to attack Egypt. Do you think he really thought they were spies? No, he was testing them.

## Genesis 42:17–20

Slide #6Slide #7

But that's not all Joseph did. Who will read the next part, Genesis 42:17–20? Assign readers.

What did Joseph do to all of the brothers? Put them in custody.

Uh oh! They weren't allowed to leave for three days. Now look in verse 19. Joseph said one of them would be confined. That means one of them would stay there in prison.

And where did he tell the others to go? Back to Canaan with grain. What did he say they had to do to prove they weren't lying? Bring the youngest brother back with them.

So Joseph took Simeon and put him back in prison. Then he warned the brothers that they must bring Benjamin when they came back, or he would know they were lying and would kill them as spies.

Things got even worse for the brothers. Not only did they have to leave Simeon in Egypt, but they also discovered that their money was back in their grain sacks. Joseph had told his servant to secretly put their money back. Now they were afraid Joseph would think they had stolen the money!

Then when the brothers got back home and told their father everything that had happened, Jacob refused to let them take Benjamin to Egypt to free Simeon.

Slide #8

Look at your Class Notes (PDF) now. Follow the path from #1 to find the answer on the other side of your sheet. Who can find the answer first and read it so we can fill in the blank? Choose a reader. Spies. Have students complete #1.

What happened on their way home? Who will read #2 for us? Choose a reader. Money. Have students complete #2.

Wow! Joseph was really putting them to the test, wasn't he?

After some time, Jacob and his family ate all the grain the brothers had brought from Egypt. Jacob told his sons to go back and buy some more, but they reminded him that they couldn't go back unless they brought Benjamin with them.

They knew Joseph had the power to kill them or put them in prison, but they were all out of food and needed to buy some more soon. Judah told Jacob that he would be responsible for Benjamin on the trip. Finally, Jacob agreed to let Benjamin go. He sent gifts and double the money for the brothers to give to Joseph.

When the brothers stood before Joseph again, Joseph was pleased to see Benjamin with them and told his servant to take them to his house and prepare a meal. This was a big honor, but the brothers were worried about the money they had found in their sacks. When they told the servant

about it, he told them everything was okay and they didn't need to worry. Simeon was brought out of prison, and they ate a meal in Joseph's house. But even during the meal Joseph was still testing his brothers.

## Genesis 43:33–34

### Slide #9

Who wants to read about that? It's in Genesis 43:33–34. Assign readers. Can you figure out why Joseph's brothers were looking at each other in amazement in verse 33? Allow discussion.

Joseph had his servant seat each of the brothers in their correct age order! The brothers were surprised that he would know their ages. They were probably asking themselves, "Who is this man? How could he know how old we are?"

Why do you think Joseph told his servant to give Benjamin more food than his brothers? He wanted to see if they would be jealous, like they were of him.

Joseph knew what his brothers use to be like, and he wanted to know if they had changed.

### Slide #10

Go back to the Class Notes (PDF). Who will read #3 for us? How did Joseph test them again? Choose a reader. Benjamin. Have students complete #3.

So they all enjoyed a meal there, but then it was time for them to head back to Canaan. This time they all got to go home together. But Joseph still wasn't finished with the test.

## Genesis 44:1–4

### Slide #11

### Slide #12

Let's read about the next thing he did in Genesis 44:1–4. Who will read those verses? Assign readers.

Why did Joseph put his silver cup in Benjamin's sack and then send his steward to accuse him of stealing? He wanted to see if his brothers would leave Benjamin or defend him.

Joseph wanted to see if his brothers were willing to stand up for Benjamin. And they did! They all went back to Egypt and spoke to Joseph together instead of letting Benjamin take the blame. When Joseph said he would make Benjamin his slave for taking the silver cup, Judah stepped up and took responsibility for Benjamin and said he would take his place as a slave.

How did the brothers act differently with Benjamin than they did with Joseph? They didn't leave Benjamin; they returned to Joseph with him. Judah offered to take Benjamin's punishment as a slave.

Remember, Joseph did all these things to test his brothers. He wanted to see if they had changed from the jealous, angry men they were when they had sold him as a slave.

So did his brothers change over the years? Did they pass the test? Yes.

### Slide #13

Who wants to read #4 on the Class Notes (PDF)? What did Joseph tell his servant to put into one of the grain sacks? Choose a reader. Silver cup.

Have students complete #4.

Look at #5 now. What did Judah say? Who will read that? Choose a reader. Slave. Have students complete #5.

## **Joseph Forgives His Brothers**

### Slide #14

Refer to the Lesson Theme Posters. Once Joseph saw the change in his brothers, he decided it was finally time to let them know who he was. Joseph's brothers were shocked and afraid when they saw that this powerful Egyptian ruler was their brother!

Why do you think his brothers were afraid when Joseph said who he was? They were afraid that Joseph would want revenge for their selling him as a slave.

They knew they had done some terrible things to Joseph. And now he was second in command of Egypt! He could do whatever he wanted to them. But Joseph's faith in God had grown a lot during his years in Egypt, and he forgave his brothers for what they had done.

Genesis 50:19–20

### Slide #15

Forgiving others can be hard to do. But I'm going to read two more verses now, Genesis 50:19–20, that explain how Joseph was able to forgive his brothers. Follow along in your Bibles. Read the verses.

How was Joseph able to forgive his brothers? What did he understand about God? Joseph understood that God was in control of the events in his life. God planned for him to be in Egypt to save his family.

When Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, they meant evil against him; they were trying to hurt him. But how did God use their actions for good? God planned all of these events so that Joseph would become a ruler, prepare for the famine, and save many lives.

If Joseph hadn't been in Egypt at just the right time, he wouldn't have interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, become a ruler, and gathered all the food to save so many lives (including his own family) during the famine. God had this all planned out perfectly; he was in control the whole time.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. What attribute of God means that he is in complete control of everything? Sovereign.

Yes. God is sovereign. Even when people do evil things, God can turn those things into something good! God's plans are perfect. Joseph understood this and knew that it was his job to trust God and forgive others.

#### Slide #16

Let's do #6 on the Class Notes (PDF) now. Who will read it for us? What did Joseph do? Choose a reader. Forgave. Have students complete #6.

### **Joseph's Family Travels to Egypt**

Joseph told his brothers to hurry back to Canaan and tell his father that he was alive. He gave them carts, donkeys, clothing, silver, and food for the journey. When they told their father that Joseph was not only alive but was also a ruler of Egypt, Jacob was so shocked at the news that he couldn't believe it at first. But he decided that he would go see Joseph.

Jacob and his family packed up everything they had in Canaan and traveled to Egypt. Along the way, Jacob stopped and offered sacrifices to God. And God spoke to Jacob. God promised that he would go with Jacob and his family to Egypt and that he would make Jacob's descendants into a great nation and later bring them back to Canaan.

When his family came, Joseph cried for joy when he saw his father. Then Pharaoh gave Joseph's family the land of Goshen to settle in. This land was the best for raising animals. Now Joseph had his family close so he could make sure they had plenty of food during the rest of the famine.

Joseph could have used his powerful position as a ruler to get revenge on his brothers. He could have put them all in prison, killed them, or not sold them any grain. But that's not what Joseph did. Instead, he chose to forgive them and save his family from the famine—all according to God's plan.

#### Slide #17

Let's finish the Class Notes (PDF) now. Where did Jacob and his whole family move to? Who will read that? Choose a reader. Goshen. Have students complete #7.

### **Application**

#### Slide #18

Refer to the Lesson Theme Posters. Joseph saw his dreams actually happen many years later. His brothers came to Egypt to buy grain and bowed down before him. Joseph decided to test them to see if they had changed from the jealous, angry brothers they used to be.

On their second trip to Egypt, the brothers were brought to Joseph's house and given a meal. When they left, Joseph had his servant secretly put his silver cup in Benjamin's sack of grain.

Why did Joseph do this? He wanted to see if his brothers would stand up for Benjamin and protect him, which they hadn't done for Joseph.

Judah stepped up and took responsibility for Benjamin, even offering to take his place as a slave. When Joseph saw this, he could see his brothers had changed, and he told them who he was. At first, they were afraid that Joseph wanted revenge for what they'd done to him. But Joseph forgave them because he understood that God had used the evil they did to him for good.

What good came from Joseph being sent to Egypt? He became a powerful ruler and saved many people, including his whole family, from the famine.

Joseph got to see his father, Jacob, and the rest of his family when they came down to Egypt. They settled in the land of Goshen, safe through the rest of the famine.

Joseph chose to forgive his brothers when he could've gotten revenge. None of us have been sold into slavery by our own brothers, but we still get hurt by others because we live in a sinful world, so people will sin against us. But we must forgive just as Joseph did. In fact, Jesus commands us to forgive others because he has forgiven us.

When we don't forgive, it can make us bitter. Does anyone know what bitterness is? Allow discussion.

Bitterness is unforgiveness, anger, and hurt. Although we may think we're punishing the person who wronged us when we don't forgive, we are actually hurting ourselves. Bitterness can ruin relationships, keep us from praying, and even make us physically sick! If there is someone you haven't forgiven, take a moment during our prayer time and ask God to help you forgive. Stop going over and over what that person did to hurt you, and give that hurt to God. He will heal that hurt and replace it with love and kindness.

Just as Joseph knew God was in control even when bad things happened we, too, can trust God to work all things together for good.

## Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

## Board Game

Teams will answer questions and make their way to the finish on the Game Board.

## Materials

- Review Questions
- Game Board (provided in the Teacher Kit)
- Dice, numbered cards, or spinner
- Buttons or other small items as game pieces for each team

## Instructions



Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into teams.

Team members will take turns answering the review questions. If they answer correctly, they will roll the dice, spin, or draw a numbered card and move that number of spaces on the Game Board. Follow the directions on the spaces to move ahead, fall back, or switch places with another team. If someone does not know or does not answer correctly, he may ask his teammates for help. Alternate between teams as long as time permits, repeating questions if necessary. The first team to make it all the way to the Finish wins.

## Box Toss

Students will answer review questions then toss the beanbag at the holes in the box to gain points for their team.

### Materials

- Review Questions
- Medium-sized cardboard box
- Scissors or knife
- Four beanbags
- Masking tape

### Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use scissors or a knife to cut two or three holes in the bottom of the box. Make sure they are large enough for a beanbag to easily pass through. Label each hole with a point number: 5, 10, and 15. Use masking tape to make a tossing line several feet away from the box.

Divide the class into teams. Have the teams line up behind the line across from the box. Give each team two beanbags. Alternate asking each team a review question. Students who answer correctly will toss the beanbags at the target holes in the box to earn points for their team. If they answer incorrectly, they may toss the beanbags for fun without the points counting. Students will go to the end of the line after tossing the beanbags. Keep score for both teams. Continue play until all questions have been answered correctly and students have all had a chance to toss the beanbags.

## Draw Dice

Teams will answer questions and complete a simple drawing to win. Who will finish their drawing first?

### Materials

- Review Questions
- One drawing area for each team (paper, white board, etc.)

Pencils or white board markers  
One die

## Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into two teams. Give each team a sheet of paper and a pencil, or divide the white board in half. Draw a mouse on the board as an example.

Ask the first team a question from the lesson. If they answer correctly, have them roll the die.

To begin drawing their mouse, each team must wait until they get a six. They will then draw the mouse's body on their paper or the board. After they have drawn the body, as they give correct answers to the questions, they can continue to draw the other parts of the mouse according to the numbers they roll.



They can draw according to the numbers below:

- 6 = body
- 5 = nose
- 4 = whiskers
- 3 = eyes
- 2 = ears
- 1 = tail

Continue giving each team a turn to answer a question and roll the die. Repeat the questions as necessary. The first team to finish their mouse wins.

You may choose to draw a simple object from the lesson, such as a crown, an open Bible, a fish, etc. Be sure to assign numbers (as above) to each part of the object to be drawn before the game begins.

## Four in a Row

Students will answer questions and add a marker for their team onto the grid. Which team will be the first to get four in a row?

## Materials

Review Questions  
Masking tape  
Red and black paper circles or other markers for each team

## Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use masking tape to make a 16-section grid on the floor. The grid should be four sections wide by four sections long. Each section should be equal in size. Use eight red circles and eight black circles cut from construction paper or other markers for the two teams.

Divide the students into two teams. Give each team eight markers. They will take turns answering the questions. If they answer correctly, they can put a marker in a square on the grid. The first team to get four markers in a row wins the game.

## Goofy Golf

Hit the sock with the noodle? Teams must work together to answer the questions and putt to get a hole-in-one in this crazy golf game!

## Materials

Review Questions  
Swimming noodles or rolled up newspapers  
Rolled up socks  
Masking tape  
Ten sheets of paper  
Markers

## Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use the markers to number sheets of paper 1–10 (use more or less depending on class size and time). Tape down the sheets of paper around the room in a random pattern to form a golf course. You may want to add chairs as obstacles in the path.

Divide the class into teams. Give each team a rolled up sock and a swimming noodle. Ask the first student a review question from the lesson. If he answers correctly, allow him to use the noodle to drive the rolled up sock toward the first sheet of paper labeled #1. Continue with the next team. Take turns allowing team members to answer questions and continue putting the socks along the course to each hole, continuing from where the last teammate left

off. The sock must touch or roll over the sheet of paper to consider it in the hole. The first team to reach the tenth hole wins.

## Oh No

Not every roll of the dice will be good for the team. Answer the question, roll the dice, and be prepared to say, "Oh no!"

### Materials

Review Questions  
Two dice

### Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into teams. Each team will take turns answering review questions. When a team answers correctly, have them roll the dice to determine their points. If a team does not answer correctly, give the answer and repeat the question later. Keep track of team scores.

Numbers aren't always a winner! If students roll:

2 or 3 that team gives 5 points away to the other team  
4 or 5 that team takes 5 points from the other team  
6–10 face value  
11 subtract 10 points from the team score  
12 double the team score

(Note: no team can have less than 0 points.)

## Pick a Point

Answer the questions correctly to earn the right to pick a point.

### Materials

Review Questions  
Small paper strips  
Cup or basket

### Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Write various numbers in increments of 5 or 10 on strips of paper to use as point cards. Put the point cards into the cup or basket. Divide students into teams of 4–5 students each. Have each team take turns answering a review question. After each correct answer, let a member of the team draw a point card from the cup.

The number of points on the cards will vary, so the score will have nothing to do with how skilled one team might be. Keep track of each team's points. If time allows, repeat the questions!

## Toss for It

How many points? Toss for it! Students answer the questions and toss the beanbag to earn points for their team.

### Materials

Review Questions

A deck of numbered cards, or numbers and "wild" written on index cards

One beanbag

Masking tape

Two baskets or containers for cards

### Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Place several rows of numbered cards facedown with a few inches between them to form a grid pattern (make sure to put several wild cards or Jokers down, too). Use the masking tape to make a tossing line several feet from the cards.

Divide students into teams and have them line up behind the tossing line. Ask the first student a review question. If he gives the correct answer, have him toss the beanbag onto a card. Turn the card over to reveal the points he receives for his team. Face cards or word cards are 10 points each. Wild or Jokers are also 10—plus another turn. All other cards are face value.

Have the student pick up his card and put it in the team's basket to be counted at the end of the game. Next team's turn. If a student gives an incorrect answer, he should go to the end of the line. Give the answer and repeat that question later. Continue taking turns until all the questions have been answered. Add more cards to the grid if necessary.

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