

This month we are learning about God's forgiveness and what it means for us. We do many things that go against God's will and plan for us, and we should always confess those sins and ask for his forgiveness. When we accept Jesus as our Savior and turn away from our sins, God forgives us and cleanses us so that we are no longer guilty in his sight.

# **CONTENTS:**

# **BIBLE STORIES** Forgiveness through Christ ...... 1 **DEVOTIONALS COLORING PAGE** Joseph and the Colorful Robe ...... 16-23 **ACTIVITIES** • Read About It • Think About It • Finding Jesus in Jeremiah Write About It Pray About It Do Something About It Clean as a Penny ...... 30 Spot Scrubber ...... 31 Joseph Crossword (with answer key) ...... 32-33

Read Ephesians 1:3–14 to learn about Jesus' sacrifice and why it means that we are forgiven and free.

I, Paul, am writing this letter. I am an apostle of Christ Jesus just as God planned.

I am sending this letter to you, God's holy people in Ephesus. Because you belong to Christ Jesus, you are faithful.

<sup>2</sup>May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Start Reading Here

## **Praise God for His Spiritual Blessings in Christ**

<sup>3</sup> Give praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Those blessings come from the heavenly world. They belong to us because we belong to Christ. <sup>4</sup> God chose us to belong to Christ before the world was created. He chose us to be holy and without blame in his eyes. He loved us. <sup>5</sup> So he decided long ago to adopt us. He adopted us as his children with all the rights children have. He did it because of what Jesus Christ has done. It pleased God to do it. <sup>6</sup> All those things bring praise to his glorious grace. God freely gave

Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians from prison. Although he is in prison, Paul isn't sad or discouraged. He is filled with hope and joy. He tells everyone that he meets about Jesus. Paul knows

that God is with him, and that God

will take care of him.

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us his grace because of the One he loves. <sup>7</sup>We have been set free because of what Christ has done. Because he bled and died our sins have been forgiven. We have been set free because God's grace is so rich. <sup>8</sup>He poured his grace on us. By giving us great wisdom and understanding, <sup>9</sup>he showed us the mystery of his plan. It was in keeping with what he wanted to do. It was what he had planned through Christ. <sup>10</sup>It will all come about when history has been completed. God will then bring together all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

<sup>11</sup>We were also chosen to belong to him. God decided to choose us long ago in keeping with his plan. He works out everything to fit his plan and purpose. <sup>12</sup>We were the first to put our hope in Christ. We were chosen to bring praise to his glory. <sup>13</sup>You also became believers in Christ. That happened when you heard the message of truth. It was the good news about how you could be saved. When you believed, he stamped you with an official mark. That official mark is the Holy Spirit that he promised. <sup>14</sup>The Spirit marks us as God's own. We can now be sure that someday we will receive all that God has promised. That will happen after God sets all his people completely free. All these things will bring praise to his glory.

End Reading Here

### Paul Prays and Gives Thanks

<sup>15</sup>I have heard about your faith in the Lord Iesus. I have also heard about your love for all God's people. That is why 16 I have not stopped thanking God for you. I always remember you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup>I pray to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is the glorious Father. I keep asking him to give you the wisdom and understanding that come from the Holy Spirit. I want you to know God better. 18 I pray that you may understand more clearly. Then you will know the hope God has chosen you to receive. You will know that what God will give his holy people is rich and glorious. 19 And you will know God's great power. It can't be compared with anything else. His power works for us who believe. It is the same mighty strength <sup>20</sup> God showed. He showed this when he raised Christ from the dead. God seated him at his right hand in his heavenly kingdom. <sup>21</sup>There Christ sits far above all who rule and have authority. He also sits far above all powers and kings. He Ephesians 1:15–23; 3:14–21

There are two prayers in Ephesians.

- In Ephesians 1:15–23, Paul prays that the Ephesians will get to know the Lord even better. He also prays that they will know God's great power working in them.
- In Ephesians 3:14–19, Paul prays that they will receive the power of the Holy Spirit. He prays that they may know how much Jesus loves them. He ends his prayer by praising God. Read verses 20–21.

1654 | EPHESIANS 1:1

Read the story of the lost sheep in Matthew 18:10-14 and learn about how God feels when we sin or walk away from him. Also, try doing the activity in the Live It feature, God's Not Mad at Me.



8"If your hand or foot causes you to sin,

### The Story of the Lost Sheep

10/11"See that you don't look down on one of these little ones. Here is what I tell Matthew 18

you. Their angels in heaven can go at any time to see my Father who is in heaven.

12"What do you think? Suppose a man owns 100 sheep and one of them wanders away. Won't he leave the 99 sheep on the hills? Won't he go and look for the one that wandered off? 13What I'm about to tell you is true. If he finds that sheep, he is happier about the one than about the 99 that didn't wander off. 14It is the same with your Father in heaven. He does not want any of these little ones to be lost.

### When Someone Sins Against You

<sup>18</sup>"What I'm about to tell you is true.

Start Reading

Here



and his sheep, it is really talking about God and his children. You are God's child if you believe in Jesus. But even though you are God's child, you still sin sometimes. That's like a sheep that goes away and gets lost. The shepherd loves that sheep so much. He goes out searching until he finds the sheep. Then he brings it home. That is just what God does for you. He loves you no matter what you do. He wants you to be close to him.

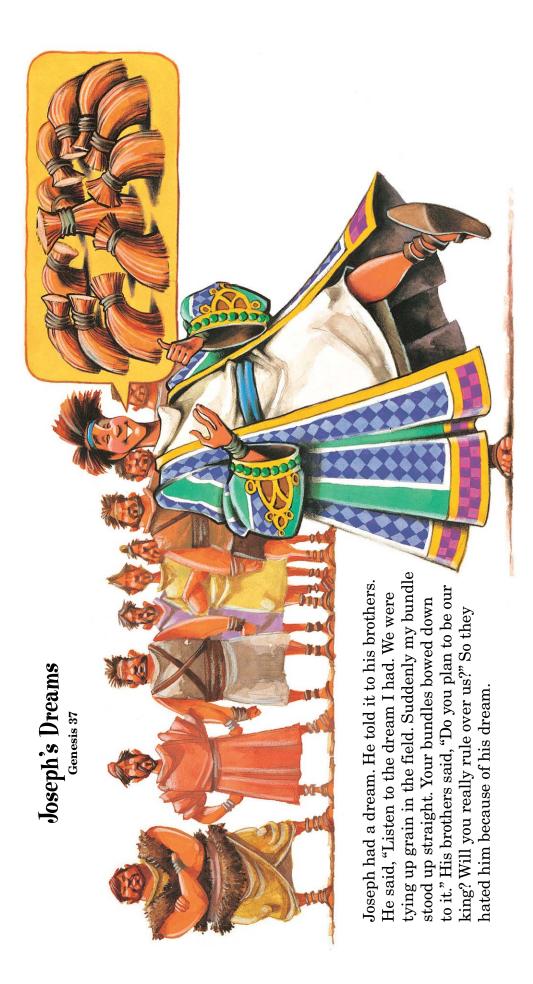
Draw a sheep on a piece of poster board. Glue on cotton balls for wool. Write "God is happy about the sheep that he finds" under the picture. Put the picture in your room. Remember that God loves you even when you have done something wrong.

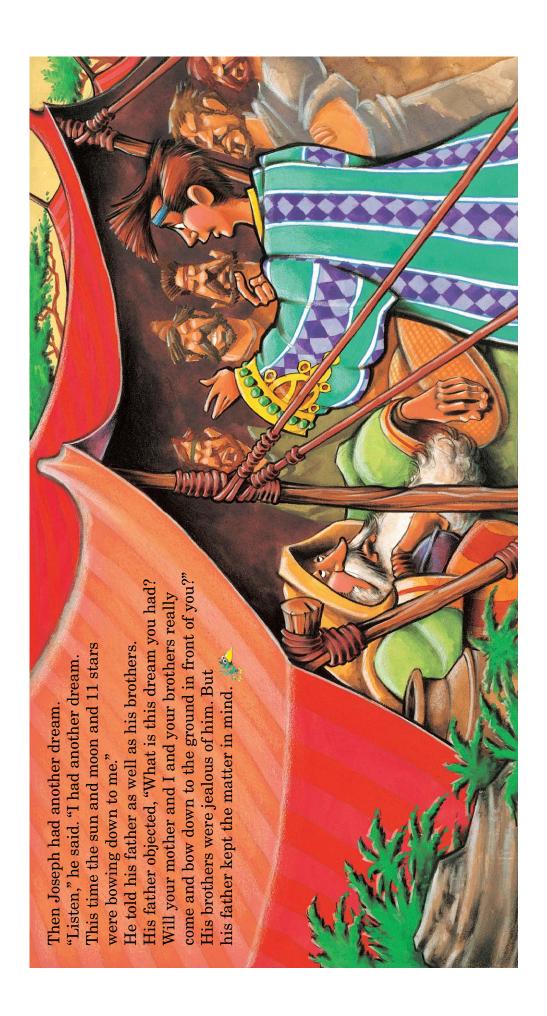




End Reading Here

Read this story about Joseph and how he forgave his brothers for how they treated him.





# The Brothers Sell Joseph

Genesis 37

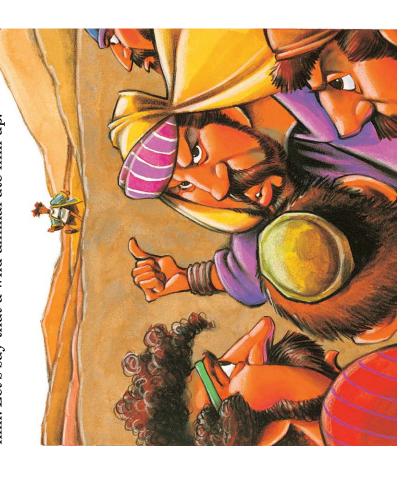


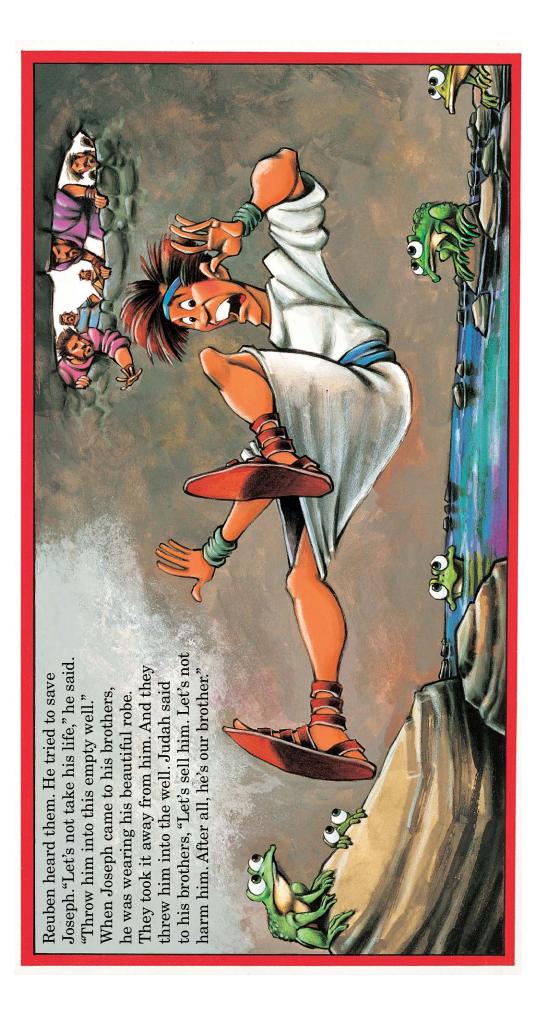
Joseph's brothers had gone to take care of their father's flocks near Shechem. Jacob said to Joseph, "Go to your brothers. See how they are doing. See how the flocks are." So

But they saw him a long way off.

Before he reached them, they made plans to kill him.

"Here comes that dreamer!" they said. "Let's kill him. Let's say that a wild animal ate him up."





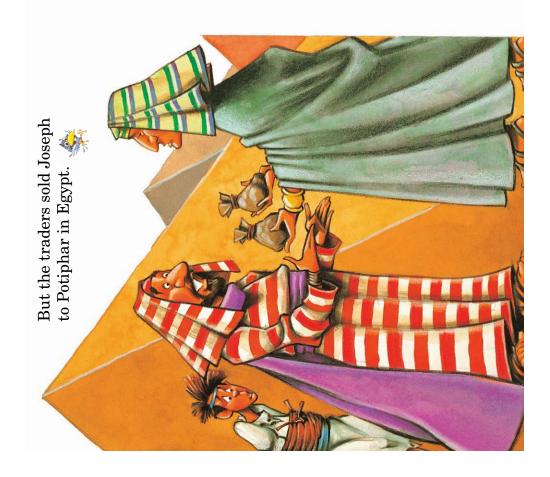


Some traders came by. Joseph's brothers sold him to the traders. The traders took him to Egypt. Then the brothers got Joseph's beautiful robe. They killed a goat and dipped the robe in the blood.

They took it back to their father. They said, "We found this. Take a look at it." Jacob recognized it. He said, "It's my son's robe! A wild animal has eaten him up." Jacob sobbed over his son for many days.

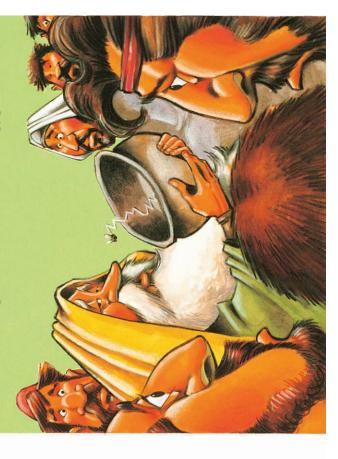


BIBLE STORIES

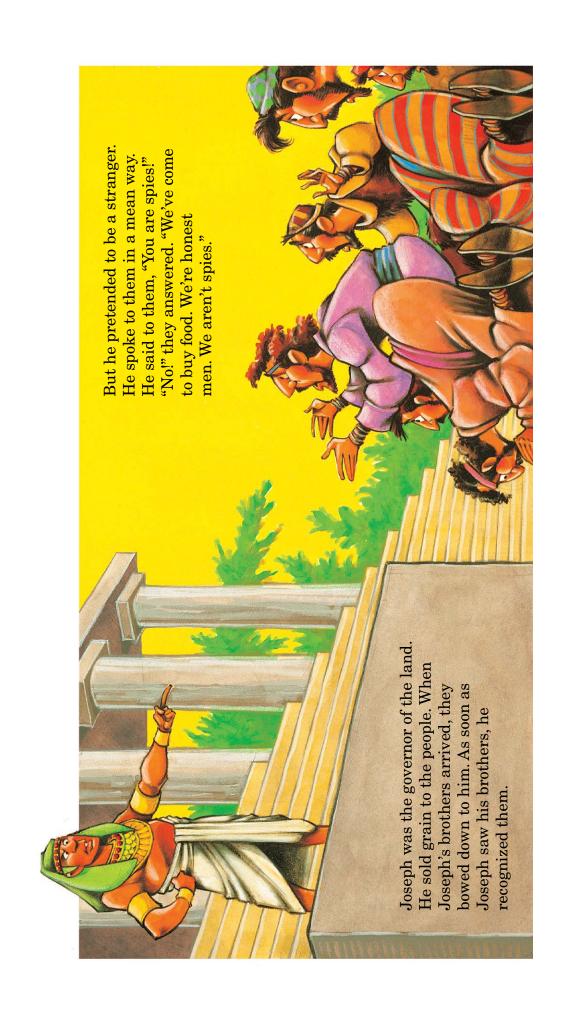


# Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt Genesis 42; 45; 47

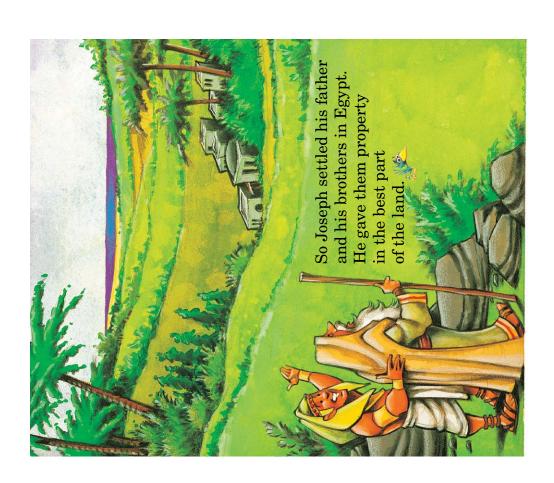
People were very hungry all over the world. Jacob found out that there was grain in Egypt. He said to his sons, "There's grain in Egypt. Go there. Buy some. Then we'll live and not die." So ten of Joseph's brothers went to Egypt.



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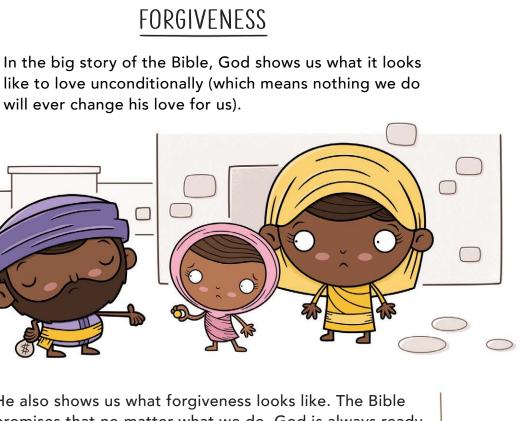




This devotional teaches us about how Joseph forgave his brothers even though he suffered because of their actions.

Genesis 62 **JOSEPH** Joseph said to [his brothers], "Don't be afraid . . . You planned to harm me. But God planned it for good. He planned to do what is now being done. He wanted to save many lives." **GENESIS 50:19-20** oseph thought back to when he was in prison. What long, dreary days, months, and even years those had been. His brothers had stripped off his beautiful, colorful coat and had sold him as a slave. His own brothers! Joseph wondered what they told their father when Joseph didn't return with them. Little did Joseph know that his brothers had torn his coat and stained it with goat's blood. Then they had shown it to their father, telling him an animal had killed Joseph. They didn't want their father to know what a terrible thing they had done. Now it was years later. Life had gotten better for Joseph. He was out of prison and no longer a slave. In fact, he was now a ruler in Egypt. God had used Joseph to save many people in Egypt from a famine, a time when there was no food to eat. When some men from another country came to Joseph to ask for food, Joseph realized they were his brothers. He was powerful now. He could get back at them for the terrible things they had done. He could have them killed! But did he? No. Joseph didn't do any of those things. He knew that everything that had happened was part of God's plan. When he was in prison and even when he had been sad and hungry, Joseph knew God was working. So instead of hurting his brothers, Joseph forgave them. He told them he loved them anyway, because God had used their awful deeds to save many people. Be a Joseph Joseph knew that God had brought good out of the bad things that had happened to him. You can forgive like Joseph. It will take God's help. But you can forgive those who hurt you. Read the Whole Story: Genesis 37; 39-48; 50 Go to page 68 for the next Super Hero.

This devotional reminds us to forgive others because God loves us.



He also shows us what forgiveness looks like. The Bible promises that no matter what we do, God is always ready to forgive us when we ask him to.



Because we are made in God's image, we are made to love the way God loves. That means we need to forgive the way he forgives. Which isn't always easy, but Jesus says we must learn to do it over and over again.

Although forgiving is something we do, it's actually a gift we give. Proverbs tells us that when we forgive others, it brings freedom and peace to the person we forgive—AND to us! It brings the possibility of a new beginning.



So always forgive and always ask for forgiveness. We love because we are loved. And we forgive because we are forgiven.



Read Luke 23:34-43 in your Bible and then see how this devotional teaches us why we should forgive others even when they hurt us.

1294 \_\_\_\_\_LUKE 23

went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. <sup>53</sup> Joseph took it down and wrapped it in linen cloth. Then he placed it in a tomb cut in the rock. No one had ever been buried there. <sup>54</sup> It was Preparation Day. The Sabbath day was about to begin.

<sup>55</sup>The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph. They saw the tomb and how Jesus' body was placed in it. <sup>56</sup>Then they went home. There they prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath day in order to obey the Law.

### Jesus Rises From the Dead

24 It was very early in the morning on the first day of the week. The women took the spices they had prepared. Then they went to the tomb. <sup>2</sup> They found the stone rolled away from it. <sup>3</sup> When they entered the tomb, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> They were wondering about this. Suddenly two men in clothes as bright as lightning stood beside them. <sup>5</sup> The women were terrified. They bowed down



Jesus said, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

### TODAY'S BIBLE READING: Luke 23:34-43

# FIGHT BACK WITH FORGIVENESS

Your best friend talks about you behind your back. You get angry and say bad things about her. Pretty soon you're fighting. You hate each other. And you're not friends anymore.

Sometimes people hurt you. You want to fight back. You want to get even.

But that's not the best way. Fighting leads to more fighting. Hate leads to more hate. It's a nasty circle.

People hurt Jesus. They whipped him and spit on him. Finally, they killed him. But he never fought back. He forgave them.

Forgiveness takes time. First you have to feel hurt. And you have to pray to God to help you forgive.

But forgiveness heals friendships. Forgiving your friend is better than getting even.



I have read this devotion.

For your next reading, turn to page 1296. If you want to read more, see Matthew 6:14–15 on page 1179 and Matthew 18:21–22 on page 1198.

These coloring pages tell Joseph's story of forgiveness.

# Week 2 Joseph and the Colorful Robe

Joseph was a young man. He was 17 years old. Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons. Israel made him a beautiful robe. Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them. So they hated Joseph. They couldn't even speak one kind word to him.

Joseph had a dream. When he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. He said to them, "Listen to the dream I had. We were tying up bundles of grain out in the field. Suddenly my bundle stood up straight. Your bundles gathered around my bundle and bowed down to it."

His brothers said to him, "Do you plan to be king over us? Will you really rule over us?" So they hated him even more because of his dream.

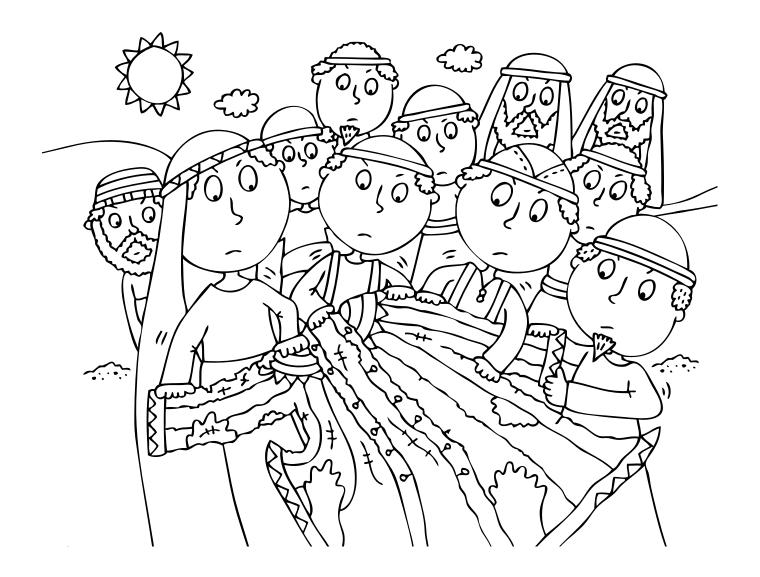




Joseph's brothers had gone to take care of their father's flocks. Joseph went to look for his brothers. But they saw him a long way off. Before he reached them, they made plans to kill him.

"Here comes that dreamer!" they said to one another.

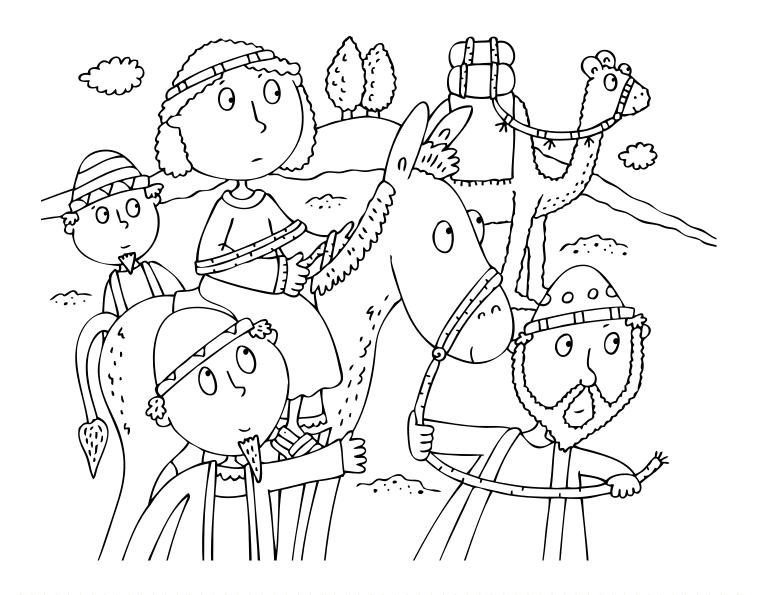
"Come. Let's kill him. Let's throw him into one of these empty wells. Let's say that a wild animal ate him up. Then we'll see whether his dreams will come true."



When Joseph came to his brothers, he was wearing his beautiful robe. They took it away from him. And they threw him into the well.

They saw some Ishmaelite traders coming from Gilead.

Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother? Let's sell him to these traders." Judah's brothers agreed with him.



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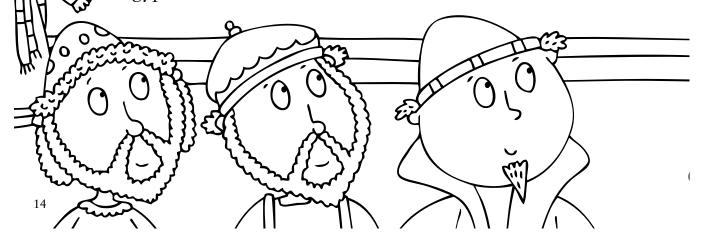
The traders sold Joseph to Potiphar in Egypt. Potiphar put Joseph in prison. While Joseph was there, the LORD was with him. He gave Joseph success in everything he did.

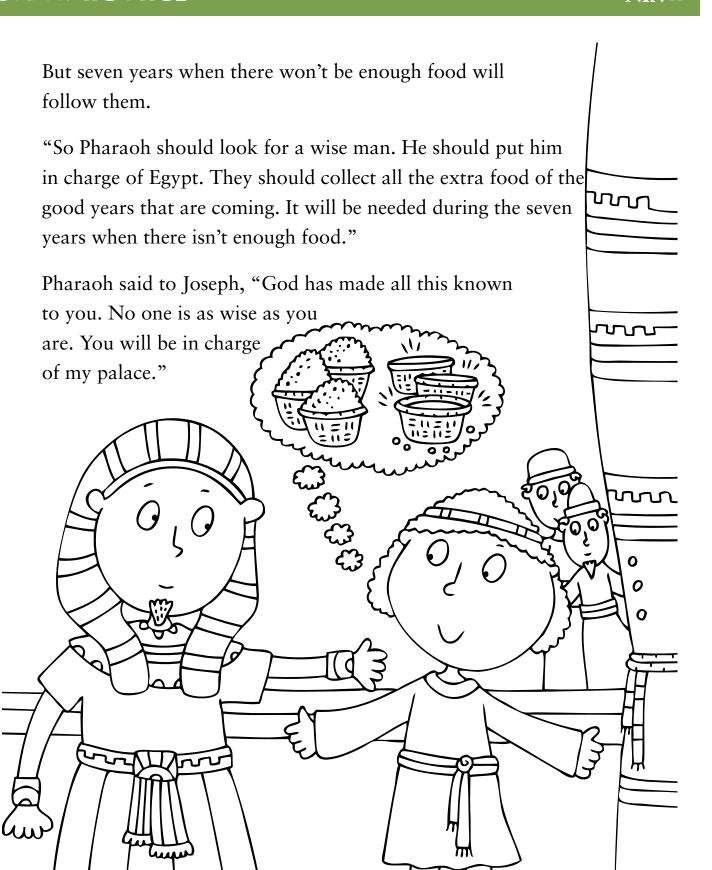
When years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream. In his dream, he was standing by the Nile River. Seven cows came up out of the river. They looked healthy and fat. After them, seven other cows came. They looked ugly and skinny. The ugly, skinny cows ate up the seven cows that looked healthy and fat. Then Pharaoh woke up.

In the morning no one could tell him what they meant. So Pharaoh sent for Joseph. He was quickly brought out of the prison. Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream. No one can tell me what it means. But I've heard that when you hear a dream you can explain it."

"I can't do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh. "But God will give Pharaoh the answer he wants."

Joseph said, "Seven years with plenty of food are coming to Egypt.





Joseph's brothers went down to Egypt to buy grain there. There wasn't enough food in the land of Canaan. Joseph was the governor of the land. He was the one who sold grain to all its people. When Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph!" But his brothers were afraid of him.

Joseph said, "Come close to me." So they did. Then he said, "I am your brother Joseph. I'm the one you sold into Egypt. But don't be upset. God sent me ahead of you to save many lives."

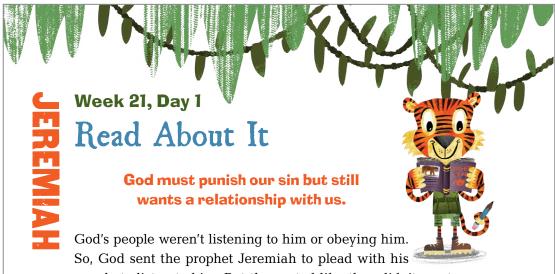


Joseph kissed all his brothers and wept over them. After that, his brothers talked with him.

The news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come. Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'Load your animals. Return to the land of Canaan. Bring your father and your families back to me. I'll give you the best land in Egypt. You can enjoy all the good things in the land."



Jeremiah was a prophet who was sent to warn God's people to turn away from their sin and to ask for forgiveness. This section includes a devotional and activities to remind us of Jeremiah's message to repent and seek God's forgiveness so that we can strengthen our relationship with him.



So, God sent the prophet Jeremiah to plead with his people to listen to him. But they acted like they didn't want anything to do with God! This made God very, very sad. He loved his people. He had shown them how to have the best life possible. But they just didn't want to listen to him anymore. So, God had to punish his people. He sent Jeremiah to tell them the bad news. God was going to bring the Babylonians to attack his people. God's people were going to be taken away to a different land. Life was going to be hard for them.

Jeremiah told them that it didn't have to be that way! There was still time for them to come back to God. But they *still* didn't listen to Jeremiah! They didn't think God would punish their sin. So, they left God no choice. He sent the Babylonians against them. The Babylonians won the battle over them and took them to a land far away.

Did a parent or teacher ever tell you not to do something because it was wrong? Did you refuse to listen to them? How did things turn out?

128



# Week 21, Day 2 Think About It

The prophet Jeremiah talks a lot about our relationship with God. But most of the time he uses a different word than "relationship." This other word means an *official* relationship. It is a relationship that is very, very important to God. See if you can discover that word by unscrambling the letters below.

# TOVCNEAN

Did you solve the puzzle? If not, here's a hint for you. The word is found four times in Jeremiah 31:31–33.



**VICENTIAL** COVENANT

# JEREMIA!

# Week 21, Day 3

# Finding Jesus in Jeremiah

God knew that people would always have a hard time doing what is right. So, God sent the prophet Jeremiah to make a promise to his people. God promised he would provide a perfect human being who would always do what was right. And all the right things that perfect person did would count for everyone who believed in him. That way, God could have that relationship with us that he always wanted. This was really good news!

God sent his own Son, Jesus, to be that perfect person! Jesus always did what was right. And all the right things he did count for everyone who believes in him. Everyone who believes in Jesus can be sure God loves them. In fact, God considers everyone who believes in Jesus to be a member of his family. He calls them his children. That's what the apostle John says in his gospel. Here is what John 1:12 says about Jesus. "Some people did accept him and did believe in his name. He gave them the right to become children of God."

Have you asked Jesus to forgive your sins? Have you asked Jesus to make you a member of his family? If you have, write about when and how that happened.



# **JEREM!AH**

# Week 21, Day 4 Write About It

ing can break. Sin keeps your relationship with God from being everything it can be. But not even sin can break your relationship with God. You are a child of God forever! Write how that makes you feel.

God will always forgive your sin when you ask him to. But sometimes you might not forgive yourself when you sin. Sometimes you might not forgive other people either. They might even have told you they're sorry. Think about some reasons why it might be hard to forgive yourself and other people. Write them here.

God sent Jesus so he could have a relationship with you that noth-





Dear God,

Thank you for loving me so much that you sent your own Son to save me. He gives me a relationship with you that can never be broken! You have forgiven my sins because I trust in Jesus. I am so happy you have made me your child! Help me forgive myself and other people the way you have forgiven me. Help me to love you as much as you love me. Then I'll have the wonderful life that you want for me. I ask you for these things because I believe in Jesus. Amen.

God forgives you! But that doesn't mean you don't have to do some work when you've done something wrong. Keep the chart below handy for the next time you do something wrong. Follow the steps to make things right again. Remember, it's just as important to forgive others as it is to ask for forgiveness.

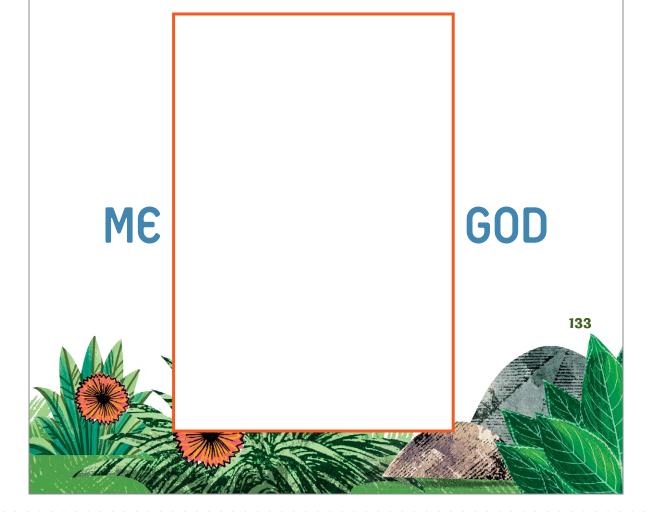


# **JEREMIAH**

# Week 21, Day 6

# Do Something About It

Jeremiah tells us about the special relationship God wants with us. Jesus makes that special relationship with God possible. But we still have to be careful to not let anything come between us and God. Our sins come between us and God. In the space below draw or glue pictures of things that represent your sins. Maybe you could find a photo of people talking together to represent gossip. Or find a picture of money to represent wanting something too much. When you are done, write JESUS across your pictures. This will show you that Jesus keeps those things from separating you from God!



This activity helps us understand how God washes away our sins through Jesus. When we accept Jesus as our Savior and confess our sins, God cleanses our hearts so that we can be with him forever.

# **CLEAN AS A PENNY**

## STUFF YOU NEED:

- Dirty pennies
- Small container
- Spoon
- Vinegar (1/2 cup)
- Salt (tablespoon)
- Strainer
- Large bowl

# **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- 1. Mix ½ cup vinegar with a tablespoon of salt in a small container. Stir until the salt is dissolved.
- 2. Give your child a few dirty pennies.
- 3. Have them place the penny in the vinegar solution. As they put the penny in the solution, encourage them to think about a couple of things they have done wrong over the last week. (i.e. said something mean to another person, disobeyed their parents, fought with a sibling or friend, etc.)
- 4. After all of the pennies are in the vinegar solution, wait five minutes.
- 5. Then pour the solution through a strainer into a large bowl and rinse with clean water.
- 6. Let your child keep their clean penny to remember the lesson. (If you are doing this with more than one child, mark the pennies with a different color per child using a permanent marker before putting them into the vinegar solution.)
- 7. Talk about how God's forgiveness makes our hearts clean.

This activity reminds us that we must rely on God in order for us to be forgiven and cleansed of our sins.

# **SPOT SCRUBBERS**

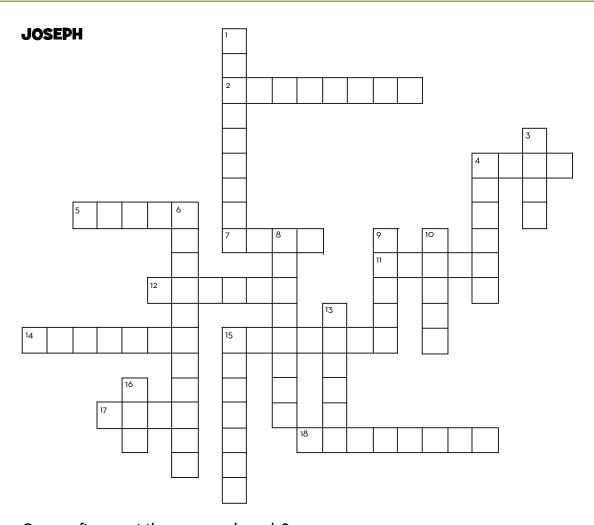
## STUFF YOU NEED:

- Washable or dry-erase markers
- Tub of water (or the bathroom sink)
- Soap
- Disinfectant wipes
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- 1. Share that sometimes when we sin, we try to get rid of the problem ourselves. But what we really need is God to make us clean.
- 2. Have children use markers to write or draw on their palms. They can write something that represents a sin, or they can just make a spot.
- 3. Have them try three different methods of cleaning the spot and see which one works best: soap and water, disinfectant wipe, or scrubbing with toothpaste and brush (the abrasive in the toothpaste helps clean).
- 4. Once they are done cleaning their hands, have the following discussion:
  - a. Tell me about a time you were sorry. What happened?
  - b. Why do you think God wants us to be sorry when we do something wrong?
  - c. Tell them that no matter how sorry we are, we're going to mess up again. every time we mess up, God is ready to forgive us again.

This crossword puzzle reminds us of what happened to Joseph and how he forgave his brothers.



# Can you figure out the crossword puzzle?

ACRO	SS
2.	One of Pharaoh's officials, named,
	bought Joseph when he arrived in Egypt (Gensis 37).
4.	During the seven years when there were good crops,
	Joseph stored in the cities (Genesis 41).
5.	Joseph's brothers bought some grain in Egypt and
	carried it home in (Genesis 42).
7.	Joseph's father gave him an ornate (Genesis 37).
11.	Pharaoh's second dream was about heads of, seven
	good ones and seven withered ones (Genesis 41).
12.	Joseph was wrongly accused of a crime and put into
	(Genesis 39).
14.	The ruler of Egypt, who was called, had two
	dreams that troubled him (Genesis 41).
15.	Pharaoh put Joseph in charge and had him ride in a
	chariot (Genesis 41).
17.	Pharaoh's first dream was about, seven fat ones and
	seven skinny ones (Genesis 41).
18.	Joseph's were jealous of him and hated him
	(Genesis 37).

DOW	N
1.	The man who was a dreamed of a vine and some
	grapes (Genesis 40).
3.	Joseph forgave his brothers and told them, "You
	intended to harm me, but God intended it for"
	(Genesis 50).
4.	Joseph said that the dreams meant there was going to
	be a (Genesis 41).
6.	When the famine came, Joseph opened the
	and sold grain to the people (Genesis 41).
8.	The silver cup was found in the sack that belonged to
	(Genesis 44).
9.	The people who bought Joseph from his brothers took him to
	(Genesis 37).
10.	The man who was a dreamed of some birds eating
	bread (Genesis 40).
13.	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
	(Genesis 37).
15.	When Joseph went to see his brothers, they threw him in a
	(Genesis 37).
16	losenh said he couldn't tell what Dharach's dreams meant hu

\_ would (Genesis 41).

Answer key for crossword puzzle.

# **JOSEPH**

Answer key

