

Joseph Forgives His Brothers

Lesson 17

Purpose To help each child have the desire to forgive others.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study:
 - Genesis 42:1–38—Jacob sends his sons to buy grain in Egypt. They bow before Joseph.
 - Genesis 43:1–34—Jacob sends Benjamin to Egypt.
 - Genesis 44:1–34—Joseph arranges to stop the return of his brothers to Canaan.
 - Genesis 45:1–19—Joseph makes himself known to his brothers, and they rejoice together.
2. Additional reading: Matthew 6:14–15 and Doctrine and Covenants 64:10.
3. Study the lesson and decide how you want to teach the children the scripture account (see “Preparing Your Lessons,” p. vi, and “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii). Select the discussion questions and enrichment activities that will best help the children achieve the purpose of the lesson.
4. Materials needed:
 - a. A Bible for each child.
 - b. A Doctrine and Covenants.
 - c. A piece of paper and a pencil for each child.
 - d. Picture 6-20, Joseph Forgiving His Brothers.

**Suggested
Lesson
Development**

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Attention Activity

Give the children each a piece of paper and a pencil, and have them write the numbers 1 through 5 down the left side of the paper. Explain that you are going to give them a quiz about forgiving. All the questions can be answered yes or no.

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 happens to someone you do not like?
3. Are you forgiving when you want to get even with someone who pushed or hit you?
4. Are you forgiving when you stop talking to someone who told lies about you?
5. Are you forgiving when you speak unkindly about the 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 was done.

Invite the children to briefly retell how Joseph's brothers sold him into Egypt (see lesson 15), and explain that this lesson is about how Joseph forgave his brothers for being unkind to him.

Scripture Account

Using the picture at an appropriate time, teach the children the account from the scriptures listed in the "Preparation" section. (For suggested ways to teach the scripture account, see "Teaching from the Scriptures," p. vii.) You might want to show portions of the video *Joseph and His Brothers* (53152) during the lesson.

Discussion and Application Questions

Study the following questions and the scripture references as you prepare your lesson. Use the questions you feel will best help the children understand the scriptures and apply the principles in their lives. Reading and discussing the scriptures with the children in class will help them gain personal insights.

- Why did Jacob send his sons to Egypt to buy corn? (Genesis 41:56–57; 42:1–2.) Which of Jacob's sons did not go? Why? (Genesis 42:3–4.)
- What prophetic dream did Joseph's brothers fulfill when they bowed down to him? (Genesis 37:7–8; 42:6.)
- Why did Joseph's brothers not recognize him? (Genesis 42:7–8, 23; it had been twenty-two years since they had seen Joseph. When they sold him into Egypt he was seventeen, and now he was a mature man. They didn't expect to ever see Joseph again, nor did they expect him to be the second most powerful man in Egypt. Also, he spoke to them in another language, communicating with them through an interpreter.)
- How did Joseph know that his brothers felt guilty about what they had done to him? (Genesis 42:21–23; remind the children that the brothers didn't know Joseph could understand what they were saying.) How can we get rid of feelings of guilt?
- What did Joseph tell his brothers they needed to do before he would sell grain to them? (Genesis 42:15–16, 20.)
- Why did Jacob not want Benjamin to go to Egypt? (Genesis 42:36, 38.) Why did Jacob finally agree to let Benjamin go with his brothers? (Genesis 43:1–4.)
- How did Joseph feel when he saw his brother Benjamin? (Genesis 43:29–30.) Why do you think Joseph felt especially close to Benjamin? (Joseph and Benjamin had the same mother.)
- What did Joseph do to prevent his brothers from returning to Canaan? (Genesis 44:1–5, 11–13.) Why do you think he did that?
- What did Judah do that showed he had repented and become a kinder, more caring person? (Genesis 43:8–9; 44:31–34; remind the children that it had been Judah's idea to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites.) What could you do to be kinder and more caring in your family?

- What benefits did Joseph realize had come because of his being sold into Egypt? (Genesis 45:5–8.) Point out that each time Joseph faced a difficult situation, he had a good attitude, and he turned a bad experience into a positive experience. What difficult situations do you face that you could turn into positive experiences?
- How did Joseph show that he had forgiven his brothers? (Genesis 45:9–11, 14–15.) How do you think he felt? How do you feel when you forgive someone who has been unkind? (See enrichment activity 1.) How do you feel when someone forgives you?
- Why do we all need to learn to forgive others? (Matthew 6:14–15; D&C 64:10.) (See enrichment activity 4.) Invite the children to share positive experiences they have had with forgiveness.

Enrichment Activities

You may use one or more of the following activities any time during the lesson or as a review, summary, or challenge.

1. Write words such as *angry*, *peaceful*, *happy*, *jealous*, *loving*, *unhappy*, *critical*, and *friendly* on separate slips of paper. Write the words *Forgiving* and *Unforgiving* on the chalkboard, and pass out the slips of paper to the children. Have the children take turns telling what their word is and putting it on the chalkboard under the word that it goes with.
2. Bring simple props such as robes and scarves and have the children role-play one part or several parts of the story of Joseph and his brothers.
3. Make a “medal” for each child. Attach a ribbon or string to it so it can be worn as a necklace. Read Matthew 6:14–15 with the children and discuss its meaning. Help them understand that if they forgive others, they will feel happier and Heavenly Father will forgive them of their wrongdoings. Ask the children to think of someone who has hurt their feelings. Challenge them to pray for that person and then do something kind for them. In the Olympics the best athletes receive medals for their performances. Spiritual performance is much more important than athletic performance, and each of us will be blessed by forgiving those who offend us. As each child accepts the challenge to return kindness for an unkind deed, give her or him a “medal” as a reminder of what the child promised to do.



4. Talk with the children about forgiveness. You may wish to bring a bag and some rocks, books, or other heavy items. Have a child hold the bag as you put each rock in. Explain that each rock represents an angry or hurt feeling. Have the child walk around the room or just hold the bag for a while. Explain that when we keep our angry and hurt feelings, they become burdens to us. If we can forgive others, our burden will be gone and we will feel better. (Take the rocks out.) Emphasize that people are more important than problems. It is important to forgive others and continue to love and care about them. Encourage the children to be as forgiving as Joseph was to his brothers.

Suggest that the children share this activity with their families. Encourage them to discuss how keeping angry or hurt feelings is like carrying around a bag of heavy rocks.
5. Write *Doctrine and Covenants 64:10* on the chalkboard; then read it and discuss it with the children. Explain that when we are full of angry feelings toward others, we cannot have the Holy Ghost to be with us. Heavenly Father wants us to forgive so we can be free of those angry feelings and enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost. Help the children memorize the scripture by having them recite it while you erase one word at a time.
6. Sing or read the words to the first verse of “Help Me, Dear Father” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 99).

Conclusion

Testimony	Share your testimony about the importance of forgiving others. You may want to describe the peace you have felt after you were able to forgive someone.
Suggested Family Sharing	Encourage the children to share with their families a specific part of the lesson, such as a story, question, or activity, or to read with their families the “Suggested Home Reading.”
Suggested Home Reading	Suggest that the children study Genesis 45:1–8 at home as a review of this lesson. Invite a child to give the closing prayer.