

LEARNING FORGIVENESS

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.



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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*.

Matthew 18

1145

Did You Know?

How are little children important?

18:4 Jesus asked a little child to come to him. The child came right away to stand beside Jesus. The adults that Jesus preached to did not obey him as well as the little child did. Obey Jesus. Then you'll be an important person in God's eyes.



because of the things that lead people to sin! Things like that must come. But how terrible for those who cause them!

⁸"If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It would be better for you to enter the kingdom of heaven with only one hand or one foot than to go into hell with two hands and two feet. In hell the fire burns forever. ⁹If your eye causes you to sin, poke it out and throw it away. It would be better for you to enter the kingdom of heaven with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

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

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

¹⁵"If your brother sins against you, go to him. Tell him what he did wrong. Keep it between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won him back.

¹⁶"But what if he won't listen to you? Then take one or two others with you. Scripture says, 'Every matter must be proved by the words of two or three witnesses.' (*Deuteronomy 19:15*) ¹⁷But what if he also refuses to listen to the witnesses? Then tell it to the church. And what if he refuses to listen even to the church? Then don't treat him as your brother. Treat him as you would treat an ungodly person or a tax collector.

¹⁸"What I'm about to tell you is true. What you lock on earth will be locked in heaven. What you unlock on earth will be unlocked in heaven.

¹⁹"Again, here is what I tell you. Suppose two of you on earth agree about anything

End
Reading
Here

Start
Reading
Here

God's Not Mad at Me!

Read Matthew 18:10-14. When this story talks about a shepherd 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.

Live It!

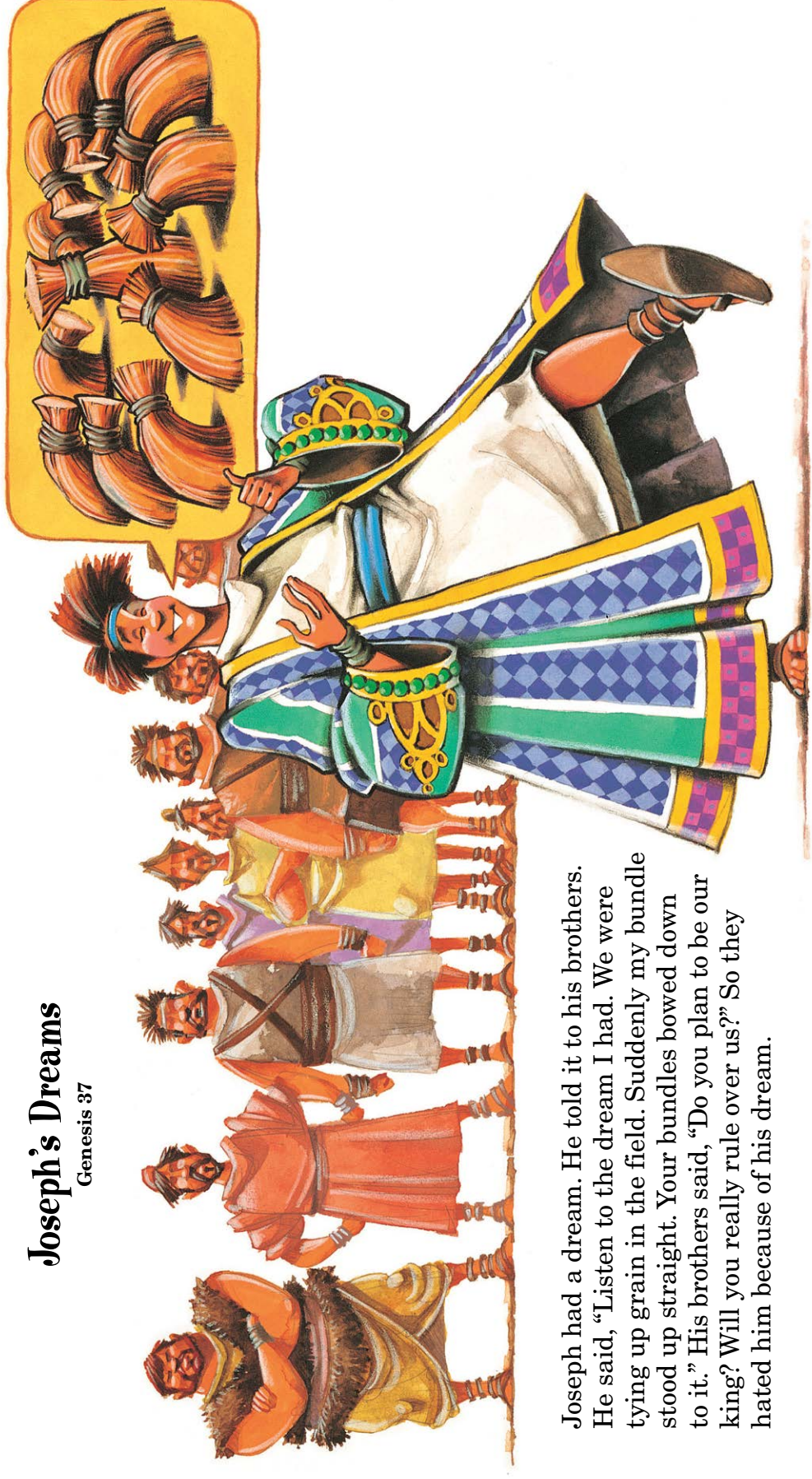
Matthew 18:10-14



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

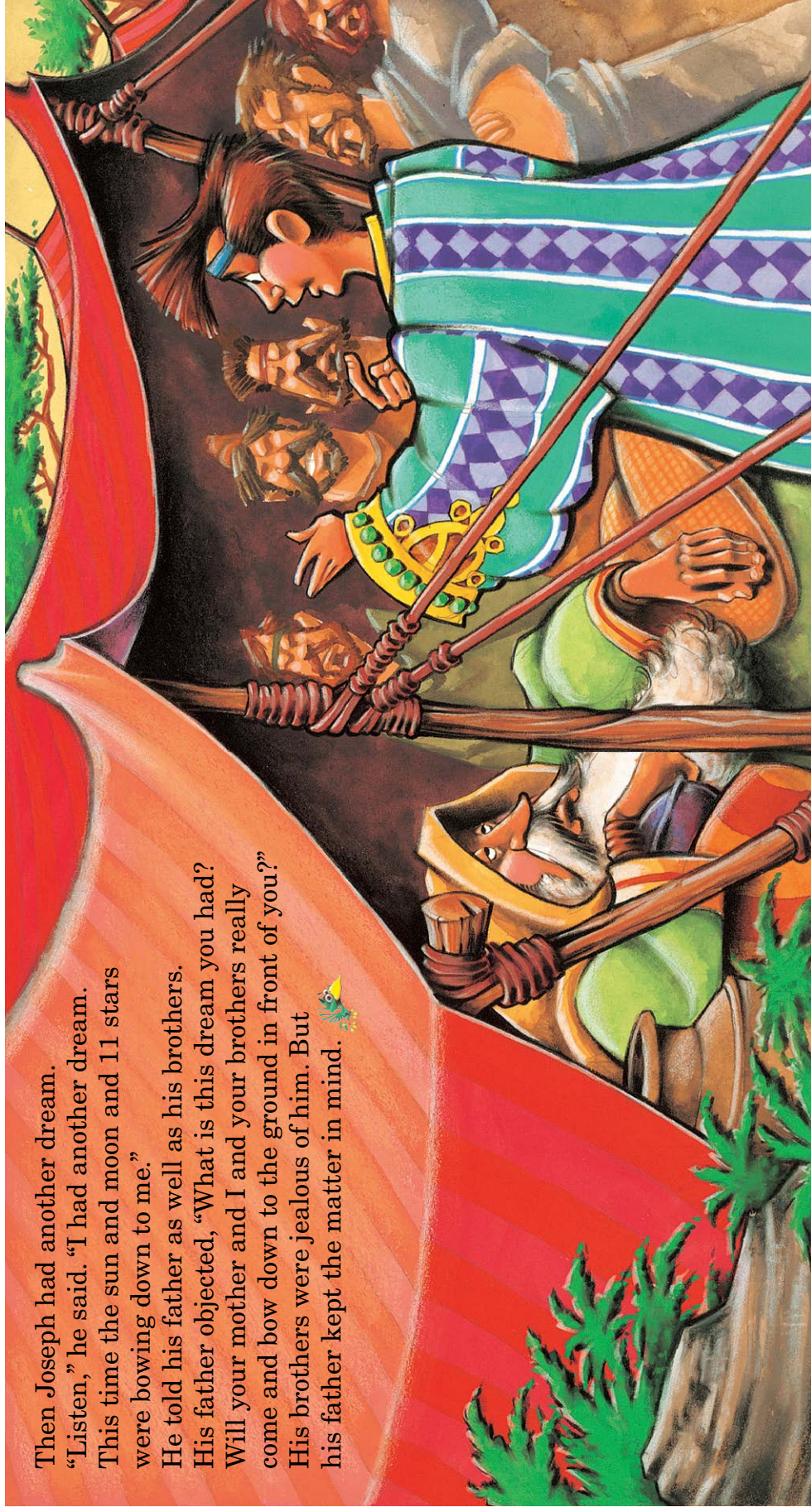
Joseph's Dreams

Genesis 37



Joseph had a dream. He told it to his brothers. He said, "Listen to the dream I had. We were tying up grain in the field. Suddenly my bundle stood up straight. Your bundles bowed down to it." His brothers said, "Do you plan to be our king? Will you really rule over us?" So they hated him because of his dream.

Then Joseph had another dream.
“Listen,” he said. “I had another dream.
This time the sun and moon and 11 stars
were bowing down to me.”
He told his father as well as his brothers.
His father objected, “What is this dream you had?
Will your mother and I and your brothers really
come and bow down to the ground in front of you?”
His brothers were jealous of him. But
his father kept the matter in mind. 🦋



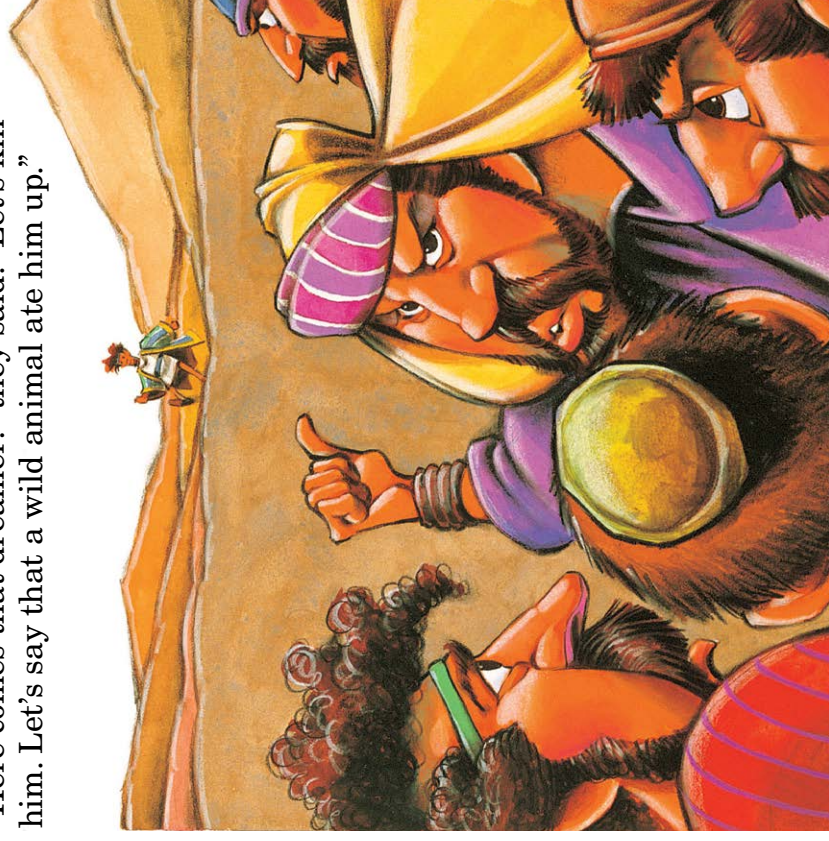
The Brothers Sell Joseph

Genesis 37

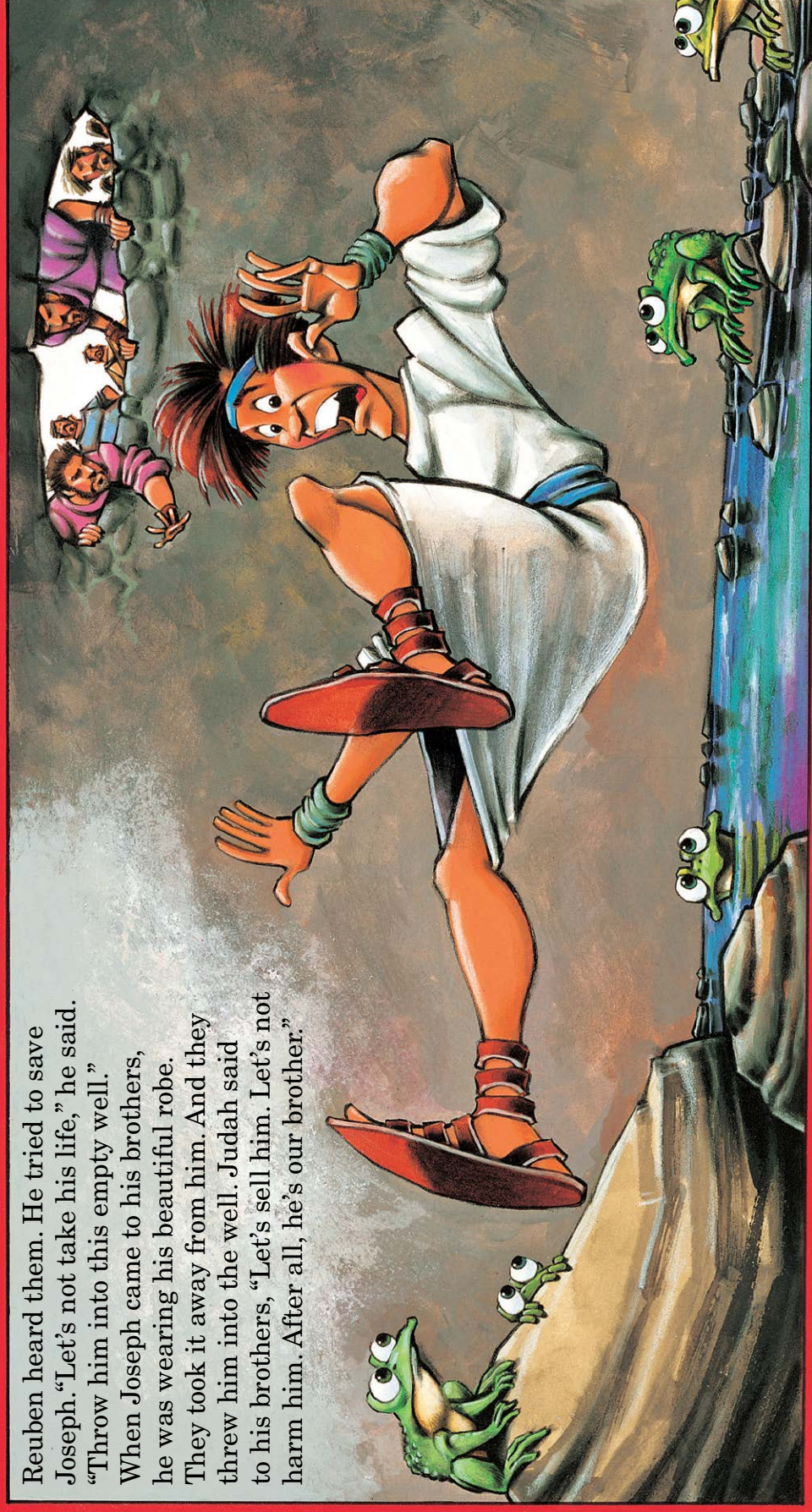


Joseph's brothers had gone to take care of their father's flocks near Shechem. Jacob said to Joseph, "Go to your brothers. See how they are doing. See how the flocks are." So

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."



Reuben heard them. He tried to save Joseph. "Let's not take his life," he said. "Throw him into this empty well." 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. Judah said to his brothers, "Let's sell him. Let's not harm him. After all, he's our brother."





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.



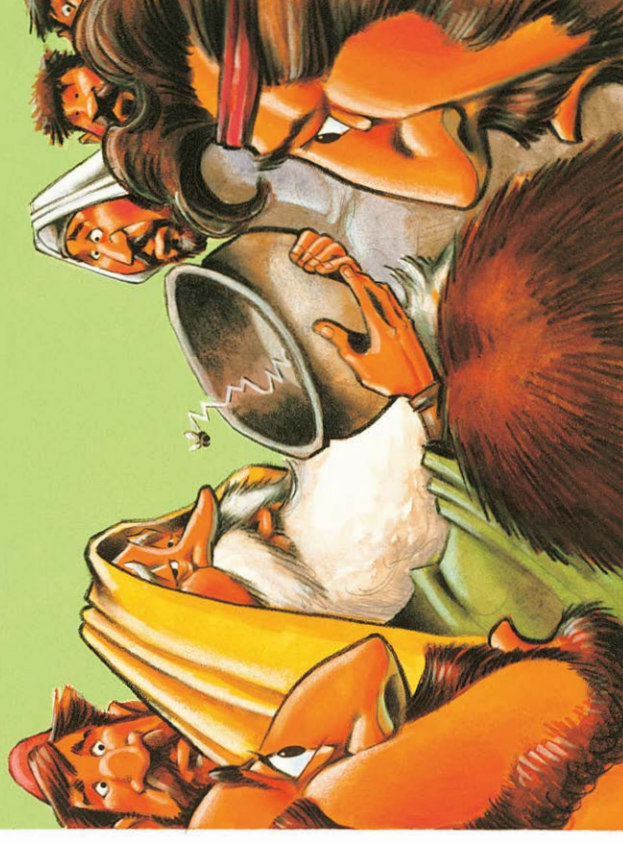
But the traders sold Joseph
to Potiphar in Egypt.

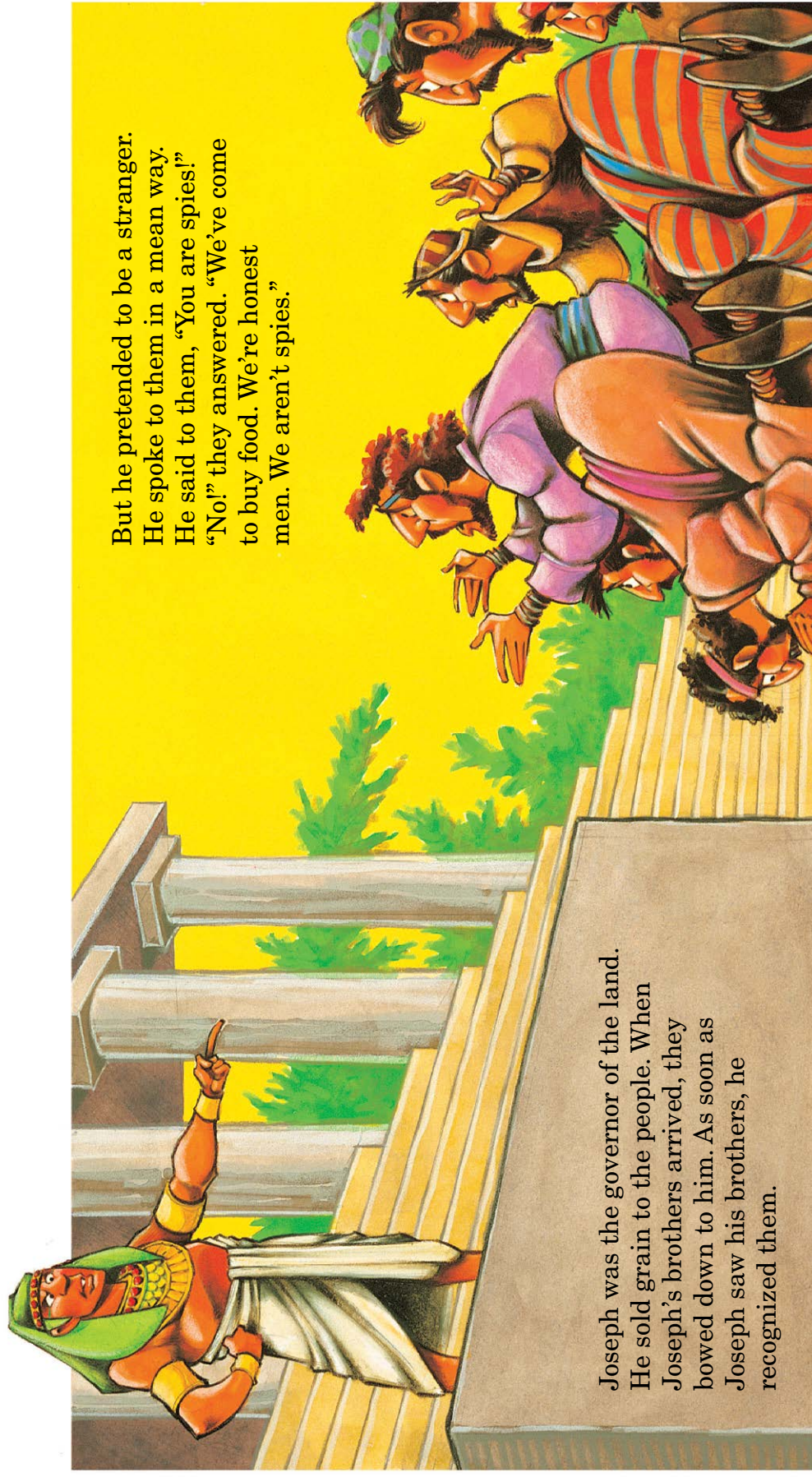


Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt

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.

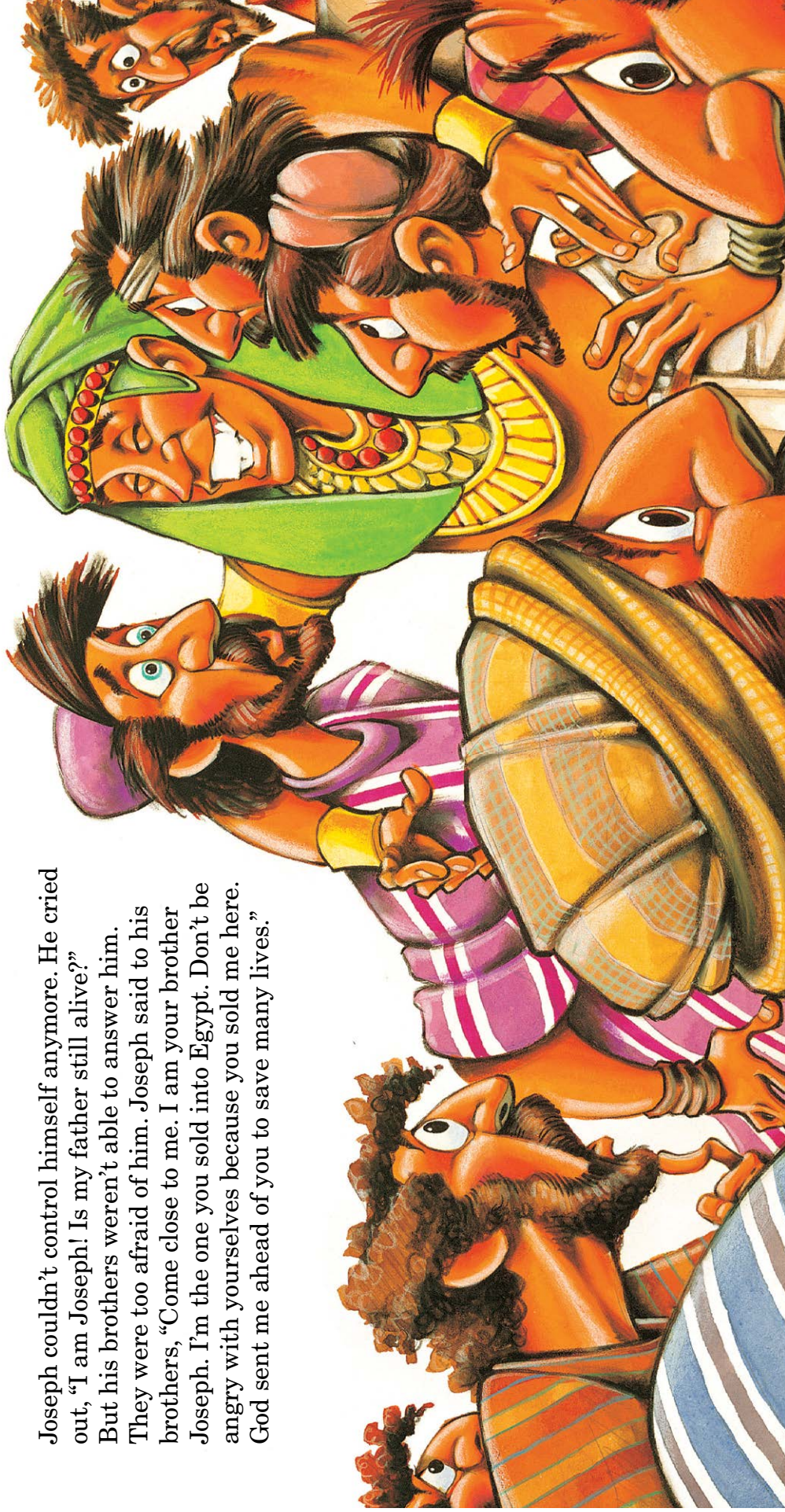


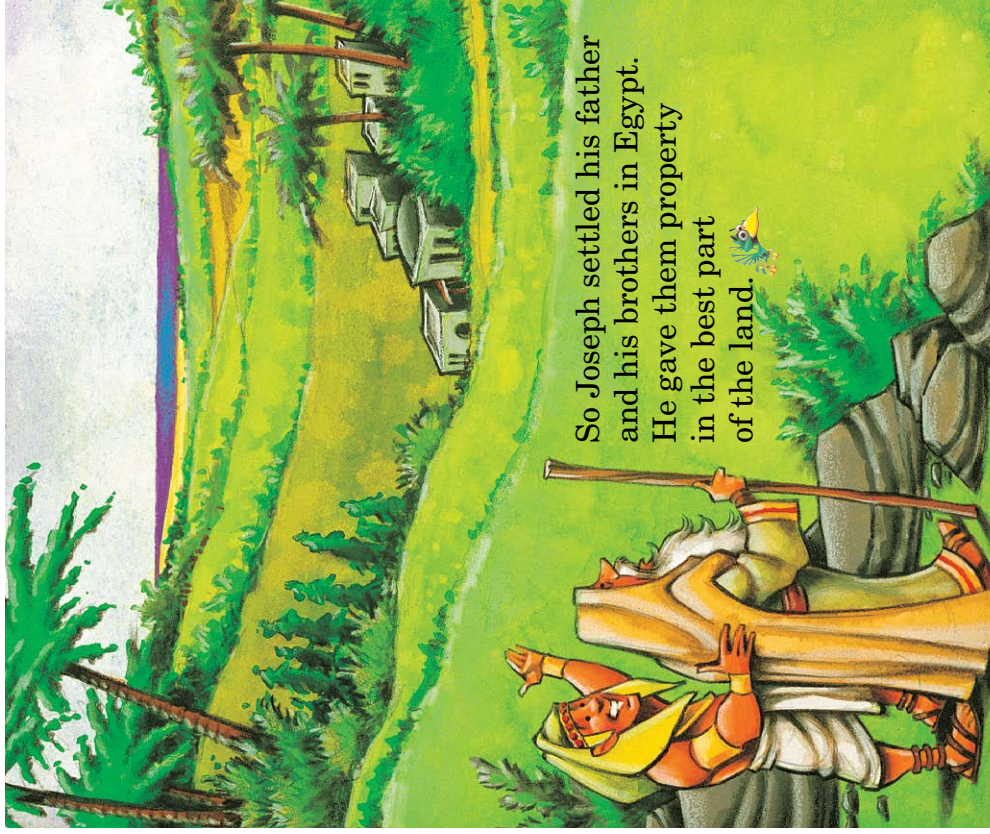


Joseph was the governor of the land. He sold grain to the people. When Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him. As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them.

But he pretended to be a stranger. He spoke to them in a mean way. He said to them, "You are spies!" "No!" they answered. "We've come to buy food. We're honest men. We aren't spies."

Joseph couldn't control himself anymore. He cried out, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers weren't able to answer him. They were too afraid of him. Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me. I am your brother Joseph. I'm the one you sold into Egypt. Don't be angry with yourselves because you sold me here. God sent me ahead of you to save many lives."





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

FORGIVENESS

In the big story of the Bible, God shows us what it looks like to love unconditionally (which means nothing we do will ever change his love for 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.



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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

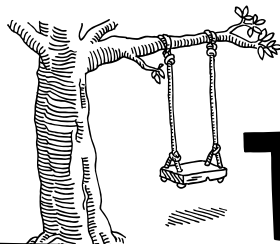
LUKE 23

went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. ⁵³Joseph 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. ⁵⁴It was Preparation Day. The Sabbath day was about to begin.

⁵⁵The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph. They saw the tomb and how Jesus' body was placed in it. ⁵⁶Then 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. ²They found the stone rolled away from it. ³When they entered the tomb, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴They were wondering about this. Suddenly two men in clothes as bright as lightning stood beside them. ⁵The women were terrified. They bowed down



THURSDAY

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.

ASK

YOURSELF

Have you ever forgiven someone? Why is forgiveness 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

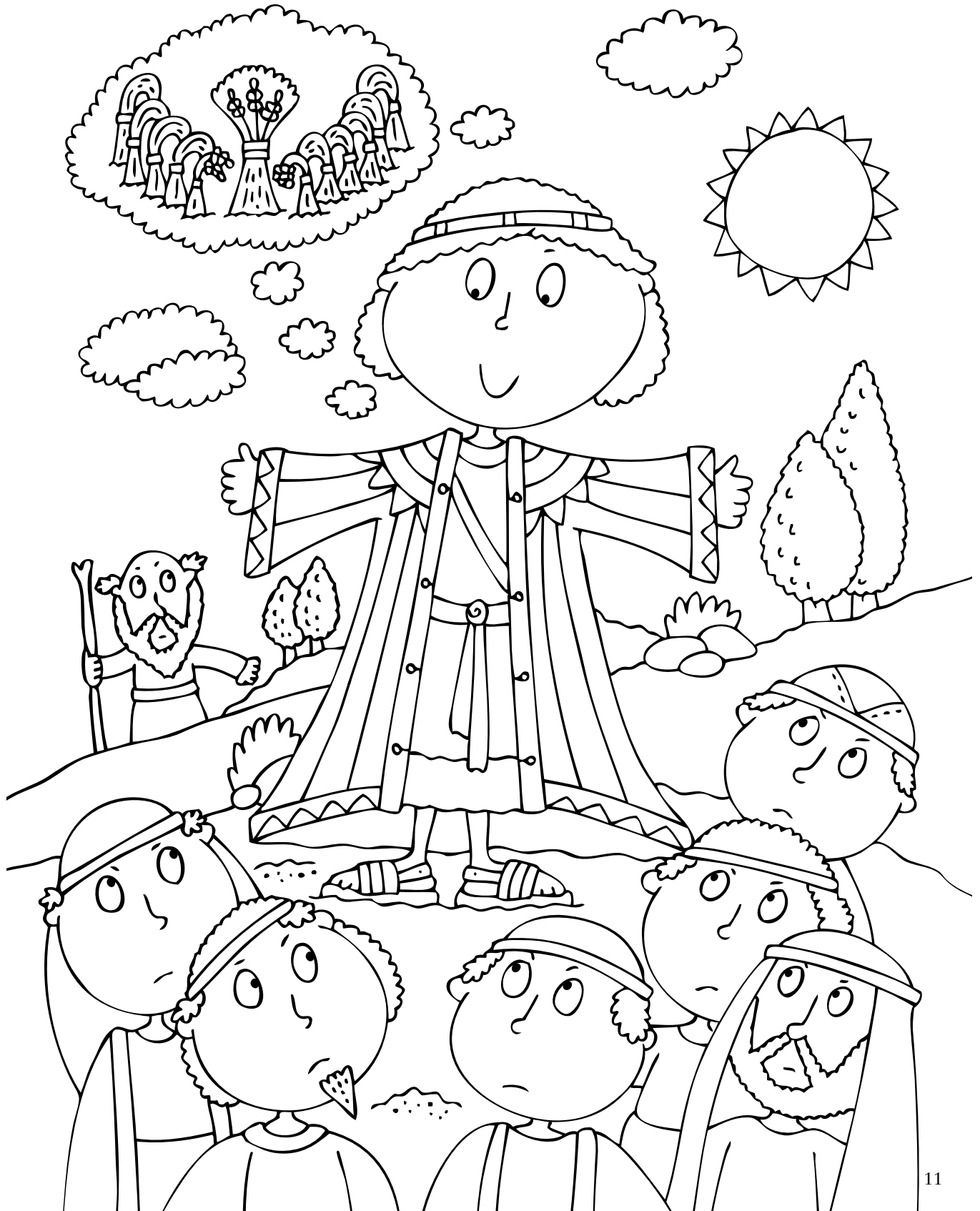
Joseph and the Colorful Robe

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.

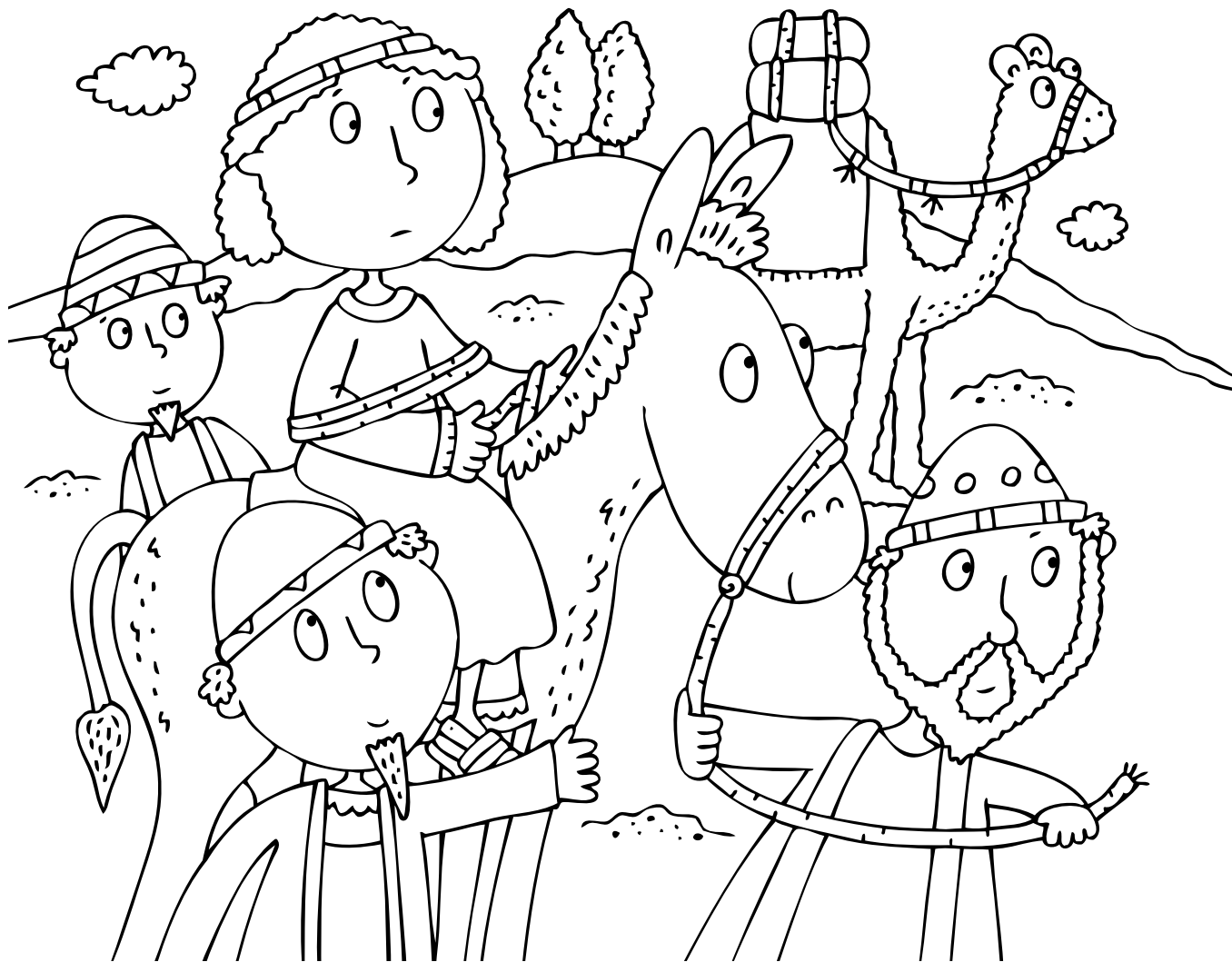
"Come. Let's kill him. Let's throw him into one of these empty wells. Let's say that a wild animal ate him up. Then we'll see whether his dreams will come true."



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.



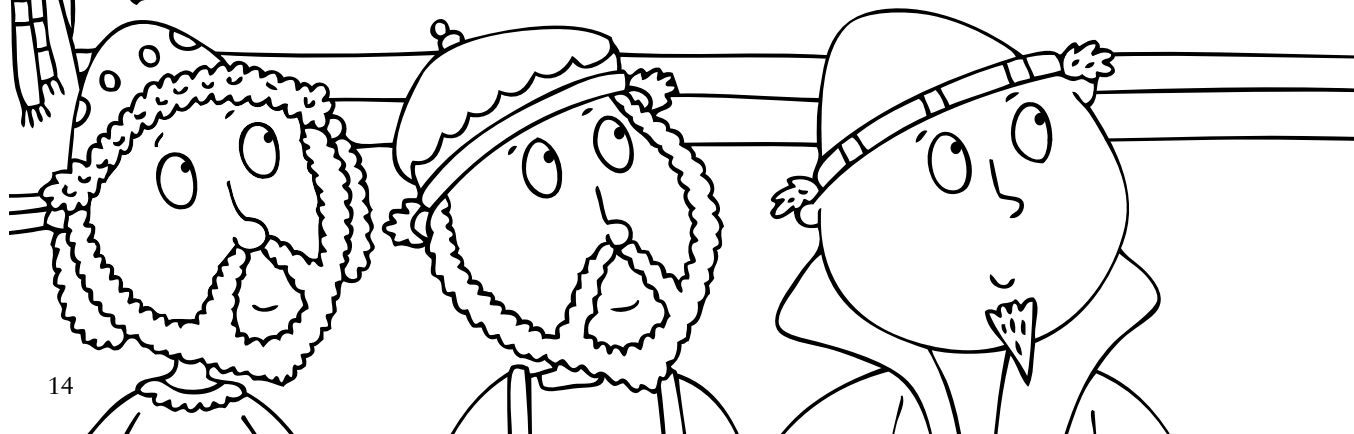
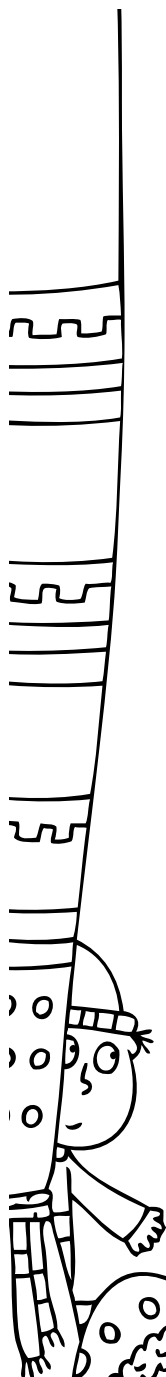
The traders sold Joseph to Potiphar in Egypt. Potiphar put Joseph in prison. While Joseph was there, the LORD was with him. He gave Joseph success in everything he did.

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.

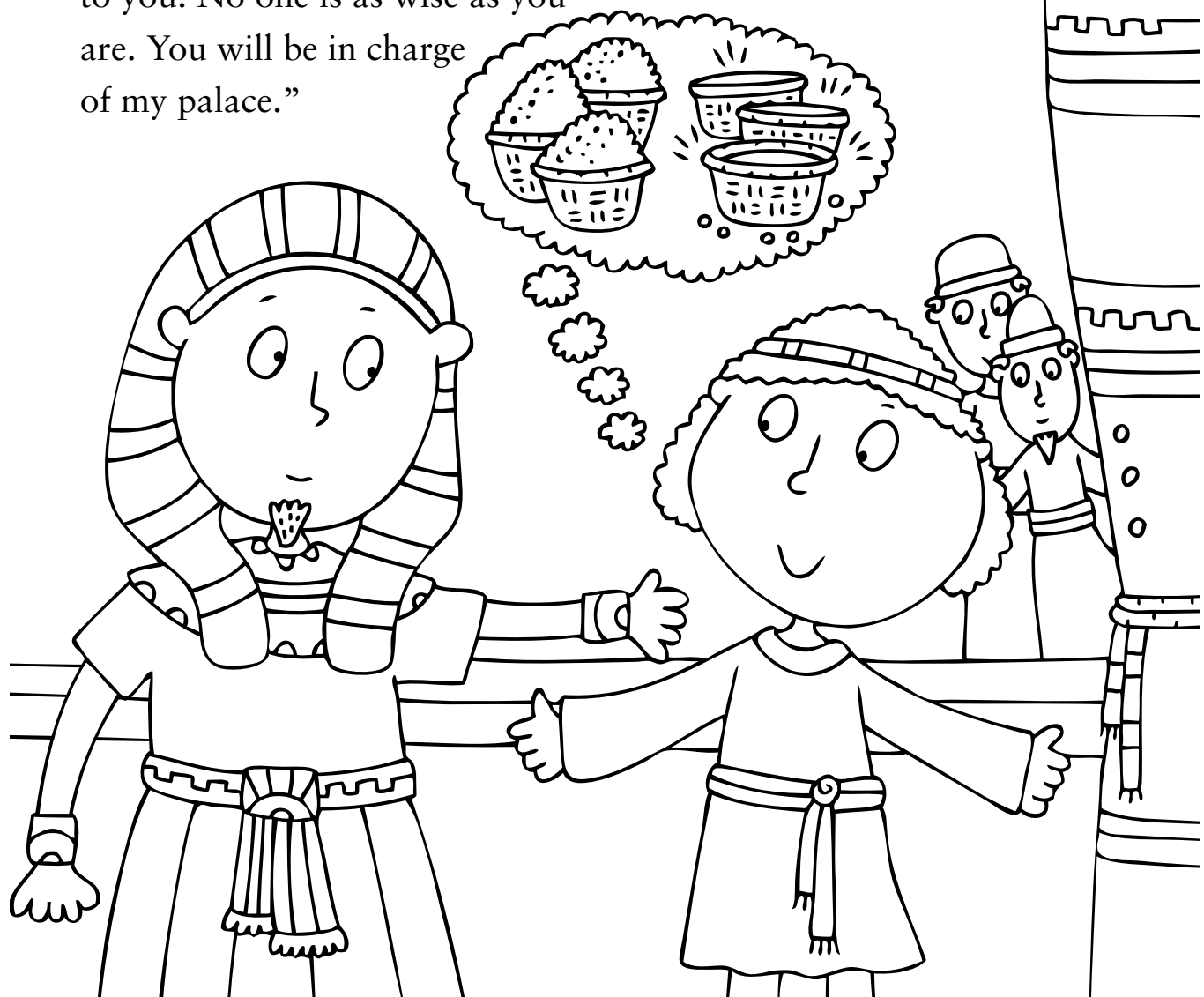


14

But seven years when there won't be enough food will follow them.

"So Pharaoh should look for a wise man. He should put him in charge of Egypt. They should collect all the extra food of the good years that are coming. It will be needed during the seven years when there isn't enough food."

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "God has made all this known to you. No one is as wise as you are. You will be in charge of my palace."



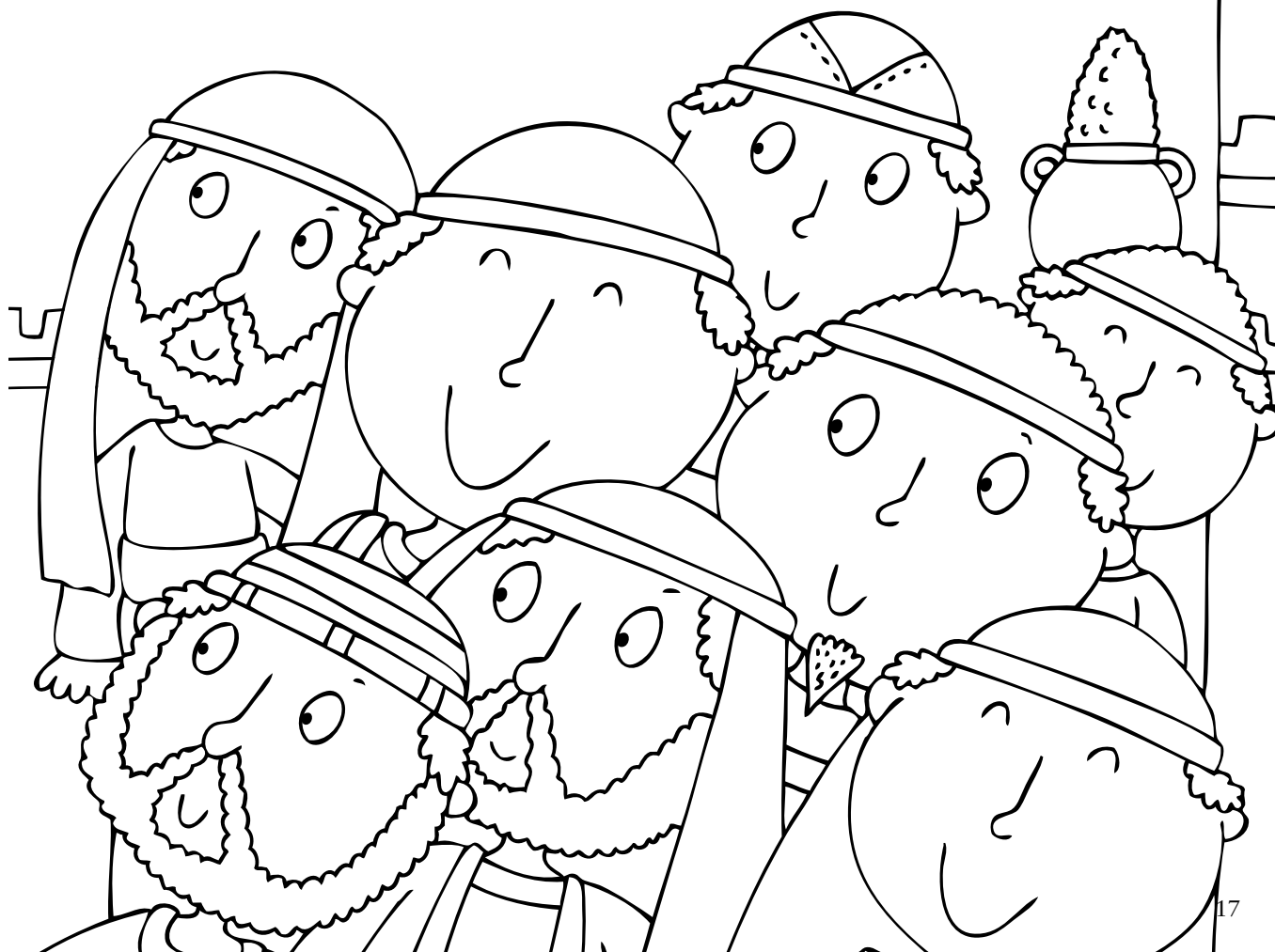
Joseph's brothers went down to Egypt to buy grain there. There wasn't enough food in the land of Canaan. Joseph was the governor of the land. He was the one who sold grain to all its people. When Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. Joseph said to his brothers,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



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:

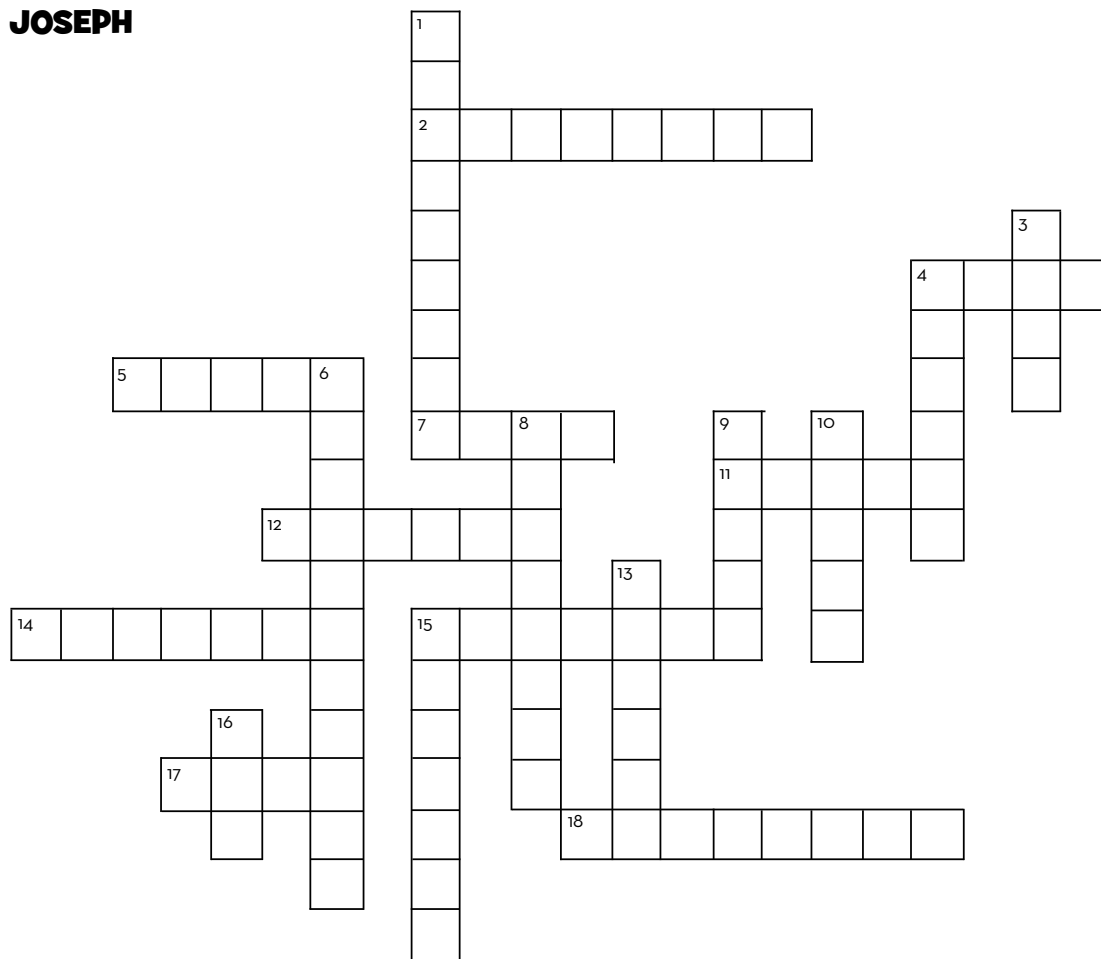
- Washable or dry-erase markers
- Tub of water (or the bathroom sink)
- Soap
- Disinfectant wipes
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste

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.

JOSEPH



Can you figure out the crossword puzzle?

ACROSS

2. One of Pharaoh's officials, named _____, bought Joseph when he arrived in Egypt (Genesis 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).

DOWN

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. Joseph was sold by his brothers for twenty pieces of _____ (Genesis 37).
15. When Joseph went to see his brothers, they threw him in a _____ (Genesis 37).
16. Joseph said he couldn't tell what Pharaoh's dreams meant, but _____ would (Genesis 41).

Answer key for crossword puzzle.

JOSEPH

Answer key

