

# LESSON 9

## JOSEPH FORGIVES HIS BROTHERS

### BEFORE YOU TEACH

#### What Is True Forgiveness?

For this class, you can take some time to talk to your students about true forgiveness. Explain to them that we were all bought with a price that Jesus Christ paid in full in flesh.

1. Are you forgiving when you say, "I forgive you, but I will never forget how unkind you have been to me"?
2. Are you forgiving when you are happy that something bad has happened to someone you do not like?
3. Are you forgiving when you want to get even with someone who has pushed or hit you?
4. Are you forgiving when you stop talking to someone who has told lies about you?
5. Are you forgiving when you speak unkindly about a person who does not choose you to be on his or her team?

Point out that the correct answer to all the questions is "no." Explain that to truly forgive we must:

1. Overcome our angry feelings.
2. Not judge or criticize others.
3. Forget about what has been done.
4. Pray for those who have hurt us.

#### Teaching Our Students to Be God-fearing

Joseph didn't just look at his troubles, he also waited for God's timing. This is one of the attributes of a God-fearing person. A God-fearing person is one who has totally submitted himself and entrusted himself to God. Joseph remained a God-fearing person while in slavery and prison. Joseph wasn't a weak person. He submitted his strength and walked by faith, rising to the top of the heap in slavery and in prison. How could he do that? He saw that God was with him (Gen 39:23).

In the end, he said that what his brothers meant for evil, God meant for good. God intended to save millions of lives through him, and he saw how great an honor it was to be used by God in such a significant way. He summed up his difficult experience of being sold into slavery by saying, "God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." It is truly a lesson we must teach our students. Joseph didn't become a bitter man after what his brothers had done to him. By the grace of God, he rose above and God not only brought him out of slavery and prison, God used him at a level where he could change the history of the Israelites.

### BIBLE TEXT

Genesis 44:14-45:28

### BIBLE TRUTHS

1. Holding a grudge hurts us more than it hurts others.
2. God wants us to completely forgive others who have done us wrong.

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To learn to forgive others.
2. To understand that forgiving others helps us become friends again.

### MEMORY VERSE

"Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another."

(Colossians 3:13a)

### PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Lord, we thank You for Your wonderful mercy and love. Even though we often do things that are wrong in Your sight, You forgive us and love us. Please help us to forgive others who have done things against us, just as You forgiven us when we do wrong. Hallelujah! Amen.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

When someone has wronged us or hurt us, the natural response is to want to fight back. The desire to seek justice is natural and God-given. We have been made in the image of God and God is a just God, but our own justice often falls short of God's justice. For example, when we think of justice, we think of "getting even." But this is not the same as God's justice.

God is pleased when we refuse to get even with our enemies. God has said, "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay'" (Rom 12:19). Help the students understand that when we want to get even, we are not trusting in God to take care of the situation. God has promised that He will deal with those who wrong us. When we look for ways to get revenge, we are letting anger control us. Often, the underlying motivation for revenge is because we feel angry, hurt, betrayed, etc. When we give in to the urge to fight back, we are letting anger control us and cause us to do foolish things.

Explain to the students that since we belong to Jesus, we do not need to find ways to get even. Rather, we

should all the more freely forgive if we desire God's forgiveness (Mt 6:14-15; 18:35; Mk 11:25-26). God will take care of the injustices we face.

This takes trust in God, and it also takes some self-control. Sometimes, the students may wonder why a bad person isn't getting punished and want to take the situation into their own hands. Assure them that God is just and will repay everyone according to what they have done. They should not worry because God has His own timing.

Ask the students if they have ever been in a situation where someone has wronged them (for example, someone took their candy, pushed them, took their place in line, etc.) and how they reacted. Ask them if there was a better way to handle the situation. The next time someone hurts them and they are tempted to take revenge, encourage them to ask God to calm them down and remember that judgment is the Lord's. Then they can trust in God and thank Him for taking care of the situation in the best way.

### VOCABULARY

**forgive:** to stop being angry at someone who has done something wrong to you

**slave:** a person owned by someone else, just like a car or house is owned by someone

**Pharaoh:** the king of Egypt

**responsible:** to be in charge

**blame:** fault

**wept:** cried

**famine:** a period of time when there is no food to eat

### REVIEW

Last week, we learned how Joseph's brothers had to take a second trip to Egypt, because their family had run out of food from the first trip. Joseph had told them they would not be allowed to buy more grain unless they brought Benjamin. Benjamin was very special to Joseph because out of all his brothers, only Benjamin had the same mother. Jacob also loved Benjamin a lot just as he had loved Joseph.

When all the brothers returned to Egypt the second time, they were asked to go to Joseph's house and eat with him. Joseph still remembered the awful thing his brothers had done to him so many years ago. He had to know if his brothers had really changed after all these years. So he came up with one last plan.

Do you know what Joseph did? (He had a special silver cup that he told his servant to put in Benjamin's sack.) Joseph wanted to see what his brothers would do when Benjamin was in trouble.

Just as they left the city, Joseph commanded his servant to go after his brothers. One by one, the servant searched in each sack from the oldest brother to the youngest. At last he came to Benjamin's sack. Oh no! The cup was with Benjamin!

What were the brothers going to do? Their father would be so sad if they came back without their little brother Benjamin. They had no choice: they all had to go back to Joseph's house. Today we will see what happened when the brothers returned to Joseph.

## BIBLE STORY

**Joseph Wants Benjamin to Be His Slave**

Joseph knew about the cup all along, of course. All of this was part of Joseph's plan. He just wanted to see whether his brothers would leave Benjamin behind and return without him. Boys and girls, we are going to find out whether or not they had changed.

When the brothers got back to his house, Joseph was waiting for them. They were very afraid and bowed before him. He pretended to be angry with them and said, "What is this that you have done? Didn't you know that I would find out if you had stolen anything?"

Judah, the fourth oldest, said, "We don't know what to say. How can we prove that we didn't steal the cup? Not only will Benjamin become your slave, all of us will be your slaves."

But Joseph wanted to see how the brothers would act now that their little brother Benjamin was in trouble. Would they leave their little brother and go, as long as they were safe? Had his brothers changed or were they still the same? So he said, "The rest of you can go back home safely to your father—only the one who had the cup will be my slave."

**Judah Wants to Take Benjamin's Place**

What do you think happened next? Do you think the brothers have changed? [Allow students to respond.] Let's find out.

Now, think back to last week's story. Do you remember that the fourth oldest brother, Judah, promised his father something before they all left for Egypt? Do you remember what it was? [Pause to let the students think.] Judah promised his father that he would be responsible for Benjamin and would look after him.

Even though Joseph seemed angry, Judah knew he had to do something. When Joseph said he wanted Benjamin to be his slave, Judah spoke up. "Please, sir, do not be angry with us, even though you are as powerful as Pharaoh himself. You asked us about our family, and we told you that we have a father who is now very old. Benjamin is the youngest, and he was born when our father was already an old man. Benjamin's older brother died, and our father loves Benjamin very much.

"When you asked us to bring Benjamin down here, my father said that if anything happened to him, he would surely die in his sadness. So now, if we do not bring Benjamin back to my father, he will die. I told my father that I would be responsible for bringing Benjamin home safely. If I do not do as I promised, the blame will be on me for all my life.

"So please, instead of taking Benjamin as your slave, take me."

Judah was the brother who had thought of selling Joseph to the merchants long ago. What a change! Now Joseph could see that Judah loved his younger brother and

was willing to give up his own life and become a slave in Benjamin's place. He knew that the brothers couldn't bear to make their father unhappy again by letting something happen to Benjamin. Joseph knew now that the brothers who had sold him into slavery so long ago had changed. How do you think Joseph felt? [Allow students to express their thoughts.]

**Joseph Makes Himself Known**

Did Joseph still remember what happened to him all those years ago? (Yes, of course he did.) Joseph knew that God had planned this all along.

Joseph saw that his brothers had changed—they loved Benjamin, and they loved their father. All of this made Joseph very emotional, and he could no longer hold back the tears.

He told all of his servants to leave. Then, in front of his brothers, he wept very loudly and cried in their language, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?"

The brothers were so surprised that none of them said anything. They were so frightened they could not say a word! They were afraid that Joseph would hurt them or take revenge on them because they had sold him all those years ago.

**Joseph Forgives His Brothers**

But Joseph said, "Come close to me. I am Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt. Don't be sad or angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was all God's plan. He sent me here before you so that you and all of these people wouldn't be killed by famine.

"So it was not you who sent me here, but God. God put me in charge of Pharaoh's entire household and made me the ruler of all Egypt. Now hurry back to Father and tell him that God has made me the ruler of all Egypt. Come back quickly to me and don't wait. You and your children can live here and be near me. I will take care of you here because there are five more years of famine to come. Otherwise, our families might starve to death.

"Now you see that it is really me. Tell Father about everything that has happened to me, and bring him down quickly."

Joseph hugged Benjamin tightly and both of them wept. He then hugged all of his brothers, and all of them wept because they had found each other again. They must have been so happy because Joseph was no longer sad or angry with them. Joseph had forgiven them and God had been with him, protecting him all this time.

**Joseph's Brothers Tell Jacob the News**

When Pharaoh heard that Joseph's brothers had come, he told Joseph to bring them all down to Egypt. He would give them the best of the land, and they could all live there.

So Joseph gave them carts and donkeys loaded with presents and all the food they needed for their journey back home. Then he sent his brothers away and said, "Don't fight along the way!"

When his brothers got home, they cried out to their father, "Joseph is alive! Joseph is alive! In fact, he is the ruler over all Egypt!"

Jacob was so shocked that he didn't believe them. But when they told him everything Joseph had said to them, and when Jacob saw all of the carts and presents from Egypt, Jacob was so happy! His beloved son Joseph, who he thought had died so long ago, was still alive! He wanted to see Joseph so much. And now he was finally going to get a chance to see him again.

So Jacob's whole family, seventy people in all, traveled to Goshen in the land of Egypt to meet Joseph again. Even though there was a famine, they had plenty to eat.

### Conclusion

Did you see how an older brother was willing to take the place of the youngest brother? Can you imagine if someone took your place because you were going to die? Actually, someone did. That someone was Jesus. He died for all the wrong things we have done so that we might go to heaven at the end of our life. If we trust Him, He will watch over us and take care of us always. What a friend! God wants us to forgive others and love others as He loves us.

- Pray to God to have the wisdom and strength to live according to His will.
- Have the faith to entrust all to God: do not allow anger towards others to hurt us, and do not allow our anger to hurt others.
- Remember the price for forgiveness that Jesus had to pay, and emulate His example of forgiveness.

### CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. In whose sack was Joseph's silver cup found? Benjamin's.
2. After the silver cup was found in Benjamin's sack, where did the brothers go? Back to Joseph's house.
3. When the brothers got there, what did Joseph do? He pretended to be angry.
4. How did the brothers feel when they had to go back to Joseph's house? Suggested answers: afraid, nervous, worried, or perhaps guilty if they remembered what they had done to Joseph.
5. What did Joseph say Benjamin had to do? Become his slave.
6. How would Jacob feel if Benjamin did not come home with his brothers? He would feel so sad that he would die of sadness.
7. Why did Joseph plan all of this? He wanted to see if his brothers had changed; he wanted to see what his brothers would do now that their little brother was in trouble and if they would leave Benjamin behind in Egypt.
8. Who spoke up for Benjamin and asked to become the slave in his place? Judah.
9. Why did all of the brothers return home? To tell their father that Joseph was alive and to bring their families to Egypt to live.

### MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.  
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

**"Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another." (Colossians 3:13a)**

### HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. B   | 2. A                  |
| 3. B   | 4. True               |
| 5. False; no one became a slave because Joseph told them who he was. |                       |
| 6. Joseph, silver  | 7. God                |
| 8. forgave   | 9. five               |
| 10. Jesus  | 11. Answers may vary. |

---

---

## SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

---

---

### **Trust and Obey**

We usually can't see what God has planned for us right away, but He gradually shows us what He is doing. There are times when things are difficult and we wonder why things are the way they are. Joseph had been wronged many times and suffered for many years. Despite this, he did not sin against God. When he finally realized God's purpose, he did not hold resentment towards those who had caused his suffering. He attributed his life events to God's greater will for good.

Trust and obey. Entrust everything to God because He knows, loves, and cares for you. He knows what is best, and even though things may be hard, He will gradually show you the right path. It takes faith, obedience, and strength to fully rely on Him. Teach your students to pray to God for wisdom and the strength to obey.

### **Understanding True Forgiveness**

Forgiving does not necessarily mean forgetting what someone has done to wrong you in the past. Forgiving does mean letting go of all the anger and resentment inside. When you forgive, you will not seek revenge or seek to hurt the one who has hurt you. Desiring justice is not wrong, it is natural. Having a sense of justice is natural. Humankind was created in the image of God, and God is a just God. True justice, however, can only come from God and cannot come from us. This requires faith in God.

Jesus paid the ultimate price for the forgiveness of our sins. Any act of forgiveness we do is small in comparison. Nonetheless, God wants us to have faith in Him and trust that He will do the right thing. Teach your students to recall Jesus' sufferings for our reconciliation with God, and to pray for the faith and patience to allow God to work in His own way.

### **What Is True Forgiveness?**

For this class, you can take some time to talk to your students about true forgiveness. Explain to them that we were all bought with a price that Jesus Christ paid in full in flesh.

1. Are you forgiving when you say, "I forgive you, but I will never forget how unkind you have been to me"?
2. Are you forgiving when you are happy that something bad has happened to someone you do not like?
3. Are you forgiving when you want to get even with someone who has pushed or hit you?
4. Are you forgiving when you stop talking to someone who has told lies about you?
5. Are you forgiving when you speak unkindly about a person who does not choose you to be on his or her team?

Point out that the correct answer to all the questions is "no." Explain that to truly forgive we must:

1. Overcome our angry feelings.
2. Not judge or criticize others.
3. Forget about what has been done.
4. Pray for those who have hurt us.

### **Suggestions for Activities**

A major application from this lesson is forgiveness. Talk to the students about what it means to forgive others. Bring bandages and talk about why we use them (to help protect a wound and help it heal). Give each student a bandage and ask them to help others who have been hurt this week.

## ACTIVITIES

1

**"I Forgive You" Puppet Role-play****Objective:** To understand the importance of forgiveness.**Instructions:** Bring a puppet (Harry) to class to help you perform this skit for the students.**Teacher:** What's wrong, Harry? You look a little angry.

Harry: Hmph, I'm not very happy right now.

**Teacher:** Well, tell me what happened that made you so unhappy.

Harry: Last night, Billy came over to borrow my new video game. It was brand new, and he broke it, so now it doesn't work anymore.

**Teacher:** Well that does seem very unfortunate, but I'm sure Billy didn't mean it.

Harry: Well, he did say that it was an accident, and that he was sorry...but I can't forgive him, it was my favorite game, Pokémon!

**Teacher:** You know, that reminds me of a story in the Bible.

Harry: Pokémon reminds you of a story in the Bible?

**Teacher:** No, silly, the forgiving part.

Harry: Oh, really?

**Teacher:** This story was about a young boy. He was very special in his father's eyes.

Harry: Moses was special.

**Teacher:** True, but this is a story about Joseph, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. Jacob loved his son Joseph so much, do you know what he did? He gave him a coat of many colors, especially for him.

Harry: I bet it was beautiful.

**Teacher:** It was, and Joseph loved his coat very much. But his eleven other brothers became very jealous. They didn't get a beautiful coat.

Harry: So what did they do?

**Teacher:** What they did was very cruel. First, they put Joseph in a deep hole and left him to die, but then they decided to sell him to some merchants traveling to Egypt instead.

Harry: I bet Joseph was really angry.

**Teacher:** He was at first, just like you are angry now, but he also loved God.

Harry: So what happened?

**Teacher:** Let's ask one of my students if they know. Does anybody want to tell Harry what happened? [Allow students to tell Harry.] Joseph made his home in Egypt and soon became an important person there. One day, God told him in a dream that there would be great famine in the land. Do you know what a famine is?

Harry: I think that is when there is nothing to eat.

**Teacher:** That's right, and this famine was going to last for seven years.

Harry: Wow! That's a long time. Everyone would starve to death.

**Teacher:** Yes, but Pharaoh had a plan. He let Joseph get ready for the famine by storing large amounts of food to eat later. So finally, the famine came, and Joseph's brothers ran out of food....

Harry: ...So they tried to get some food from Joseph?

**Teacher:** Yes, they did.

Harry: But he was still angry and wouldn't give them any. "Get away," he said, "starve to death, go... "

**Teacher:** Hold on, Harry [hand over mouth], that's not what happened. He forgave them and shared the food because he realized that God had planned the whole thing. Because of his brothers, Joseph went to Egypt and was able to save all of them from starving to death. You see, God knows what is best for us even when we don't, and when we learn to forgive others in our hearts, He can do great things for us.

Harry: I guess Joseph did the right thing by forgiving his brothers. I better forgive Billy, too. Maybe then God will help me win at Pokémon.

**Teacher:** Well, that's not quite what I meant, but anyway, forgiving Billy is a good start.

Harry: Yeah...he is a good friend.

**2****Forgiving Situations****Objective:** To identify situations where we can forgive.

1. Ask the students to come up with ten situations where someone has done wrong to someone else. Examples can be: a sister hitting her brother, a classmate stealing a pencil, someone cutting in line, etc.
2. Ask the students to find the three hardest things to forgive and the three easiest things.
3. Go through each situation and first ask if any of the students have experienced it before. Choose one student to share how they dealt with the situation. Then, ask the class how Joseph might have dealt with the situation.

**3****"To Forgive" Acrostic Poem****Objective:** To remind students that it is important to forgive.

Each letter of the word "forgive" forms the start of a line describing the word (e.g., a situation where the students would forgive, what forgiving means to them, where others have forgiven them in the past, a description of Jesus' mercy, etc). It can be done as a class activity (each student contributes a line), group activity, or individual activity. The finished poems will be written down, embellished, and mounted on the wall.

Forgiving people will help me heal.  
Only God can seek true justice.  
Real forgiveness is from the heart.  
God likes it when I forgive.  
I should forgive others even if they did something bad to me.  
Vengeance is not something that I should seek.  
Even my enemies deserve to be forgiven.

**4****Board Game****Objective:** To review what happened when Joseph's brothers traveled to Egypt.

Create a simple board game about the journey Jacob's family made from Israel to Egypt. The students will need to roll a die to advance. Landing on certain squares will require them to answer questions about the lesson or share their thoughts on something. The first student to reach Egypt wins. Penalties can be included by creating spaces that require the students to take steps backwards.

E1 Year 1 Book 2 Lesson 9—Joseph Forgives His Brothers

# Homework Assignment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bible Truths:** 1. Holding a grudge hurts us more than others.  
 2. God wants us to completely forgive others who have done us wrong.

**Lesson Objectives:** 1. To learn to forgive others.  
 2. To understand that forgiving others helps us become friends again.

**Bible Reading:** Please put a checkmark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

**Prayer:** Please put a checkmark in the space on the days you prayed to God.

|               | Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Bible Reading |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Prayer        |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |

## Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(Colossians 3:13a)

---



---

## What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



# Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

## Multiple Choice

- \_\_\_\_ : Why did the brothers return to Egypt a second time?
  - They missed Joseph and wanted to see him again.
  - They ran out of food.
  - They wanted to bring Benjamin to see Joseph.
- \_\_\_\_ : Who went down to live in Egypt?
  - All of Jacob's family.
  - Only Benjamin's family.
  - Only Joseph's brothers.
- \_\_\_\_ : Forgiving means \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Forgetting about what wrong someone has done to you.
  - Not being angry about the wrong someone has done to you.
  - Wanting to do wrong back to the person who hurt you.

## True or False

- Judah had promised his father that he would keep Benjamin safe. \_\_\_\_\_
- Judah became Joseph's slave instead of Benjamin. \_\_\_\_\_

## Fill In the Blank

|      |         |        |       |        |     |
|------|---------|--------|-------|--------|-----|
| five | forgave | silver | Jesus | Joseph | God |
|------|---------|--------|-------|--------|-----|

- \_\_\_\_\_ asked his servant to put the \_\_\_\_\_ cup in Benjamin's sack.
- Joseph knew it was \_\_\_\_\_ who brought him to Egypt to save many people from starving.
- Joseph \_\_\_\_\_ his brothers for what they had done to him. He was no longer angry or upset about what they had done to him.
- There were \_\_\_\_\_ more years of famine when they moved down to live in Egypt.
- God wants us to forgive others because \_\_\_\_\_ already died to forgive us of our sins.

## Life Application

- Write a short letter to God telling Him how thankful you are that He died on the cross and forgave your sins.

Dear God,

---

---

---