

# Joseph Does What Is Right

## Overview



### Materials You'll Need

- cardboard
- pencils, colored pencils, crayons
- scissors
- glue
- molding clay, paints, paintbrushes (optional)



### Scriptures

Gen 39, 41:1-40

### Bible Truth Objective(s)

God blesses those who do what is right.

### Behavioral Objective(s)

To be willing to do what is right for God even when it is hard to do so.

### Memory Verse

"The Lord was with Joseph." (Gen 39:2a)



## Bible Knowledge

### Joseph

After he was sold by his brothers, Joseph became a slave worker for Potiphar, an important Egyptian official. In those days, slave owners could use their slaves to do just about anything. Joseph was obviously very clever and also blessed by God. In a short time, Potiphar trusted Joseph so much that he placed him in charge of everything he had.

Joseph was also well built and handsome. When Potiphar's wife failed to tempt him, she tricked and accused him. Potiphar was angry over this (Gen 39:19). But instead of executing Joseph, which was the punishment for the sin he was falsely accused of committing, Potiphar put Joseph in prison. Although his circumstances looked grim, God continued to bless Joseph in prison; soon the warden put him in charge of everything that had to be done there (Gen 39:22-23).

After Joseph successfully interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, he suggested a comprehensive plan to meet the coming emergency. Pharaoh, sensing the spirit

of God in Joseph, appointed him to handle the task. Joseph was thirty years old when he entered Pharaoh's service (Gen 41:46).

### Dreams

In the Ancient Near East, dreams were often interpreted as messages from the divine or demonic world. The dreams of kings were especially important because they could affect the future of the entire nation, depending on how they were translated. That is why there were many skilled "magicians and wise men" who were always ready at hand to interpret the dreams of the king (Gen 41:8). They had to first be consulted before any final decisions could be made.

Like Daniel, Joseph was able to understand people's dreams. In the Bible, God sometimes used dreams to show people what would happen in the future, as was the case while Joseph was in prison. But both the prophets Jeremiah and Zechariah spoke against solely relying on dreams to express God's thoughts and will, as not all dreams were from God or were interpreted correctly (Jer 23:28; 27:9; Zech 10:1-2).



## Understanding Your Students

Young children have a difficult time understanding that God is always present since He is not visible. Songs are sometimes the best way to help imbed certain messages to them. The following poem has been taken from the Wee Sing Bible Songs Book. It can also be sung to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me." There are also some actions that can be included as the students sing. By singing this song, it can help the students remember that God sees them no matter where they are or what they are doing. At times when they need Him but aren't sure how to find Him, they can always sing this tune.

### "Jesus Sees me"

*Jesus sees me when I sleep,  
(rest head on hands)*

*Jesus sees me when I play,  
(turn around)*

*Jesus sees me all the time,  
(arms outstretched)*

*And He cares for me each day.  
(cross arms over chest)*

The words to this poem can also be displayed on a poster in the classroom. Although your children are probably not fluent readers, they will find the poster quite simple to recall when the song has been sung several times.



## Vocabulary

### **Slave**

when you have a master and work for him; you need to do whatever he says

### **Responsible**

to take care of the things you are in charge of

### **Pharaoh**

the king of Egypt

### **Handsome**

when a man looks nice

### **Famine**

when there is no food; people go hungry

### **Harvest**

the grains or crops that are gathered together at the end of a season



## Before You Teach

When people hurt us, our first reaction is to hurt back—if not physically, then at least verbally. Very few of us could do what Joseph did: do nothing and just endure everything quietly and patiently.

By the time Joseph was imprisoned, he had been sold by his own brothers, worked as a slave, tempted by his master's wife and wrongly accused of a terrible sin. Most of us would have spoken up at that point, but Joseph continued to work hard, even in jail, without saying anything to defend himself. Although we may feel a lot of injustice for Joseph, it was God's plan for him to go through all this suffering. Why would God want us to suffer? Doesn't He love us enough to want to give us the best? In a sense, God was preparing Joseph for the best. But first he had to learn to be patient and to trust in God, regardless of the circumstances. And Joseph learned that lesson well.

What about us? When we are wronged or hurt by others, do we have the strength to be "longsuffering" (Mt 5:43-45)? In the heat of the moment, it is difficult for us to see into the future and what God has planned for us. But God may be putting us in certain situations to help us learn to be patient and to hold our tongues so that we are ready to meet with even greater challenges in life.

It is indeed hard to do what Joseph did. And he certainly could not have done it without God in his life. To many, God had most definitely abandoned him. But it was through all these seemingly bad circumstances that Joseph realized how much more he needed God in his life. Only God can give us the strength to have the patience to endure all things.

Paul is another example of someone who knew God even better when he suffered. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13). May God give us the strength to meet all of our trials so we may face everything with longsuffering.



## Bible Story

### **Joseph Works For Potiphar**

Do you remember in the last lesson Joseph was sold by his brothers? They did not like him. They were jealous of him. They wanted to get rid of him. So when they saw a group of people going to Egypt, they sold Joseph to them for twenty pieces of silver.

Now Egypt was very far away from Joseph's home. He was very sad that his brothers wanted to get rid of him and he missed his father a lot. But he had to follow the people because now he was a slave. He belonged to them and had to do whatever they wanted. When they finally arrived in Egypt, those people sold Joseph to a very rich family. So now, Joseph became a slave in a rich man's home. This rich man was called Potiphar.

Even though Joseph was a slave, he still worked hard at his job. Whatever Potiphar told him to do, he did it well and he did not complain. Potiphar saw how God was with Joseph because God caused everything that Joseph did to be successful. After a few years, Potiphar made Joseph the head of the household. That meant that Joseph was in charge of the other slaves and could tell others what to do. We can see that God was with Joseph even though he was very far from home. God still protected him and helped him do his best.

### **Joseph Is Put in Prison**

One time, Potiphar left the house to do other things. While he was gone, Joseph was the one in charge. Everyone who lived in Potiphar's house knew that Joseph was responsible and hard-working. When you are responsible, that means you always do what people tell you. Potiphar's wife knew that too. And she thought that Joseph was handsome. Soon she wanted to always be with Joseph. She really wanted Joseph to love her like her husband did. But that was wrong because she was already married to Potiphar. Potiphar was her husband. God says that we can only have one husband or one wife.

One day Potiphar's wife said, "Joseph, I want you to spend time with me. I want you to love me, just like my husband."

But Joseph knew that he could not love her like

that. God would not like it and it would be a sin.

So Joseph said to her, "My master Potiphar has been good to me. He left me in charge of everything here. It would be wrong to do this. I will not sin against God."

When Potiphar's wife heard this, she was mad! So when Potiphar came home, she lied and said that Joseph did something terrible to her. But did Joseph do anything wrong? (Wait for students to respond.) Joseph did nothing wrong. He only tried his best to take care of all the things in Potiphar's house. But when Potiphar heard his wife's words, he took Joseph away and put him in prison. Joseph was sad that people did not believe him but he did not complain. He knew that God would still be with him.

### **Joseph Tells About the Dreams**

Even though Joseph was in prison, God still took care of him. The head of all the jailers saw that Joseph was hard working and responsible. God caused the head of all the jailers to trust Joseph more than anyone else in the jail. The head of the jailers is a person who is in charge of the jail. He was kind to Joseph and after awhile, he put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners. He knew that Joseph loved God and he always did his best, even when he was in jail.

One night, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had two strange dreams. First, he dreamed that there were seven fat cows that came out of the river to eat grass. Then seven thin and ugly cows followed the fat cows out of the water. The thin cows ate up all the fat cows. But the thin cows didn't get fat. After this, Pharaoh woke up. He didn't know what this meant. Later, he fell asleep again and had another dream. This time, he saw seven fat and good heads of grain. Then suddenly seven thin heads came up out of the ground and ate up the seven fat heads of grain.

The next morning, Pharaoh thought about his dreams. He didn't understand what they meant and he wanted to know. But no one in Pharaoh's palace could tell him what his strange dreams meant. But when Joseph was in prison, he had explained some dreams to two prisoners. God had shown him what other people's strange dreams meant. So when Pharaoh found out about Joseph,

he sent for him to come to the palace. When Pharaoh saw Joseph, he told him his dreams one more time.

After Joseph heard the dreams he said to Pharaoh, "This is what your dreams mean. The seven fat cows and the seven good heads of grain mean that Egypt will have seven good years of harvest. But the seven thin cows that ate up the fat cows means that there will be seven years of famine after the good years of harvest. The seven thin heads of grain that ate up the good heads of grain means the same thing. After the seven good years of harvest, there will be seven years of famine."

What does this mean? This means that the dreams Pharaoh was having told him about the future. But he didn't know what they meant. God, however, showed Joseph what the dreams meant. Now Pharaoh knew that there would be seven years of good harvest. They would have plenty of food and vegetables to eat. After that, though, there would be seven years of famine where they couldn't grow any food. Once Joseph explained the dreams, Pharaoh knew that God was with Joseph.

So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I can see that God is with you and is helping you. I am going to put you in charge of storing the extra food in the barns. You would be a good helper for me. You don't need to be in prison anymore."

So Pharaoh put him in charge of storing all the

extra food they would collect in these seven good years. That way, the people in Egypt would have enough food to eat when the seven bad years came. They wouldn't have to go hungry. Pharaoh was happy Joseph could tell him what to do so that they could come up with a good plan.

How do you think Joseph felt? First he was sold by his brothers. Then he was sold again to a rich man to be a slave. After working hard, the rich man put him in charge of the house, but the rich man's wife lied about him and Joseph was thrown into prison. Now, after telling the Pharaoh about his dreams, he was put in charge of building barns and storing food. Joseph probably didn't know what to think. So much had happened to him since he left his home. But Joseph knew that whatever happened to him, God was with him to help him. Now he didn't have to stay in prison anymore. He was put in charge of an important job and like his other jobs, he would do his best.

We learned from today's lesson that Joseph did his best even when he was in bad situations. We can try our best at school. We can try our best when we help clean up the house or clean up our rooms. At church we can try our best when we pick up the trash or wipe the tables. Then we can be a good worker and helper like Joseph. God will be pleased and we can shine for God just as Joseph did.



### Check For Understanding

1. **What was Joseph's job when he worked for Potiphar?** (He was a slave.)
2. **Why was Joseph put into jail?** (Potiphar's wife lied about him so he was put into prison.)
3. **Why was Joseph put in charge of all the prisoners when he was in jail?** (The chief of the jail saw that Joseph was hard working and responsible, so he was put in charge.)
4. **What were the two dreams Pharaoh had?** (He dreamed there were seven fat cows eating grass. Then seven thin and ugly cows came out of the water and ate up all the

fat cows. In the second dream, he saw seven fat and good heads of grain. Then seven thin heads came up out of the ground and ate up the seven fat heads of grain.)

5. **What did the dreams mean?** (There would be seven years of good harvest and then seven years of famine.)
6. **Why could Joseph tell Pharaoh what the dreams meant?** (God helped Joseph understand what the dreams meant.)
7. **What did Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of?** (Joseph was in charge of storing the extra food so that there would be enough food for everyone later on. He was put in charge because he always did his best.)



## Life Application Story

### Doing What Is Right

Ben stepped into his house with mud on his pants and the saddest expression on his face. Something had obviously gone very wrong at school.

Mrs. Lim asked right away, “Ben, honey, why the long face?”

“That trouble maker Willy pushed me today during recess for no reason. Then, he laughed at me because I fell down and got mud on my pants and shoes.” Tears begin to well up in Ben’s eyes as he showed his mother his dirty pants and shoes.

“Oh, Ben, that must have been awful!” Mrs. Lim came near and wrapped Ben in her arms. Wiping Ben’s tears from his cheeks, Mrs. Lim suggested, “I will bring you some clean clothes so that you can change and put these dirty ones in the bathroom. Then we will come back to the kitchen and have a snack together. How about it?”

Ben nodded his head as he walked to the bathroom, for he was never one to refuse a nice snack.

By the time Ben sat at the kitchen table, of his brother and sisters were there too. Ben could hear his mom retelling what happened to him today. Trying very hard not to feel sorry for himself, Ben sat in the empty chair.

“So, Ben, what did you do to that kid? His name is Willy, isn’t it?” asked Julius curiously.

“Did you push him too?” Susie wanted to know.

“Did you tell the teacher about what happened?” Anna asked with concern, “You didn’t get hurt, did you?”

All eyes were on Ben when he finally opened his mouth to speak, “Um... you remember Willy, the kid that always causes trouble in class? Today, he snuck behind me during recess when I was playing in the grassy area and pushed me to where there was a puddle of mud. I just tripped and fell into the mud, getting my pants and shoes all dirty. He began to laugh out so loud that everyone in the playground knew what happened to me. He pointed to me and said, ‘Look at my buddy, Muddy Benny!’ The other kids also laughed too.” Ben stopped to take a sip from his juice.

“Then, what happened? Did you push him back?” Julius needed to know.

“Julius, do you think pushing Willy back would

solve the problem?” Mrs. Lim asked.

“I don’t know,” answered Julius with a shrug, “At least I’d feel better afterwards.”

“Excuse me, can we be quiet so we can find out from Ben? What did you do anyway?” Anna pressed on.

“Um...I...did nothing,” Ben replied feeling rather embarrassed. “I was really mad at Willy and I wanted to push him back. But then I remembered that Dad and Mom taught us that God said it was wrong to get even with someone who hurts us. One time, Dad taught me that even if someone made fun of me, I was to just ignore him and walk away. Dad told me that I should always do what is right so that God will be proud of me.”

“Oh, Ben, I’m so proud of you for doing what is right,” beamed Mrs. Lim. “Aren’t you proud of your brother?”

“Yeah, Ben. I think I might have pushed that kid back and gotten into some kind of trouble or something,” confessed Julius.

“I’m proud of you too, Ben,” agreed Anna and Susie.

“Everyone, I want you to remember what happened to Ben today and learn from him,” Mrs. Lim said proudly as she looked into each of her children’s eyes. “Every time you do what is right in the eyes of God—even when Daddy and Mommy are not around—God sees that and remembers it. And you know what? God is definitely going to bless you in some way. I know that doing what is right can be very hard sometimes. But the harder it is, the more God is pleased with you. What do you think, kids, shall we give Ben a big group hug?”

Everyone gathered around Ben and squeezed the boy in the middle until he burst out into laughter. By then, the group had become a big pile of laughing heads.

### Questions to Think About:

1. **What happened to Ben today in school?** (Willy pushed him into a muddy puddle and dirtied Ben’s pants and shoes.)
2. **Why didn’t Ben take revenge and push the boy who hurt him?** (Because he remembered God’s teaching in doing what is right.)
3. **Have you ever tried to get even when someone hurt you? What do you think God wants us do instead of getting even?** (Allow students to answer.)



## Activity 1

### Joseph Does His Best Work

Look at the pictures. What is Joseph doing in each picture? Fill in the blanks with the word "best."  
Joseph did his \_\_\_\_\_ (best) work in prison.  
Joseph did his \_\_\_\_\_ (best) to store food for the famine.



## Activity 2

### How Can I Help?

Color in each picture at the bottom of the page. What is each person doing to be a good helper? After the pictures are colored, cut them out and glue them in the correct box. Make sure the pictures match the words! Which ones can you do to help your parents?



## Activity 3

### Helping Hands

#### Materials:

1. cardboard
2. pencils and crayons
3. scissors
4. glue
5. molding clay, paints, paintbrushes (optional)

#### Directions:

1. In this activity, the students will be making replicas of their hands. In its simplest form, they can trace out their hands on a piece of sturdy construction or cardboard paper. Then cut them out.
2. They can decorate their hands or write a sentence within their cardboard hands (e.g. "I can help by ...")
3. Then a small rectangular piece of cardboard can be bent and glued to the back of the "hands" and it can stand on its own (like a picture frame). The students can be reminded that they can always use their hands to be good helpers.
4. Alternatively, molding clay can be purchased and students can press one of their hands into

the soft clay to make an imprint. Then after it has air-dried, they can paint their hands and these can also serve to remind them of how they can use their hands to help.



## Optional Activity

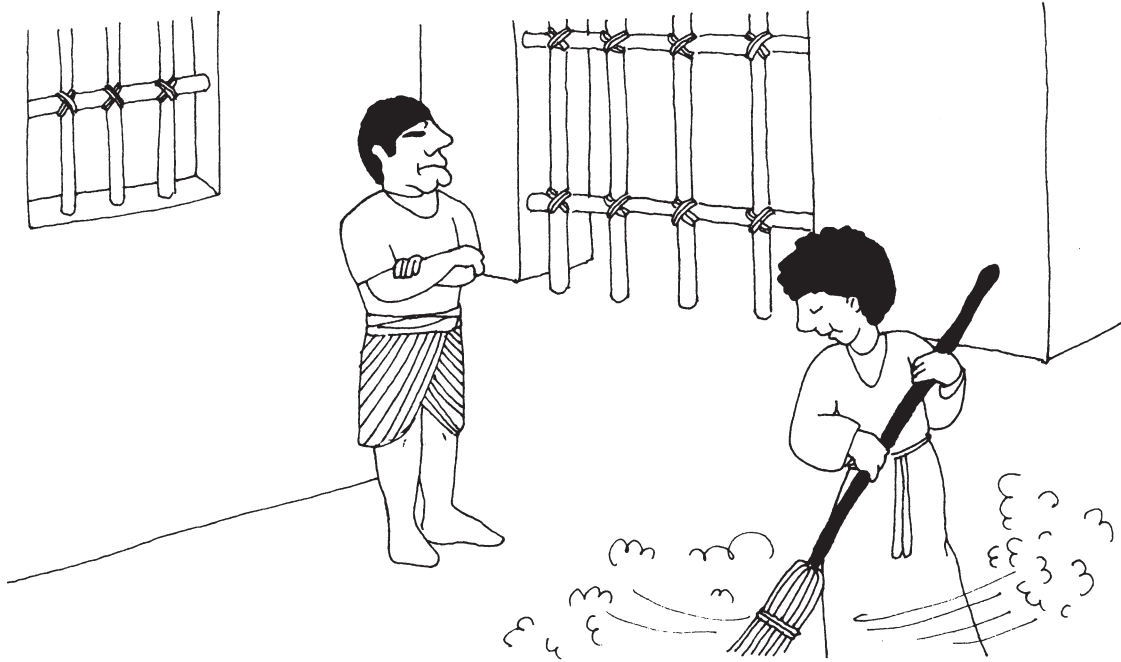
### Let's Clean Up!

This is a good lesson to encourage the students to use their hands to help clean their classroom. If the students already regularly clean up, then maybe this is an opportunity to scrub the tables with soap or wipe the board especially clean. Students can also help to throw out dried up markers and clean out scraps that may be around the shelves. If each student has a cubby or box where they store things, now would be a good time to clean those out, as projects and papers tend to pile up over time. Whatever the time is used for, remind the students that they can be good helpers at church too!

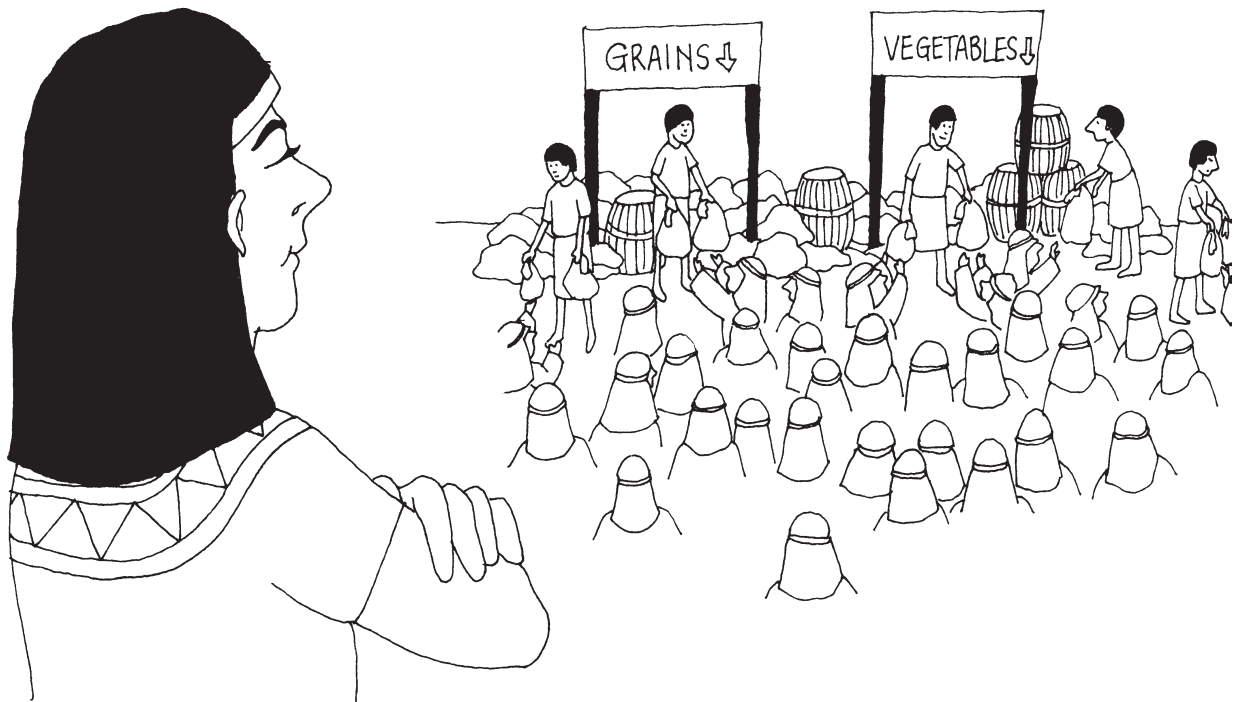
Activity 2:1

### Joseph Does His Best Work

What is Joseph doing in each picture?



Joseph did his \_\_\_\_\_ work in prison.

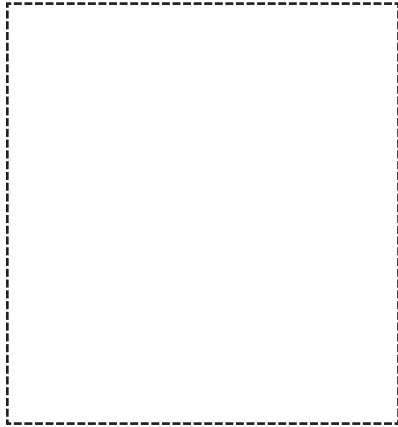


Joseph did his \_\_\_\_\_ to store food for the famine.

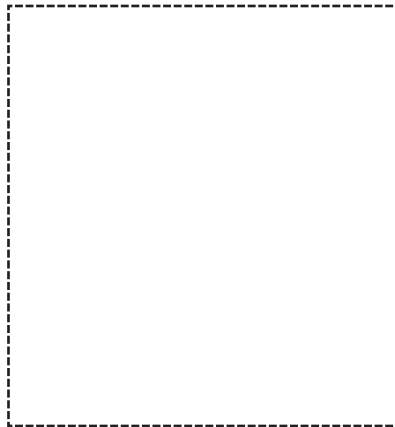
Activity 2:2

### How Can I Help?

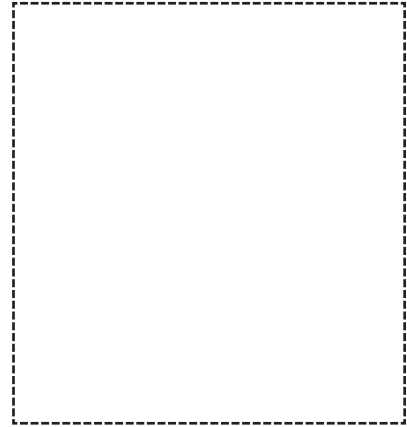
Color in each picture at the bottom of the page. What is each person doing to be a good helper? After the pictures are colored, cut them out and glue them in the correct box. Make sure the pictures match the words!



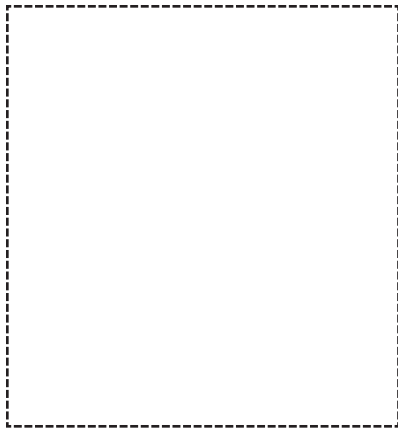
Turn off the TV



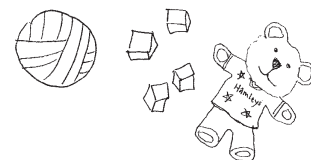
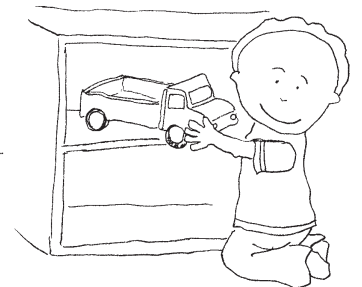
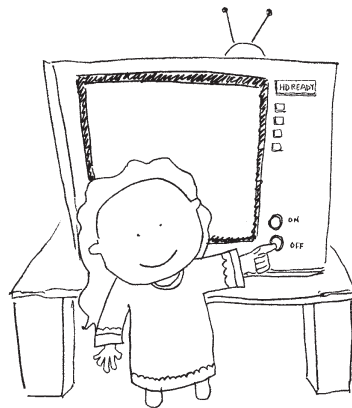
Put away toys



Put away clothes



Feed the dog



Which ones  
can you do  
to help your  
parents?