



NPC Children

October 17th Family Lesson

Bible Story: Joseph (Genesis 1:33-50)

Theological Application: God has a big picture through ups and downs.

Memory Verse: “And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

Lesson Background: *The thrust of these activities is to concisely present the Joseph narrative within the context of God’s larger plan Joseph, his family, and the wider community. **The objective** for this Sunday is for the kids to understand that God uses everything, our ups and our downs, to prosper His people. Our vision and understanding is so limited, but God’s vision is vast and eternal.*

LESSON

Bible Story

The purpose of this activity is twofold: To share scriptural narrative with the children, and to encourage their memory of the story through play.

Read: The Story of Joseph.

Explain: That the story of Joseph has its ups and downs. Explain that as you tell the children the story, you will direct them to stand up or crouch down in response to Joseph’s circumstances. For older children invite them to come up with their own physical representation of up and down that does not disrupt others or the flow of the story.

- Children begin in a sitting position on the floor.
- When you read a green section invite them to stand up. Explain after you read the section why it was a good thing for Joseph so they make the connection. For example: “**God gave Joseph special dreams**” you could say something like how wonderful it was that Joseph was hearing directly from God.
- When you read a red section invite them to crouch down into a ball. Explain after you read the section why it was a difficult thing for Joseph so they make the connection. For example: “**when Joseph’s older brothers saw this and they got very mad because they thought their father liked Joseph more**” you could say that his brothers didn’t like Joseph because their father treated him differently than he treated the rest of the family.

The Story of Joseph

Over the past few weeks, we have learned about Abraham, his son Isaac, his grandson Jacob, and today we are learning about Jacob's son Joseph. Joseph was actually one of 12 sons of Jacob. They lived in a land called Canaan which was the land God had promised to Abraham and where Joseph's father and grandfather were from.

Almost all of Joseph's brothers were older than him. Of the 12 brothers, he was number 11 and he had one younger brother.

Joseph was his father Jacob's favorite son, so Jacob made Joseph a beautiful and colorful robe.

and when Joseph's older brothers saw this they got very mad because they thought their father liked Joseph more.

God gave Joseph special dreams

that his brothers would bow down before him and he told them these dreams! This made the brothers dislike Joseph even more.

A few days later, while the brothers were working in the fields, Jacob asked Joseph to go check on them.

When they saw Joseph coming, the older brothers made a plan to get rid of him. So when Joseph came up, they first threw him in an empty well and then sold him to traders who took him to Egypt.

Then the brothers took Joseph's beautiful robe, dipped it in animal blood and took it back to their fathers saying "Some animal has killed your son." And Jacob cried for many days and nobody could comfort him.

Now the traders sold Joseph as a slave to a man named Potiphar, an assistant to the Pharaoh of Egypt.

But the Lord was with Joseph and He helped him do everything right. So, Potiphar made him his helper, and put him in charge of everything that he owned.

Until Potiphar's wife lied about Joseph to her husband, and Potiphar had Joseph put into jail.

But the Lord was still with Joseph even in jail, and the warden put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. Two of his fellow prisoners, a cupbearer and baker to Pharaoh, told Joseph about some bad dreams that they had. God explained to Joseph what their dreams meant and Joseph told the cupbearer that his dream meant that he would soon be let out of jail. The cupbearer was happy and Joseph asked him "Please tell Pharaoh about me, and ask him to get me out of here."

However, when the cupbearer was freed he forgot about what Joseph did. So, Joseph stayed in jail for two more years.

Until one day the Pharaoh had a dream, and nobody could explain it to him. The cupbearer then remembered what Joseph had done for him, and Joseph was brought to Pharaoh.

"Can you understand dreams?" Pharaoh asked. "I can't, but God helps me." Joseph replied. After Pharaoh had told him his dream Joseph explained, "God is warning you. There will be seven years when nothing will grow and there won't be any food for anyone."

"What can I do?" Pharaoh asked. "God has shown you what to do. There will be seven years before the bad years that will be very good. So good that there will be extra food for everyone. So, you should save a little bit of each year's harvest, that way you will have enough to get you through the bad years." Joseph said.

Pharaoh believed all that Joseph told him, and put him in charge of all the land of Egypt.

People came from all countries to buy grain from Joseph, because the whole world was in need of food. Some of those people were Joseph's brothers. When his brothers came, Joseph recognized them, but they didn't know who he was.

The brothers all bowed to him because he was an important person. Just as he dreamed they would at the beginning.

After a few meetings with his brother's, he could not keep it in any longer and Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father alive?" But his brothers couldn't answer him because they were afraid. Then Joseph said, "Come here. I am your brother, the one you sold! Do not worry, and do not be angry at yourselves for selling me, because God has put me here to save people from starving."

So, his father, his brothers, and their families came to live in Egypt with Joseph, and they had all the food they need.

Discussion Question younger children:

- How did God use Joseph to help others?

Discussion Questions for older children:

- How might things have turned out if any one of the bad things hadn't happened to Joseph?
- What bad things have turned out okay for you?

Say: "God has a big picture through ups and downs. We don't usually thank God when we're going through down times. But since we've learned that we can trust his big picture, let's thank him for our downs. Silently thank God for something bad in your life right now."

Memory Verse Activity

The purpose of this activity is twofold: To provide an opportunity for the children to get their wiggles out, and to encourage their memory of the verse through movement.

Memory Verse "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

What You Do:

- Say the verse out loud together a few times.
- Put movement into the verse: (**note:** if there are a mix of ages, invite the older children to invent and teach the younger children memory verse movements)
 - "And we know" - *index finger to the temple*
 - "That God"- *point up*
 - "causes everything"- *make a big circle motion with your arms*
 - "to work together for the good"- *two thumbs up*
 - "of those who love God"- *make a heart shape with your hands*
 - "and are called according to his purpose" -*hand up to mouth like you are calling someone*

Prayer

Open in a prayer of gratitude and praise and Invite the children to pray about whatever is on their heart. Please be aware that some children may prefer to pray silently or have the lead pray on their behalf.

Craft Activity

The purpose of this activity is to promote the theological lesson of the story through creative play.

What You need: Printer, paper, markers or crayons, abstract coloring page, Stain Glass coloring page (provided at the end of this lesson)

What You do:

- Distribute the abstract coloring page.
- Explain that when we think about the ups and downs we experience, it can feel like a big mess. We may even get frustrated because we don't understand why God let's things happen. Invite them to color the page.
- When they have finished, hand out the "Joseph the King" coloring page.
- Explain that while we can only see our ups when we are in them, and our downs when they happen, God sees the whole story of not only our lives, but the lives of everyone in our life. God will make everything work together for the good of those who love him. God sees a whole beautiful picture while we see only a tiny mess of color.

Reflection Question For Parents:

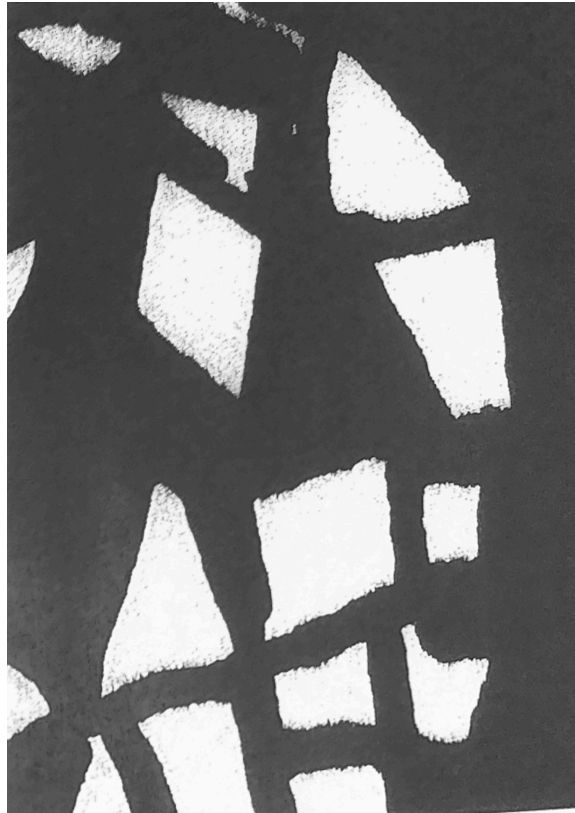
- Joseph experienced both high points and low point throughout this story. What were some of his high points? What were some of his low points?
- What was the relationship between the highs and lows? In other words, does this story demonstrate a symbiosis between suffering and flourishing?
- Can you think of an example of a blessing you have received that could only have been made possible through a hardship you have experienced?

The Theological Point of The Children's Lesson

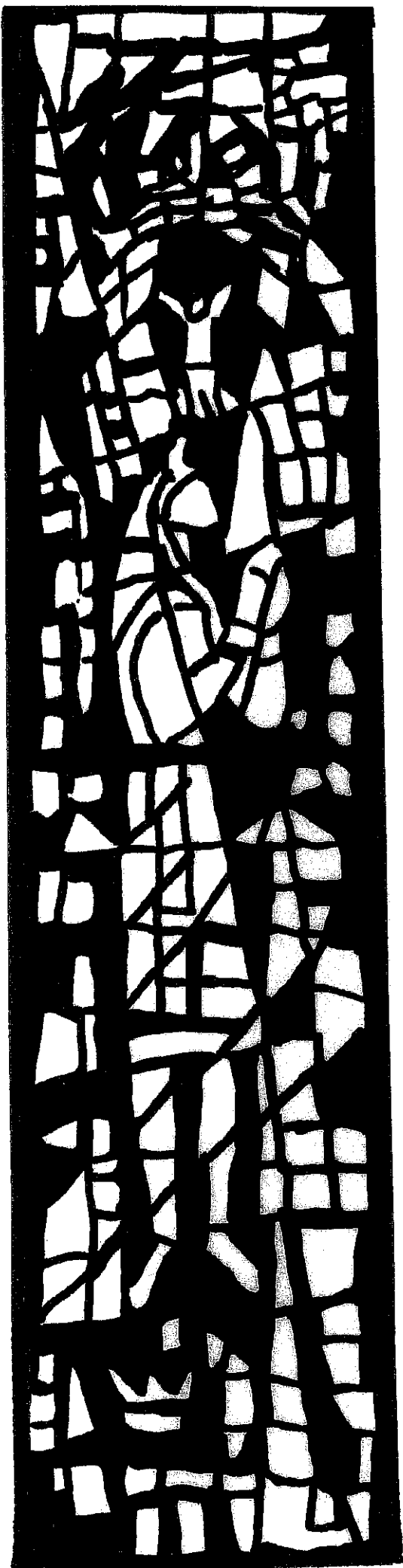
Today your children are learning that God uses everything, all our ups and all our downs, to prosper us. Our vision and understanding is so limited, but God's vision is vast and eternal. We can trust God to weave a beautiful tapestry from what can sometimes feel like the random threads of our immediate circumstances.

One way your kids can experience God's love is through fearless conversation. Fearless conversation means kids can speak openly, without judgment. It means *you* set the example of sharing from your heart. It means kids feel like their thoughts and doubts are welcome. This lesson might bring up some tough questions about down times in life. Practice fearless conversation as tough questions arise.

When we only see a small part of a picture we don't understand it and we can't see its beauty.



But God can make all things, all our good days and all our bad days, work together for our good and the good of others when we trust and love Him. God sees the whole picture...



Joseph the King

*Even though you intended to do harm to me,
God intended it for good, in order to preserve
a numerous people, as he is doing today.*

Genesis 50:20

This window depicts three significant events in the life of Joseph, the eleventh of twelve sons of Jacob and great-grandson of Abraham. The central depiction of Joseph as Pharaoh's second in command rests below Joseph as a young man, whose brothers, shown above, put him in a well. This early stage is represented by the cloak of many colors; his later rule in Egypt is symbolized by the crown at the bottom of the window.

After Joseph told his brothers of his remarkable dreams, they sold the teenager into slavery, but because of God's blessing, he rose to be the most powerful man in Egypt after Pharaoh. Eventually, during a severe famine, Joseph settled his father Jacob's entire family of seventy in the Egyptian area of Goshen. Upon Jacob's death, Joseph received the double-portion inheritance of the eldest son. One of the Bible's most poignant scenes occurs after the death of Jacob when the brothers come before Joseph to ask for forgiveness (Genesis 50:15-21). Remembering God's protection, help, and blessing during his ordeal, Joseph had long ago forgiven them: "God sent me before you" to preserve life. "So it was not you who sent me here [to Egypt], but God" (Genesis 45:7-8).