

Session 2

Benjamin and the cup

We see an example of forgiveness, how relationships can be restored and how God makes the best out of a bad situation.

Scripture: Genesis 41:53–47:12

Supplies:

- Clothes pegs
- Breakfast cereal (puffed rice, rice crispies or fruit loops)
- Wool or rope to span across the room
- Pictures: Jacob, Joseph, 11 brothers, a pyramid, a storehouse, corn bag, silver cup, 2 Egyptian guards (each picture is glued to a clothes peg)
- Flour or sand
- Trays
- Powdered paint
- Brown paper bags



Welcome

“On the clothes line”

Divide the group into smaller groups and play a game. Each group has one person who represents their clothes line. The group members run one by one to a bucket filled with clothes pegs and grab a handful to hang on their clothes line (their group member’s clothes). When the clothes pegs are finished, each group can count how many clothes pegs they fastened.

“The storehouses of Egypt”

Fill a dish with breakfast cereal and write: “The storehouses of Egypt”. Give each child/group a smallish cup or cap and let them run from a certain point/line (their own town) to the dish (Egypt) to fetch food. See how much food each team can get in a few minutes.



Worship

Settle down ritual: Give each child a small paper to write down or draw something they are grateful for. Sing a song of thankfulness (or listen to one) and let the children clip their notes onto a T-shirt that is hanging on a hanger.



Word

Hang rope or wool around the room. Fasten the clothes pegs with the characters as follows: On one end: Jacob and his sons. On the other end: Joseph, the pyramid, the storehouse and the guards.

Previously in Joseph’s story we heard that he became advisor to the king. (*Show Joseph at the pyramids.*) He had big storehouses built to keep all the extra wheat that they had from the 7 good years. The 7 years of drought had begun. Food was getting less and less, and they went to the king of Egypt for help. He said: “Go and speak to Joseph. He will help you.” Joseph opened the storehouses to start selling the wheat.

The drought went further than Egypt and it also became very dry in Canaan. Jacob (*walk closer to the side of Canaan and point to Jacob*) and his sons didn't have any food left. Jacob told his sons: "I heard that there is a lot of wheat in Egypt. Go there and buy us some wheat, otherwise we'll starve. Ten of his sons went. Jacob didn't want to send his youngest son, Benjamin. He was afraid that something would happen to him. (*Bring Benjamin to Jacob and move the other brothers to Egypt.*)

The ten brothers arrived in Egypt. Joseph was managing the selling of the wheat. Everyone had to go to him to buy it. The brothers came to Joseph and bowed before him. Joseph immediately recognized his brothers, but they didn't recognize him at all. Joseph spoke to them very sternly. He asked them, "Where did you come from?" They answered, "From Canaan. We have come here to buy wheat." Joseph accused them, "No! You're spies that want to come see where you can attack Egypt." They denied it and tried to convince him, "No, sir! We were actually 12 brothers. The youngest brother is still at home with our father and one of our brothers unfortunately died."

Joseph told them, "You will have to convince me of this. I want to see your youngest brother before I believe you." He locked all the brothers in jail for 3 days. (*Turn the clothes pegs around so that their backs are facing the children.*) After 3 days Joseph's heart changed. He ordered that one brother must stay in Egypt while the rest had to go back to get their youngest brother. He let them fill their bags with wheat to take home. The brothers said to each other, "That's our punishment for what we did to Joseph! Joseph begged us not to sell him and we didn't listen. Now it's our turn to be scared. Our past is coming back to haunt us."

The brothers didn't know that Joseph understood every word they said. When Joseph heard that they realized what they did to him was wrong, he became quite sad. Simeon had to stay behind while the rest went to fetch Benjamin. Joseph took the money that his brothers paid, and hid it in the bags. He also gave them some food for the road. (*Put a peg with the wheat bag on the line. Keep one brother and let the rest move to the other side.*)

After they traveled really far, one of the brothers opened the bags and found the money. Now they were really scared that they would get into trouble. Once they got home Jacob was very upset and said: "Joseph is already dead, Simeon is in prison, and now you want to take Benjamin too! I will lose ALL of my children. I will not allow it!" The wheat they brought ran out quickly and they convinced Jacob to let Benjamin go along to Egypt. (*Move the ten brothers to Egypt.*) The brothers brought gifts and money for Joseph. Joseph invited them all to dinner, but the brothers were afraid that it was a trap. At the door of his house, they told the person in charge about the money they found in their bag and that they wanted to give it back. "Relax," he said, "all your debt has been paid. It must have been God, the God of your grandfather and father who put the money in your bag."

When Joseph arrived, they bowed before him and gave him the gifts they brought. To their surprise Simeon was there in Joseph's house and not in prison. Joseph asked many questions. He wanted to know how their father was. When Joseph saw his little brother, Benjamin, he said to him, "My son, God will be gracious to you." And then Joseph left the room quickly. He was so sad that he went to cry in his room.

After a while Joseph washed his face and went back to the dining room. "Bring the food," he said. At the table his brothers saw a strange thing. Joseph had them seated from oldest to youngest. They looked at each other. On top of all of that Joseph was spoiling Benjamin and gave him five times more food than the others.

Joseph ordered the brothers' bags to be filled again, with their money packed on top of the wheat and his special silver cup packed in Benjamin's bag. The next morning the brothers got up early to go back to Canaan. (*Move them down the line.*) They were only gone a short while when Joseph sent two Egyptian guards (*put them on the line*) to go after them and asked, "Why are you stealing? Why are you taking a cup from the man who is helping you so much?" The brothers immediately said that they are innocent. If the cup is found with one of them, then he can be killed and the others taken in as slaves. The secretary then said, "Right! Open their bags. The guilty will become my slave, the rest can go home." From the eldest to the youngest they opened the bags. Then they found the cup in Benjamin's bag! Everyone was shocked and very sad. They went back to Joseph. There was a big problem.

The brothers fell in front of Joseph and said that they would all be his slaves. They explained to Joseph that Benjamin was their father's beloved wife's only living son and that their father wouldn't survive if Benjamin was also taken from him. Joseph saw that they were really sorry. Then he couldn't take it anymore. He sent out all the Egyptians and when he spoke to his brothers, he began to cry. He spoke in their language and told them who he is. He wanted to know if his father was really still alive. His brothers were speechless. He told them what happened since they had sold him. They were overjoyed and hugged each other. He sent them to fetch their father with the rest of the family.

Jacob couldn't believe what they told him. "My son is alive! I don't have to mourn anymore!"

Joseph went to meet his father. They hugged each other and Jacob said, “Now I can die in peace. I have seen my son.” The entire family lived in Egypt and God blessed them.

Children reflect on the story:

1. I wonder what you would do if you were Joseph and your brothers stood in front of you.
2. I wonder how you would feel if you were wrongly accused.
3. I wonder if you can think of someone you need to forgive.



Working and Playing

- Give the children each a brown paper bag. Let them read or listen to the scripture Genesis 45:5–10 and let them write or draw their favourite part and decorate the bag. When they’re finished, they can scoop some of the cereal into their bags and take it home
- Lay the trays out and put flour or sand on them. (you can mix the powdered paint through it or make sure that the trays are brightly coloured.) Give the children a picture to draw or a name to write of someone in a situation that they have to forgive. Let them say a short prayer about it and then rub the picture/name off the tray.

Closing prayer to end the session

Leader: “We are here...”

Children: “to serve the Lord.”

Leader: “When God speaks to us...”

Children: “we follow only his advice.”

Jacob



