

JOSEPH FORGIVES HIS BROTHERS

Bible Basis: Genesis 37; 39:1–47:31

Bible Verse: “A man may have many plans in his heart. But the LORD’s purpose wins out in the end.”
—Proverbs 19:21, NIV

Bible Point: God took care of Joseph. God also takes care of me.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 3: “Joseph Forgives His Brothers”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: a small animal such as a fish or hamster, or a puppet animal or stuffed animal one would normally have as a pet, such as a dog or cat

Lead the children in a discussion about taking care of an animal. This example contains references to having a fish in the classroom, but if you have a stuffed animal, you can say, “**If this animal were real, what care would it need?**”

Say, “**Everyone come look at what I brought today! Come sit down on the floor by me! I brought in a pet fish. Let’s watch it swim around. Its name is — (fill in name). How do you take care of a fish? (You feed it, clean its water, and add water conditioner.) What would happen if I didn’t take care of it? (It would get sick or even die.) Just as we take good care of our pets, God takes good care of us! Today we are going to learn about a man named Joseph who was in a very scary situation, but God took care of him.**”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Preparation: On a piece of poster board, make a large star at the top and write, “God took care of Joseph” underneath the star.

First, read aloud Chapter 3, “Joseph Forgives His Brothers,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

When you see (S&W) in the story, have the children smile and wave. When you see (F&C) in the story, have children frown and rub their eyes like they are crying. When you see (*), hold up the star card and have the children say, “God took care of Joseph.” Practice these with the children before you start the story.

Joseph’s father gave him a colorful robe (S&W). Robes are what men wore in Bible times. Joseph’s brothers were jealous (F&C). Even though Joseph’s brothers were mean, God took care of Joseph. (*) One night Joseph had a dream. Stars and hay bowed down to him. Joseph

was really good at knowing what dreams meant, so he told everyone about it (S&W). He told everyone that he would someday be in charge of all his brothers. Well, his brothers did not like the dream. They stole his robe, put him in a deep hole, and sold him (F&C). Joseph was taken to Egypt as a slave. Even though Joseph became a slave, God took care of Joseph. (*)

Potiphar was a powerful man in Egypt. Potiphar bought Joseph and put him in charge of his house (S&W). Potiphar's wife played a mean trick on Joseph, and Joseph was blamed for the mean trick. He was thrown into prison (F&C). Even though Joseph was in prison, God took care of Joseph. (*)

The jailer liked Joseph. He put Joseph in charge of the prison (S&W). A baker and a drink-tester in prison had dreams. God showed Joseph what each dream meant (S&W). Joseph asked them to remember him, but they forgot about him (F&C). Even though people forgot about Joseph, God took care of Joseph. (*)

One day Pharaoh had a dream. Pharaoh ruled all of Egypt. He heard Joseph was good at telling what dreams meant, so he sent for Joseph (S&W). Joseph told Pharaoh what his dream meant (S&W). It meant that Egypt would have years with plenty of food then years with only a little food. Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of all the food in Egypt so there would be plenty of food all the time (S&W). Pharaoh gave him nice clothes, good food, and a nice place to live (S&W). For seven years, Egypt had a lot of food. Joseph put extra food in a safe place. Then people started running out of food (F&C). People from all over the world came to buy food, even Joseph's brothers. They were shocked to see Joseph, and they were sorry for selling him as a slave. Joseph forgave them (S&W). He told them that what they had meant for evil, God had used for good (S&W). This was God's plan for Joseph's life.

All of Joseph's family moved to Egypt to live with him. God took care of Joseph. (*) God took care of Joseph's family.

Ask:

- What gift did Joseph's father give to him? *(a colorful coat)* Were Joseph's brothers happy for him? *(No, they were jealous.)*
- What did they do to Joseph? *(sold him as a slave)*
- When Potiphar's wife played a trick on Joseph, where was Joseph sent? *(to jail)*
- How did Joseph get out of jail? *(He could tell the meaning of people's dreams.)*
- What job did Pharaoh give him? *(He was in charge of food.)*
- When Joseph's brothers came to Egypt, what did Joseph do? *(forgave them; had them come live with him)*
- Even when times were hard, did God take care of Joseph? *(yes)* Did he take care of Joseph's family? *(yes)* Does God take care of you? *(yes)*

Pray with the children, thanking God for taking care of you.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: GOD TAKES CARE OF ME!

Have the children stand up. Teach the children the point of this lesson by practicing the following motions:

God (*Point up.*)

Took care (*Hug yourself.*)

Of Joseph. (*Motion like you're putting a crown on your head, like Joseph wore when he was deputy pharaoh.*)

God (*Point up.*)

Takes care (*Hug yourself.*)

Of me! (*Both thumbs point to your chest.*)

OPTION 2: QUILT OF MANY COLORS

Stuff you need: a large, colorful quilt—possibly more than one, so all the children can sit on a quilt—bean bag or small soft ball

Lay the quilt on the floor of your room, and have the children sit on it in a circle.

Say, **"This is my colorful quilt! What colors are on this quilt?** (*let children answer; repeat answers are okay*) **This colorful quilt reminds me of Joseph's colorful coat! Do you think his coat may have looked kind of like this? What colors do you think were on Joseph's coat?"**

Say, **"God took care of Joseph in many different places—in a pit, in jail, and in the palace! Where are some places you like to go? We are going to pass the beanbag around the circle. When you have the beanbag, you tell us one place you like to go—it might be a particular store or restaurant or the home of someone special."**

When everyone has had a turn, say, **"You know all those places we just talked about? God takes care of us in all those places! He takes care of us at home, at Grandma's house, at stores, at the playground, and anywhere you can think of!"**

OPTION 3: JOSEPH'S STOREHOUSE

Stuff you need: Joseph's Storehouse Activity Sheet, stickers of food (or pictures of food items cut out of coupon ads and magazines or from the Internet), glue sticks

Give each child an activity sheet. Say, **"God took care of Joseph, and all the people in Egypt, by helping them store up food so there was plenty all the time. Use the stickers to create your own storehouse of food."**

OPTION 4: STOREHOUSE WORKER

Stuff you need: Masking tape for the floor, 4 heavy-quality plastic zippered sandwich bags full of dry beans and 1 laundry basket per game. Double-bag the beans and tape the plastic zippered bag closed. Set up a game for every 4–5 children.

Preparation: Set up the laundry baskets against one wall; put masking tape lines on the floor about 4 feet in front of them.

Say, **“We are going to help Joseph fill his storehouse. He needed lots of food, like these beans, in order to feed all the people in Egypt. Line up behind the tape lines. One at a time, you will stand on the line and toss the beans into the basket to help Joseph fill the storehouse.”** Everyone gets to try until they get all four bags into the basket.

OPTION 5: JOSEPH AND HIS COLORFUL COAT

Stuff you need: Joseph and His Colorful Coat Activity Sheet, coffee filters, colored markers, a spray water bottle (or a paintbrush to flick water), Joseph template, coat template

1. Give each child a coffee filter to color. This will be the coat.
2. Have children color with markers however they wish.
3. Wet the coffee filter.
4. Hang to dry for roughly half an hour.
5. While the coat dries, children will have time to color Joseph.
6. When coffee filters are dry, have children use the template to help cut the coffee filters into the shape of the coat.
7. Glue the coat to Joseph.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 3*.

Say, **“The front of this card will remind you that God took care of Joseph. God loves you, and he will take care of you, too. Show your parents the back and tell them that God takes care of you.”** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.