

Explore It

FOR LEADERS



THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

Genesis 45:1-28 Joseph reveals who he is

Joseph's story happened more than 1,500 years before the birth of Jesus, so how are they linked? What can we learn from how Joseph forgave his brothers and from Joseph's example of sticking with God? Why is it important that we forgive?

Each child will need:

→ Pens/pencils and paper

Start It

● **Say:** There are lots of characters in films who make the wrong choices, some of them even enjoy doing it! See if you can guess the Disney villains from their silhouettes.

Screen share: Can you guess the Disney villains by the shadow?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJA5dR-imMQ>

Ask: Out of all the Disney villains in the quiz, who would you find it the most difficult to forgive? Why?

● **Say:** Today we are thinking about forgiveness. Joseph was let down by a lot of people during his life. His brothers sold him into slavery because they were jealous of him.

Sing It

● **Say:** Our Bible verse from Proverbs 3:5-6 reminds us how important it is to trust in God's wisdom, rather than trying to figure everything out on our own.

Ask: Has anyone else managed to learn the Scripture verses off by heart? If so, then share them with the group!

**'Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.'**

Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV)

● **Say:** The chorus of this song should be very familiar now! [Note that the final line in the song is: 'and he will make your paths straight'.]

'Proverbs 3:5-6' by Kids JAM COG Sasa (2 mins 45 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivHuvRDZYcE>

Tell It

Ask: Where did we last leave Joseph in our story?

● **Say:** Joseph had resisted the temptation to do the wrong thing, but ended up in jail because of it. Instead of moaning about how unfair it was, Joseph decided to do what he had always done. He trusted God and carried on being the person God wanted him to be.

Screen share:

'Even while Joseph was in prison, God was with him and made him successful in everything he did. He gained the trust of the man in charge and was soon responsible for running the whole prison. Everything ran smoothly.

'One day Pharaoh threw two of his servants in prison because he was upset with them, his baker and his wine server. One night they both had strange dreams and told them to Joseph. With help from God, Joseph told them what the dreams meant: that the baker would be executed, and the wine server would be released. When Joseph was proven right, he asked the wine server to mention him to Pharaoh, to release him from prison because he was innocent. But the wine servant forgot.

'Two years later, Pharaoh was troubled by some very strange dreams and none of the wise men of Egypt could interpret them. Then the wine server remembered his promise to Joseph and mentioned that Joseph might be able to help. Joseph was brought before Pharaoh and he asked Joseph to explain the meaning of his dreams. But Joseph replied by saying he was not able to do this, but God would, through him.'

Ask: How did God look after Joseph in prison?

🗨️ **Say:** Joseph helped the wine server with his dream and asked him to put in a good word with Pharaoh once he was out of prison.

Ask:

- ➔ How many years went by before the wine server remembered Joseph?
- ➔ How do you think Joseph felt during this time?
- ➔ How would you have felt if you were in his sandals?

🗨️ **Say:** The wine server only mentioned Joseph to gain favour with Pharaoh, but Joseph still trusted God and did the right thing. Joseph was able to interpret Pharaoh's dream and ended up as his right-hand man, helping to save food for a famine that was on the way.

Video

Joseph forgives (Genesis 42-45) by Saddleback kids (3 mins 44 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndETu4bzwAY>

- ➔ Ask: Why do you think Joseph didn't tell his brothers who he was straight away?
- ➔ What would you have been tempted to do?
- ➔ Do you remember Joseph's dream from our first session? How did it come true?

🗨️ **Say:** Throughout his life, Joseph was treated badly by people, including his own family. Instead of filling his heart with bitterness, he chose to forgive those who had hurt him and trusted God to deal with them. His brothers were deeply sorry for what they had done and eventually had a chance to make things right.

🗨️ **Say:** Soon we will be celebrating the birth of Jesus, which happened more than 1,500 years after Joseph forgave his brothers.

Ask:

- ➔ What similarities are there between Joseph's story and the story of Jesus?
- ➔ What do they both teach us about the importance of forgiveness?

Action It

Screen share: *How Stuff Works 4 – Forgiveness* by PursueGOD Kids (2 mins 39 secs)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deAoYWxrr0A>

Ask: Finish the sentence: Forgiveness is ...

🗨️ **Say:** In the Bible we are taught how important forgiveness is and why God wants us to forgive.

'Do not be angry with each other, but forgive each other. If someone does wrong to you, then forgive him. Forgive each other because the Lord forgave you.'

Colossians 3:13 (ICB)

🗨️ **Say:** Even when we are tempted to feel bitter and resentful it is important that we lean on God's understanding of forgiveness and trust him to take care of the situation.

Ask: Finish the sentence: Forgiveness is not ...

Discuss

Give the group the opportunity to discuss what forgiveness doesn't mean. You may want to cover some of the following points in your discussion:

- ➔ Forgiveness is not just a feeling. We don't need to wait until we feel OK about the situation before we choose to forgive. Forgiveness is often the starting point, but it's OK to still feel hurt about what happened.
- ➔ Forgiving someone doesn't mean we have to trust them straight away.
- ➔ Forgiveness doesn't mean you have to be friends again. God wants us to be part of healthy relationships and wouldn't want us to go back to a friendship that keeps hurting us.
- ➔ Forgiveness is not saying that what the person did was OK or forgetting it altogether.
- ➔ Forgiveness is not putting up with behaviour that is hurting us. If someone is behaving in a way that is causing you hurt, then tell a grown-up that you trust, and they will be able to help.

Pray It

🗨️ **Say:** Sometimes it can be difficult to know what to say when we are forgiving someone who has hurt us. Use this prayer as a starting point when you choose to forgive.

Dear God,

I forgive _____ who hurt me when they _____. When that happened, I felt _____. I know that your son Jesus was hurt by people around him and yet he chose to forgive them. Help me to follow his example and forgive others. I trust you to deal with the situation and to help me feel better about it. Thank you for forgiving me when I make mistakes and help me to forgive others when they do the same.

AMEN.

Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It (For Me) and Explore It (Together) ideas for children and families.