

## Lesson #22

Hebrews 11:20-31, Genesis 37, 39-50

April 8, 2015

We learn a lot about faith and the faithfulness of God from people in the Bible. Today we are going to learn about Joseph. *Write a simple family tree diagram on the board. Start with Abraham, then underneath his name, Isaac, then Jacob. Under Jacob's name, write Joseph and circle it. Let the kids know that these men were all related to one another and though they weren't perfect, they followed after God.*

When Joseph was just a teenager, his brothers sold him into slavery. (They were jealous because Jacob, their father, gave extra attention to Joseph in many ways, including giving him a special coat. To make matters worse, Joseph told his brothers about a dream he had that they would one day bow down to him and this made them angry.) Joseph served as a slave for many years in the house of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. He was an honest and hard working slave, but trouble seemed to follow him. One day he was accused of something awful that he didn't do. Potiphar, his master, threw Joseph into prison for it and he stayed there for several years. But then, when Pharaoh had some disturbing dreams and no one could figure out what they meant, Joseph was brought before the king to help. God gave him the wisdom to understand what Pharaoh's dream meant: Egypt would have seven good years when there would be plenty for the people to eat, but then they would have seven bad years when food would not grow. Pharaoh was thankful for Joseph's help and he could tell that Joseph was wise so he released him from prison and put him in charge of the food supply in Egypt! Joseph knew that God was with him.

Joseph did an amazing job of managing the food in Egypt. He had the people save some of their food during the good years so they had plenty to eat during the bad years. In the meantime, Joseph's father Jacob and his 11 brothers living in Canaan were not able to grow food and they were becoming hungry and worried. So, Jacob sent his sons to Egypt to try and buy food for their family. They had no idea that Joseph was the one they would have to go to for help! They didn't even know he was still alive. Many years had passed since they'd seen him so when they stood before him, they didn't recognize their brother Joseph. He was older, of course, but he was also not dressed as a slave, but as an Egyptian leader. They bowed

down to him to make their request. (Remember the dream he had when he was young? It came true! His brothers really did bow down to him.) After a while, Joseph revealed to his brothers who he was. They became frightened because they had been so cruel to him in the past and now he was a man of power. Would he throw them into prison or have them killed? No! Joseph didn't seek revenge. Instead, he showed God's love and forgiveness to his brothers. He told them, "Don't be afraid...you intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done; the saving of many lives." (Genesis 50:19&20) The brothers went home to tell their father Jacob that Joseph was alive! Then, they returned with their father and their whole family to live in Egypt to be near Joseph. Over the years, Egypt became full of Israelites.

During his life Joseph trusted the Lord even when difficult things happened. He served God faithfully and God blessed and honored him. When Joseph became very old, just before he was about to die, he told his people, the Israelites, that they would be leaving Egypt. God had revealed this to him and through faith he believed it:

**“It was by faith that Joseph, when he was about to die, said confidently that the people of Israel would leave Egypt. He even commanded them to take his bones with them when they left.” Hebrews 11:22.**

(And they did just that! All Joseph's brothers had died before the great exodus out of Egypt, but Moses himself carried Joseph's bones across the Red Sea according to Exodus 13:19.)

Grow at Home #22  
Hebrews 11:20-31, Genesis 37, 39-50  
April 8, 2015

Today the children learned these God facts:

- Joseph trusted the Lord even in difficult times
- God was faithful to Joseph and blessed him

**Live It Out:** The life of Joseph is an exciting story for sure, but it also gives us a lesson on faithfulness. Joseph trusted the Lord even when he was sold into slavery, thrown into prison and given challenging tasks to perform. And the Lord was faithful to Joseph and his family. God honored and protected Joseph and used him to bless many people.

Re-read the story or a part of Joseph's story to your child (read from a children's bible). Together identify the various ways that Joseph trusted and honored God (i.e. he worked hard and was faithful to his master) and how God blessed him (i.e. even his prison guard was pleased with him and put him in charge of the prisoners). Then, identify some ways you and your child can be faithful to God. Together, thank God for the ways he has blessed your child and your family.

As a reminder of Joseph and God's faithfulness, ask your child to draw a picture of a scene from Joseph's life, like his coat of many colors or him forgiving his brothers.

**Prayer:** Help us to be like Joseph and trust you even in difficult situations. Thank you that you are always with us and always faithful to us—just like you were for Joseph.

**Bible Verse:** “It was *by faith* that Joseph, when he was about to die, said confidently that the people of Israel would leave Egypt...” Heb. 11:22a