

General Church Education



The Famine Begins

Genesis 42:1-28

Lesson 16

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 2: The Lord Is Our Shepherd

For ages 7-8 years

The Famine Begins

Genesis 42:1-28

Ideas for Parents & Teachers

The story of Joseph as ruler in Egypt gives insight as to how the Lord leads and protects us during our earthly life. Joseph recognized his brothers as they bowed before him seeking food, but they did not know who he was. Joseph spoke roughly to them and accused them of being spies. The brothers did not understand why these things were happening. They were afraid as they remembered the things they had done that might have caused these events. They remembered how badly they had treated Joseph.

Joseph had long ago forgiven his brothers, but it was important for them to realize what a wicked thing they had done. It is similar with us. The Lord constantly seeks to forgive us, but we must be willing to face whatever evil we have done and repent of it. Until we acknowledge our wrong, pray to the Lord for help, and mend our ways, forgiveness will elude us.

Ideas for Children

- The Lord leads and protects us in good times and bad.
- The Lord always forgives us, but we must acknowledge and reject our sins in order to *receive* His forgiveness.
- Repentance is not only being sorry for the wrong we have done, but also trying not to do that evil again.

From the Writings

How is one to repent? By examining oneself, recognizing and acknowledging one's sins, praying to the Lord, and starting a new life. Repentance is impossible without self-examination. Self-examination enables us to recognize our sins, acknowledge their presence in us, confess them before the Lord, appeal for His help and start a new life, which is the goal. This is real repentance.

This is the way we need to develop and act once we have left childhood behind, and more and more as we become our own master and know our own mind.... The Ten Commandments are simply instructions not to do evil deeds, and unless one puts them away by repentance, one cannot love the neighbor, much less love God. Yet on these two commandments the Law and the Prophets depend, and consequently so too does one's salvation. If real repentance is practiced from time to time, in fact as often as one prepares oneself to partake of the Holy Supper, and if one thereafter refrains from one or two sins one caught oneself committing, this is enough to start the process of making it real. Anyone at that point is on the way to heaven, for that is when a person begins to become spiritual instead of natural, and to be born anew under the Lord's guidance. See *True Christian Religion* 530

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Pharaoh had dreamed two very strange dreams (Genesis 41:1-36). In one dream Pharaoh saw seven fat, healthy cows come up out of the Nile River. Then seven thin, sickly cows came up out of the river and ate up the seven fat, healthy cows. In the second dream Pharaoh saw seven plump and good heads of grain come up on one stalk. Then he saw seven thin heads of grain come up and eat the seven good heads of grain.

These two strange dreams troubled Pharaoh. You remember that Pharaoh could find no one to tell him the meaning of the dreams and give his mind peace until Joseph. The Lord showed Joseph that both dreams had the same meaning. For seven years there would be plenty of food—a fat, healthy time. Then, there would follow seven years in which there would be very little food—a thin, sickly time. In other words, there would be seven years of famine.

Joseph also gave Pharaoh good advice about storing up food during the good years in order to get through the lean years. So, Joseph seemed the wisest man to put in charge of the country. That is why he was made ruler second only to Pharaoh himself.



Joseph Rules Egypt

Seven years of plenty passed during which Joseph saw that large amounts of food were stored away. Then the seven years of famine began. The crops were poor over the whole area, not just in Egypt. Back in Canaan, Joseph's homeland, there was not enough food for the people to eat either. One day Jacob decided the family needed to get food from Egypt. Let's see who he sent to get it.

Read Genesis 42:1-5. Who went to buy grain? (Joseph's ten older brothers.)

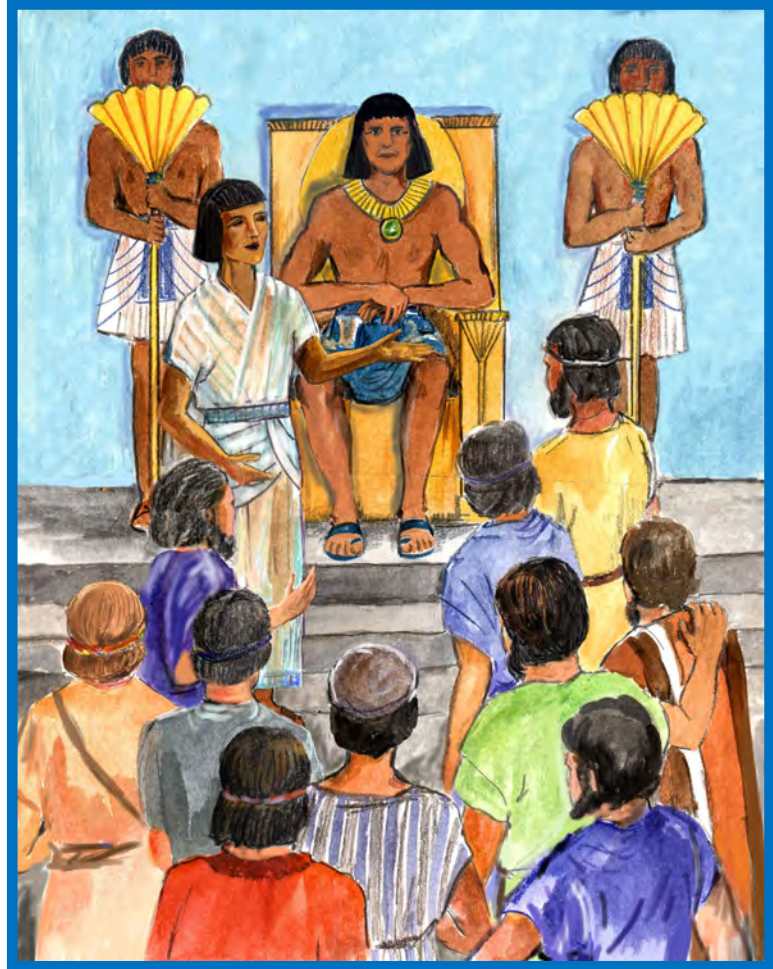
Why didn't Benjamin go with them? (Jacob was afraid that harm might come to him and kept him at home.)

It had been many years since Joseph's brothers sold him into

slavery. Do you think they will recognize each other now?

Read Genesis 42:6-8. Why do you think the older brothers did not recognize Joseph? (He was grown up now, he was the ruler of Egypt, he dressed and spoke like an Egyptian.)

The brothers bowed down before Joseph and Joseph remembered the dreams he had about them so long ago. Joseph was glad to see his brothers even though they had not treated him well. He wanted to hear news about his father and his younger brother Benjamin. Joseph was also willing to give them food, but he did not tell them who he was just yet. He wanted to see Benjamin and had an idea of how to get him to Egypt with the others. Joseph spoke harshly to his brothers so that they would obey. Read on and find out what he asked them to do.



Read Genesis 42:9-28. What did Joseph want his brothers to do? (Bring Benjamin back to Egypt. Joseph told them not to come back without Benjamin.) Whom did Joseph keep in Egypt to make sure the brothers would bring Benjamin there? (Simeon.)

How did the brothers feel when they discovered their money in the grain sacks? (They knew it was not right, thought that they would be punished for it and were frightened.)

Joseph was not punishing his brothers. He understood why the Lord let them sell him into slavery. It was so he could become a great man in Egypt and save his family. Joseph had long ago forgiven his brothers for what they did. Do you think that Jacob will let Benjamin go with them next time?

Repentance

To repent means to think about something you have done wrong, then to be sorry for what you have done and to make up your mind that you will never do this thing again. Being sorry is not enough. Repentance means that you will ask the Lord for help and try hard not to do it again.

Everyone makes mistakes. There are times when each of us does something we wish we had not done and later we feel sorry about it. It is important to make up our mind to try not to do these things again.

Long ago Joseph's older brothers had done an evil thing. They were jealous of Joseph and angry with him, so they sold him into slavery. He was sent far away from his family and the home that he loved. When the brothers were afraid, they began to think back about what they had done and wondered if they were being punished for their wickedness. They said, "We are truly guilty concerning our brother...therefore this distress has come upon us." Do you think they were sorry for what they did? Do you think they wished they had never treated Joseph so badly?

The Lord is eager to forgive each of us. He hopes we will learn from our mistakes and not repeat them in the future. The Lord wants us to learn how to treat each other as we would like to be treated. In heaven all of the angels treat each other with care and thoughtfulness.



Discussion Questions

- What did Pharaoh's dreams mean? (There would be seven years of plenty and then seven years of famine.)
- Why do you think Joseph acted the way he did toward his brothers even though they had sold him into slavery? (Answers may include that he missed his family and wanted to hear news of them, that he wanted to see Benjamin, that he had forgiven his brothers.)
- What are the three parts of repentance? (To be sorry for something you have done that was wrong, to ask the Lord for help, and to try not to do that thing again.)
- Do you think Jacob will let the brothers take Benjamin back to Egypt? Why or why not?

Activity Overview | The Famine Begins

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

Just as you want people to do to you,
you do also to them likewise. Luke 6:31

Songs

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-savior-like-a-shepherd-lead-us/>

I'm Joseph Your Brother

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-im-joseph-your-brother/>

Activities

Choose one or two.

- Activity 1 | Joseph's Good Qualities and My Good Qualities
- Activity 2 | Review the Story of Joseph
- Picture to color

Additional Activity Ideas

- Bake bread or muffins. If you are short on time, use a mix or pre-prepared dough and discuss the grains that are included as part of the mix. If you have more time, make bread or chapattis from scratch and talk about the importance of grain in our diet.

Activity 1 | Joseph's Good Qualities and My Good Qualities

Write a some of Joseph's wonderful qualities in the ovals around him, and then draw a picture of yourself in the center of a cluster of ovals and think of the talents and blessings the Lord has given you.

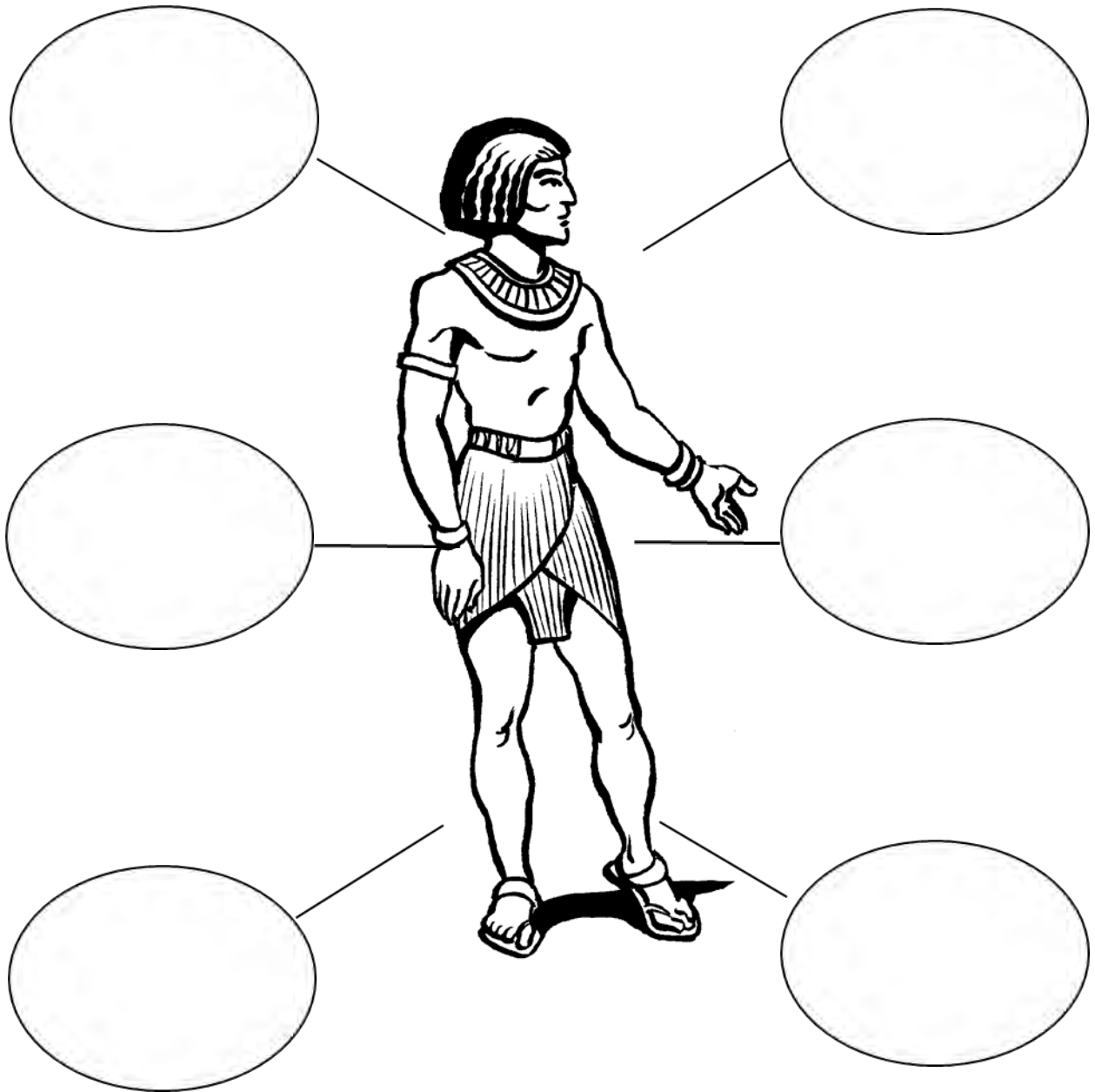
Materials

a copy of *Joseph's Good Qualities*
a copy of *My Good Qualities*
crayons, markers or colored pencils

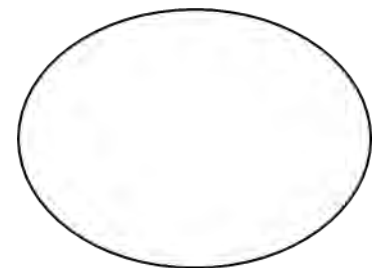
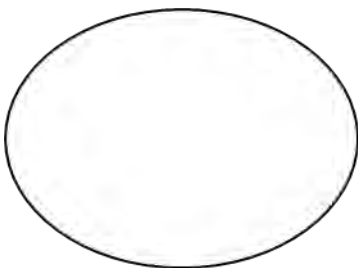
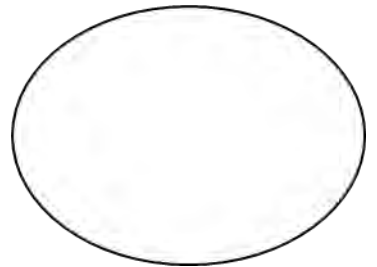
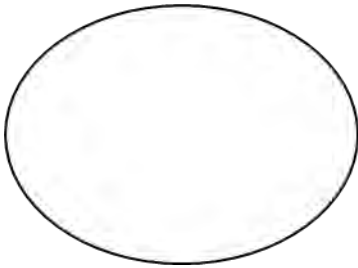
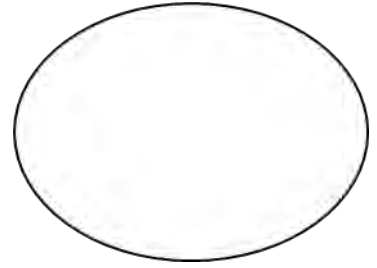
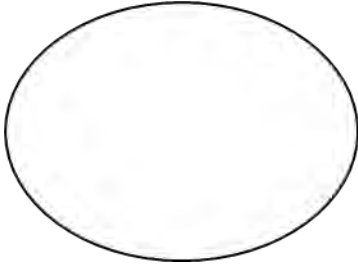
Instructions

1. Color the picture of Joseph on the *Joseph's Good Qualities* page.
2. Talk about Joseph's good qualities, e.g. loved the Lord, obeyed the Lord, was wise. Write one quality in each of the ovals around him.
3. Draw a picture of yourself on the *My Good Qualities* page.
4. Write a list of the talents and good qualities the Lord has given you, or of the good qualities you would like to have in your heart.

Joseph's Good Qualities



My Good Qualities



Activity 2 | Review the Story of Joseph

Cut the review cards apart and arrange them in the order of the story.

Joseph's father gave him a special coat.	Joseph dreamed the sun, moon and stars bowed down to him.
Joseph's brothers put him in a pit.	Joseph was sold as a slave.
Joseph worked for Potiphar.	Joseph was put in prison.
The butler and the baker had dreams.	The Lord told Joseph the meaning of the butler and baker's dreams.
The butler worked for Pharaoh.	The baker died.

