

LESSON 10

JOSEPH'S FAMILY GOES TO EGYPT

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Burial Practices

Most ancient burial practices demonstrated some belief in the afterlife. The Egyptians believed that the existence of the soul was linked to the existence of the body, and thus they mummified corpses to preserve them forever. The tomb was filled with items the dead person would need in the world beyond, like food, jewels, and even chariots.

But the burial practices of the Hebrews differed strikingly from the pagan people around them, suggesting a powerfully distinctive belief system. There is no evidence that food or equipment intended for life beyond the grave was ever buried with the corpse. At most, there were some precious adornments the family might have included. Bodies of the dead were not embalmed but buried quickly, on the day of death or within twenty-four hours, with no attempt to preserve them. Surely a body whose destiny was to return to dust had no need for embalming. The embalming of Jacob was an exception. Jacob's family probably allowed this as a sign of courtesy and respect to the Egyptians, in whose land they were living. It is also possible that his body was embalmed because it would have taken days to get his body to the burial site.

It was customary for successive generations to be buried in the family tomb, like Sarah and Abraham, Isaac and Rebekah, and Leah and Jacob. Besides weeping, mourning for the dead included rending one's garments and donning sackcloth. As seen with the example of Jacob's death, the mourning period lasted for as long as seven days.

Jacob's Name

In today's lesson, some of the Bible verses refer to Jacob as Israel. Remember that Jacob's name was changed to Israel after he wrestled with God (Gen 32:22-32). If that reference comes up as the students are reading specific verses, be sure to remind them that they are the same person, and that the name change has significance (i.e., Israel represents the nation). To avoid confusion, Joseph's father will be referred to as Jacob throughout the lesson.

Joseph's Pledge to His Brothers

After Jacob's death, his sons were afraid that Joseph would take revenge for the evil they had committed against him in his youth. So they sent word to him, telling him that before their father's death, he had asked them to tell Joseph that he should forgive his brothers for what they had done to him. Joseph, however, calmed their fears and told them not to worry about the past, adding that it had been God's will for him to save the lives of many. He assured them of his undying love and loyalty, and pledged to sustain them and their families. They were all greatly moved by his words, and their eyes were filled with tears.

BIBLE TEXT

Genesis 46:1-47:12;
47:28-31; 49:29-50:26

BIBLE TRUTH

Those who care for their families please God.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To love our family and care for them through concrete actions.
2. To understand that God has a purpose for my life.

MEMORY VERSE

"Honor your father and mother."

(Ephesians 6:2a)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Lord, we thank You for giving us our wonderful families to take care of us and love us. Please help us to be obedient to our parents and kind to our brothers and sisters. We know that You have given us our families and want us to love and care for them. May Your Spirit guide us as we learn about how Joseph cared for his family. Hallelujah! Amen.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

If your students are like most people, it is much more difficult for them to be kind to their family members than to others. This could be due to the amount of time that family members spend with one another and the fact that we know our family members so well. But as comfortable as we are around them, our family members are the people closest to us and often the ones who love us the most. Help the students understand that God has given us our families and that they are very special. God especially instituted families from the very beginning with Adam and Eve.

Ask the students for suggestions on how to make their families happier. God has commanded us to honor our parents and has promised that we will be blessed if we do. Ask the students what it means to honor. Oftentimes, to honor our parents is to obey our parents. However,

obedience must be rooted in respect and love from the heart. Not only did Joseph obey his father, he also brought his father to Egypt and gave him the best of the land to live in. He wept for a long time when he saw his beloved father. Honoring our parents includes doing actions outwardly, but these must come from the heart.

Conflicts with siblings are, of course, inevitable. As with Joseph's example, forgiveness plays a big part in our relationships with our siblings. No one can guarantee that they will never fight with their siblings; therefore, the act of forgiveness is very important. Ask the students to share a time when they fought with a sibling and forgave. Let them express how they felt after they forgave. We can help the students understand how special our families are and how to better cherish them.

VOCABULARY

sacrifice: a gift to God; something special you give up; in old Biblical times, this was usually an animal burnt for God to make a pleasing smell

worship: to pay respect or pray to God

vision: an image that isn't actually there, like a dream

comforted: to make someone who is sad feel better

REVIEW

Last week, we learned about Joseph's plan to find out if his brothers had changed. We learned about how Joseph tested his brothers one last time. Joseph asked his servant to hide a silver cup in Benjamin's sack so that he would be in trouble. What punishment did Joseph ask for the thief? (The thief would be made his slave as punishment.) Who was going to become his slave in return for stealing the cup? (Benjamin.) Who asked to take Benjamin's place and be the slave instead? (Judah, the brother who had come up with the idea to sell Joseph in the first place.)

When Joseph saw how his brothers loved Benjamin and their father, he knew they had changed. Joseph knew that it was God who had brought him to Egypt to save them all from starvation, so he wasn't angry with his brothers. How wonderful!

After Joseph saw how much his brothers cared for Benjamin and their father, he told them that he was Joseph, their little brother. Joseph asked them to move to Egypt where there was plenty of food and where Joseph could take care of them. So they headed home to bring their father and the rest of their families back to Egypt. How many people are in your family? Can you guess how many people were in Joseph's family? [Allow students to guess.] Joseph had a big family. There were seventy people in his family! It would have been a big task to look after them all, but Joseph loved them and wanted to take care of them all.

BIBLE STORY

Introduction

Before we start with today's story, we're going to do a little brainstorming. Who knows what brainstorming means? That's right! We're going to come up with lots and lots of ideas, so put your thinking caps on and be ready to share your ideas. [Write answers on the board as the students contribute.] We're going to talk about love. What does love mean? Who do you love? Who does God want you to love? (Within their answers there will be mention of family members.) How do you show you love someone? What do you do when you love someone? What don't you do when you love someone? [Write the answers down in columns and use this discussion to smoothly transition into this week's Bible story.]

God Speaks to Jacob

Joseph loved his family very much, so he cared for his great, big family. The brothers went home as Joseph had asked, and together with Jacob and their families, they started their journey to Egypt. Jacob was now an old, old man who had lived most of his life at home in Canaan. How do you think Jacob felt about leaving his home for a country he had never been to before? [Allow students to respond.] He probably felt unsure and maybe a bit nervous, but also happy because he was going to see Joseph again. Also, he knew his family would be taken care of. On the way, they stopped at a place called Beersheba where they camped for the night. There, Jacob offered sacrifices to God. In the old times of the Bible, instead of coming to church, people who believed in God would kill and burn animals to make a beautiful smell when they worshiped God. That's what Jacob's sacrifices were. God saw and heard Jacob. Something very special happened that night. Let us turn to Genesis 46:2-4 in our Bibles to read what happened. [Read with students.] How marvelous! God knew Jacob was worried about going to Egypt and knew how sad he had been without Joseph for all those years. Not only was he going to see Joseph again, but Joseph would be beside him when he died.

Jacob was greatly comforted by what God told him. Jacob knew that God was with him so he was no longer sad, and he was no longer afraid even though he had never been to Egypt before. He knew that this was something God had planned for him and his family. Jacob's great, big family traveled in the carts Pharaoh had given them. They didn't have cars like we do now. The women and children sat in the carts. Imagine how slow the journey must have been! They dirt roads back then were very rough and dusty. It was also probably hot during the day and cold at night! Sometimes, they might have had to deal with wind gusts and sandstorms. But they still traveled on. Because they didn't have maps, someone had to show them the way there. Judah was sent ahead of the group to point the way to Goshen, the place in Egypt where they

would be staying. They would be living in Egypt, but apart from the Egyptians. Joseph, too, traveled to Goshen to meet his father. At last, the whole family arrived.

Joseph and His Father Meet

When Joseph saw his father, he threw his arms around him and wept for a long time. Jacob and his son, who he had thought was dead, met again. They were so happy to see each other that they cried and cried as they hugged each other. What's the longest time you have been away from your mother or father? [Ask for some answers.] Joseph and Jacob had not seen each other for years and years so it was a very happy time for them.

Jacob Dies

Joseph took care of his family and gave them the best of the land. They lived together and their families grew bigger and bigger. Jacob and his family stayed in Goshen for a long time. After seventeen years of living there, Jacob had become very old, and he was dying. He called for Joseph and told him, "Promise me this: Do not bury me in Egypt after I die, but carry me back to my home where my fathers are buried."

Joseph promised, "I will do as you say."

After this, Jacob called for all of his sons and blessed them. After blessing every one of them, he breathed his last breath.

Joseph threw himself on his father and wept over him and kissed him. His family and the Egyptians cried for a long time for Jacob. Then Joseph asked Pharaoh if he could go back and bury his father in Canaan, his homeland. Pharaoh agreed. A very large group of people, including all of Joseph's family and many of Pharaoh's men, went up to Canaan to bury Jacob. They mourned for seven whole days.

Joseph Has Completely Forgiven

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they became frightened. They thought, "What if Joseph is still angry at us for what we did, and he was just waiting for our father to die to get even?" Then they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Please forgive us for what we have done against you."

Can you guess what Joseph did? Raise your right hand if you think Joseph was still angry with his brothers. Raise your left hand if you think Joseph had forgiven them. [Allow students to think.] Let's see what happened.

When Joseph received the message, he wept. His brothers came and fell down before him, worried and afraid. They bowed to Joseph, saying, "We are your servants."

But Joseph had already forgiven them long ago. He wasn't angry. He loved his brothers. He spoke kind words to them, saying, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of

God? You planned to harm me, but God planned to send me here so that many lives could be saved. So don't be afraid. I will take care of you and your children." Joseph spoke comforting words so his brothers were no longer afraid or worried. Joseph could say these things because he loved his brothers and his father, and therefore he did what Jacob would have wanted him to do. More importantly, he showed his love for God by understanding that it was God's plan for all these things to happen.

Joseph Dies

Joseph and his family stayed in Egypt for a long time. He lived to be an old man—one hundred and ten years old. The time came when he was going to die. So Joseph called his family and said to them, "I am about to die, but one day God will bring you back to our homeland, the land He promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But when you go back, you must bring back my bones to that place."

Joseph breathed his last and lay in Egypt until the time

came for the Israelites to go home.

The Life of Joseph

In the life and story of Joseph, we see the value of a person who was:

- a. centered in faith and trusted in God;
- b. devoted to serving God and man with honor and dependability;
- c. unwilling to be deterred by the hatred, betrayal, and forgetfulness of others;
- d. willing to forgive the wrongs committed by others;
- e. able to see the big picture: God's wonderful workings in the events of man.

May Joseph's life story serve to inspire us to develop our character to be like his, "an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim 4:12).

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. **While Jacob was on the way to Egypt, he stopped at a place called Beersheba. What happened there?** Jacob offered sacrifices and God spoke to him in a vision.
2. **What did Jacob do to his sons before he died?** He blessed all of them.
3. **Where did Joseph take his father to be buried?** His homeland in Canaan.
4. **Why were Joseph's brothers afraid after their father died?** They were afraid that Joseph was still angry, and that he was going to get even with them.
5. **What did Joseph say to his brothers when they wanted to become his slaves?** He told them not to be afraid; God had planned for him to come to Egypt to save many lives; he would take care of them and their children.
6. **How did Joseph show his love and care toward his family? How can we do this today?** He gave them grain as the famine continued in Egypt and he took care of them.
7. **Think of certain times when it is hard to be nice to our family members. The next time we find it hard to be nice to our family members, how can we be more like Joseph?** Answers may vary.

MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

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

"Honor your father and mother." (Ephesians 6:2a)

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

Love and Cherish Our Family

Joseph demonstrated his love for his family time and again by looking after them in Egypt, forgiving his brothers, and respecting the wishes of his father. Joseph could have easily taken advantage of the opportunity that Jacob's death brought. He no longer had a father to give account to, he was powerful in Egypt, and he had reason to exact revenge. His actions stemmed from love, forgiveness, and His fear of God. In his dying days, he acknowledged the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In doing so, he recognized that his brothers and their families were part of this plan.

Your family members are people upon whom you can depend. If you are hungry, they feed you. If you are sick, they help and care for you! They are the ones who help you build up your confidence. Without their love and support, life would be tough. Make sure you never lose your love for your family members. Keep them close to your heart! Families are one of our most precious possessions. Never take them for granted. Treasure your time with them.

The Top 5 Things You Can Do for Your Family Members!

- Tell Them – Tell your family members that you love them and tell them how much they mean to you.
- Show Them – Show them that you are thinking about them—give them a big hug every day or do something for them in your own special way (e.g., make a special present for your parents, siblings, grandparents, etc., on their birthday).
- Cherish Them – Cherish them every day for the rest of your days.
- Obey Them – Obey and honor your parents. This is a commandment with a promise that we will live long.
- Pray for Them – Remember them in your prayers!

God Has a Purpose for My Life!

Does my life have a purpose? Am I meaningful or is my life meaningless? Is there a reason why I am here? According to the teachings of God, God has a purpose for your life!

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jer 29:11). This is a beautiful verse with a hope. In answer to all the questions of purpose, uncertainty, and doubt, God lovingly proclaims to us all that we have a purpose, and that purpose is a prosperous one sustained and directed by God Himself if we follow Him.

On several occasions, Joseph acknowledged God's hand in the events of his life. He knew that despite his glory in Egypt, God had a higher purpose. He did not ask to be buried in Egypt, where he was a leader and viewed as a hero for saving the lives of the Egyptians. Rather, he asked to be taken out, when God's time came, to the Promised Land.

Teach your students that, like Joseph, each of them has a small but significant role to play in God's plan for salvation. That role begins with obedience to the word of God through loving Him and others. Their recognition and achievements in this life will be nothing when life ends. The journey they take and the decisions they make must reflect their knowledge that their home is not here on earth. What they do, say and think should conform to what is pleasing in the eyes of God. If they get stuck, tell them to ask themselves, “What would Jesus do?”

ACTIVITIES

1

The Best Things

Objective: To understand the importance of family.

Instructions

Have the students sit in a circle and let each one tell the best thing about their families. The teacher may start the sharing. After the sharing, lead a prayer thanking God for all of our families.

Variations

The teacher can choose to vary the sharing by discussing any of the topics below.

- Their most embarrassing moment
- The funniest thing that happened to them or their family
- Answers to a prayer
- The time they were most frightened
- The thing they're most thankful for
- Something that seemed bad at first but turned out to be good.

After talking about a memorable moment that happened to their family, ask the students to draw a picture to capture that moment and make a picture frame (or bring in a real one) to frame it.

2**Surprise Day****Objectives:** To understand the importance of family and to give the students an opportunity to help their family.

Help the students plan a "Surprise Day" for their families. Each student can think of something nice they can do for each person in their family. They shouldn't let their family know that they're the helpers. After they have surprised their family, they can tell them that they were helping God by helping them.

Students can write down how they are going to help and list the things they will need in order to carry out their task. Help the students by considering things they may not have thought and by helping them plan their ideas.

3**Love's Shadow****Objective:** To understand the importance of family.**Materials**

- Overhead projector (or some other bright source of light which will produce a clear shadow when lit). If an ordinary projector is used, take care that the light is not too bright in the students' eyes.
- 2 contrasting colored pieces of paper that are light enough to be written on
- Sticky tape
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Glue
- Thick black marker

Instructions

1. Stick a piece of colored (or white) paper on the wall and position the seated student between the light and the paper. The student should be seated facing the light. Adjust the student or the projector until the student's head sufficiently fills the paper.
2. Have another student trace the student's silhouette onto the paper, making sure that the penciled line goes all the way to the bottom edge of the paper.
3. Cut out the silhouette and paste either the silhouette or its inverse onto the contrasting piece of paper.
4. Within the silhouette, have students write what they like about their families using the marker.
5. Outside the silhouette, have students write what positive things they do, or can do for their families (i.e., their actions towards their families).
6. During the activity, encourage sharing and discussion among the students.
7. While students are waiting for their silhouette to be traced, they can brainstorm what they will include on their paper.

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. B
2. B
3. A
4. They traveled to Egypt in carts.
5. Joseph was 110 years old when he died.
6. Goshen
7. He wept for a long time when he saw Jacob; he looked after all their families and gave them the best land in Egypt; he carried out the promise of burying his father in Canaan; and he forgave his brothers and did not take Jacob's death as a time for him to get even.
8. False; Jacob was buried in Canaan.
9. False; he had forgiven his brothers, and he only wanted to take care of them.
10. Answers may vary.
11. Answers may vary.

E1 Year 1 Book 2 Lesson 10—Joseph's Family Goes to Egypt

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Bible Truth: Those who care for their families please God.**Lesson Objectives:** 1. To love our family and care for them through concrete actions.
2. To understand that God has a purpose for my life.**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.

(Ephesians 6:2a)

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

Multiple Choice

1. ____ : How many people were in Joseph's family when they came to live in Egypt?
 - a. Fifty
 - b. Seventy
 - c. Eighty

2. ____ : Jacob stopped at a place to offer sacrifices to God before arriving in Egypt. God also appeared to him there. Where was this place?
 - a. Bethel
 - b. Beersheba
 - c. Canaan

3. ____ : Who pointed the way to Goshen?
 - a. Judah
 - b. Jacob
 - c. Reuben

Short Answer

4. How did Jacob's family travel to Egypt? _____
5. How old was Joseph when he died? _____
6. What was the name of the place in Egypt where Jacob's family settled? _____
7. How do we know Joseph loved his family? Give two reasons.

True or False

8. Jacob was buried in Egypt. _____
9. Joseph planned on getting even with his brothers after his father died. _____

Life Application

10. What are three things you can do to show your love to your family?

11. Is there anyone in your family you are angry with right now? Who? Why? What can you do to show that you love them and forgive them?

