

General Church Education



# Joseph's Family United

Genesis 43:1-34; 45:1-24

## Lesson 17

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 2: The Lord Is Our Shepherd

For ages 7-8 years

# Joseph's Family United

## Genesis 43:1-34; 45:1-24

### Ideas for Parents & Teachers

In this lesson Jacob's family is brought together and saved from death by famine. This surprise ending of the story of Joseph teaches us several important ideas. First, we can see that although we may try to hide things from the Lord, we really cannot do that. The Lord knows all. Secondly, the Lord is eager to forgive us. Thirdly, we bring punishment on ourselves when we disobey the Lord's commandments. Joseph's love for his family was great. His forgiveness, mercy and tenderness picture the way the Lord acts toward us. As Jacob's older sons learned, we must learn that we cannot be happy without considering the happiness of others. We need to treat others with love and compassion.

The famine has another important spiritual message for us as parents and teachers. The seven years of plenty stand for the years of childhood and youth when knowledge of the Lord's Word can be stored up in a child's memory. The seven years of famine stand for times of temptation that come in later life. If children have stored up precious knowledges from the Lord's Word, they will be able to draw on them when needed to save their lives "by a great deliverance" (Genesis 45:7).

### Ideas for Children

- The Lord leads us and protects us in good times and in times of trouble.
- The Lord brings good out of bad situations even when those who caused a situation intend evil.
- We should treat others as we wish them to treat us. (The Golden Rule)

### From the Writings

From earliest infancy through to early childhood people are led by the Lord into heaven. Indeed, they are placed among celestial angels who serve to keep them in a state of innocence. This state which infants pass through until early childhood is a well-known one. But because people do not yet know any truths, those forms of the good of innocence do not possess any qualities as yet; for truths give good its qualities, while good gives truths their essence. From this time of life onwards therefore, people are being equipped with truths by means of the teaching they receive, and especially by means of their own thoughts about and consequent verification of those truths. Insofar as people are moved at this time by an affection for good, the Lord joins truths to good in them and stores them away for future use. This is the state meant by the seven years of abundance of grain. *Arcana Coelestia* 5342

Truth comes to be joined to good when a person finds joy in doing good to the neighbor for truth and goodness' own sake, and not for any selfish or worldly reason. When that affection moves a person, the truths they hear or read or think about become joined to good; and this can usually be seen in an affection for truth which has that end in view. *Arcana Coelestia* 5340

## Joseph's Family United

In the last lesson Joseph's older brothers came to Egypt to buy grain when there was a famine throughout the land.

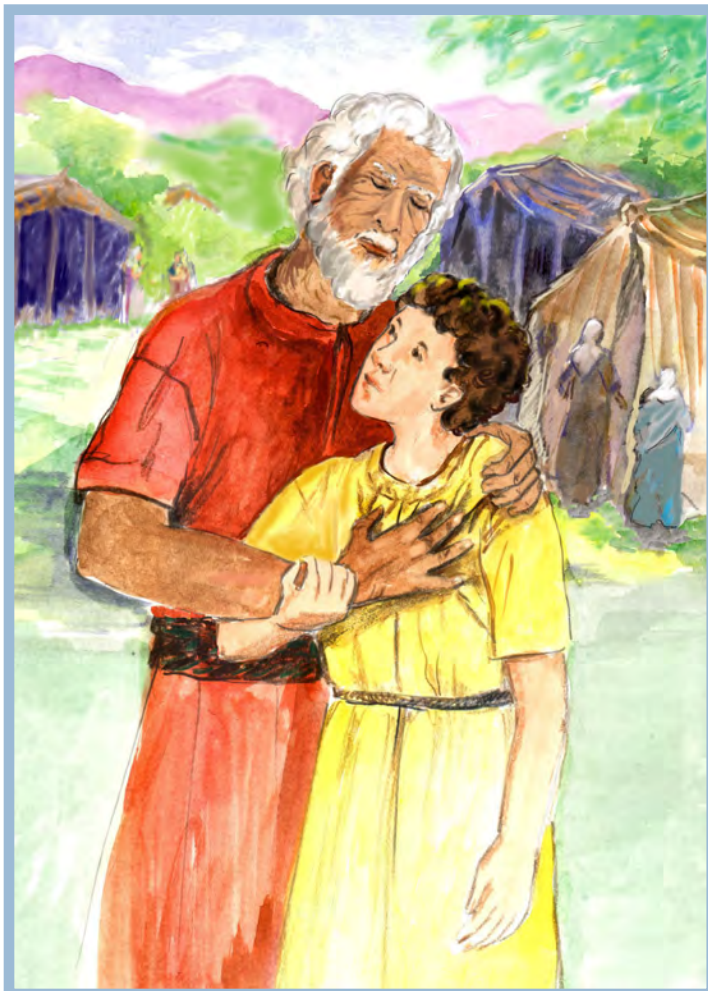
Who was kept behind in Egypt to encourage the brothers to bring Benjamin back? (Simeon.)

What did the brothers find in their grain sacks when they left Egypt? (The money for the grain.)

The famine continued, and was a great hardship for everyone. Jacob and his family once again ran out of grain and were in danger of starving. They knew they could get food in Egypt, but Jacob was afraid to send Benjamin along this time. Let's read and see what convinced Jacob to send Benjamin and his brothers back to Egypt.

**Read Genesis 43:1-14.** Why was Jacob afraid to let Benjamin go? (Joseph and Benjamin were the sons of his favorite wife Rachel. He thought Joseph was dead and did not want to lose Benjamin as well.)

What convinced Jacob to let Benjamin go? (Judah took responsibility and promised to take care of Benjamin. Also, Jacob knew that his family would starve without more food.)



What did the brothers take on the journey with them? (Gifts of spices and nuts for the great man of Egypt and double the money for grain.)

### The Second Visit

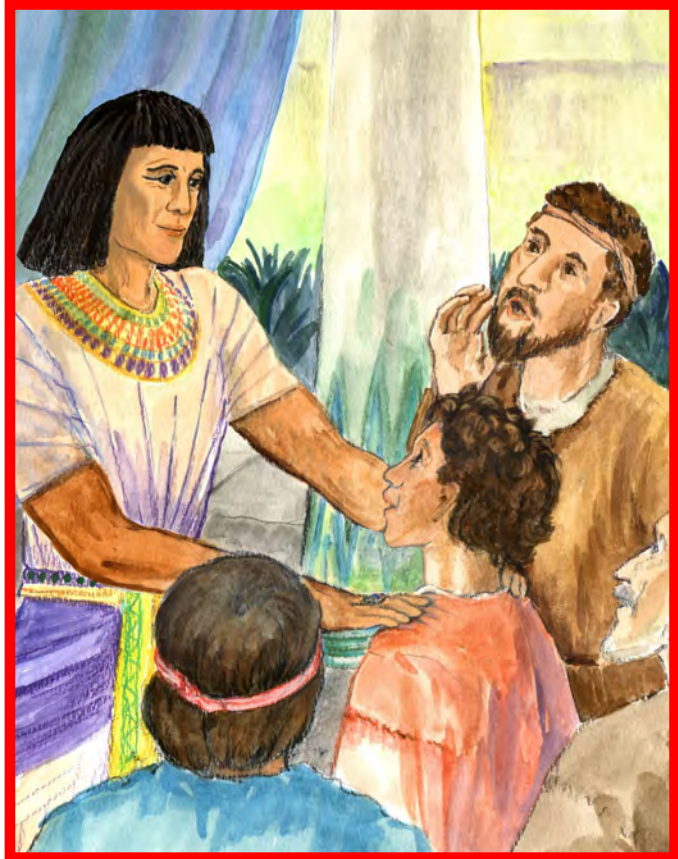
When Jacob's family came the second time to buy more grain, Joseph immediately knew who they were. He saw Benjamin with them and so he had all of the brothers taken to his own house.

Can you imagine what kind of house Joseph lived in? The wealthy Egyptians of this time lived in large houses with many big rooms. The rooms had colorful pictures painted on the walls. There were many plants, nice furniture and decorations. Of course, the rich people had many servants to take care of the house and attend to the family who lived there.

How do you think the shepherds from Canaan felt in Joseph's house? Remember, they were used to living outdoors or in tents. Joseph's brothers probably felt quite strange in his fine house. Read on to find out why they might feel uneasy.

**Read Genesis 43:15-23.** What were the brothers thinking about that made them especially afraid in this strange situation? (The money they found in their grain sacks after the last visit.) How were the brothers treated? (Kindly.)

The brothers were given water to wash their feet after their journey. Their donkeys were fed. They did not recognize the great man of Egypt when he came home at noon to eat dinner, but he knew them. Joseph was so happy to see his younger brother Benjamin that he could not control his feelings.



**Read Genesis 43:24-34.** What did Joseph do when he was so overcome with feelings for Benjamin? (He went into his bedroom and wept.)

Why were the brothers astonished when they sat down to eat dinner? (They were seated in their birth order, from oldest to youngest, and they could not understand how a stranger could know their ages.)

When they ate dinner in Joseph's house, Joseph sat at a special table by himself because of his high rank. The Egyptians and the brothers from Canaan ate at separate tables. The Egyptians were not allowed to eat at the same table with foreigners. Joseph honored the brothers when he had some of his own food sent to their table. He sent Benjamin five times as much as the rest!

The brothers stayed the night and began their journey home early the next morning. However, Joseph had instructed his servants to return the money to their sacks and to put his own silver cup in the sack of the youngest brother. When Joseph's servants went after the brothers, they charged them with stealing their master's cup. They would have brought Benjamin back to be a slave and let the others go, but the brothers were faithful to Benjamin and they all returned to face Joseph.

Judah begged Joseph not to keep Benjamin. Judah told him how important the youngest brother was to their father and offered to stay as a slave instead of Benjamin. Joseph could see

that his brothers had changed their ways and was happy that they now stood up for Benjamin so that their father would not suffer another terrible grief. Joseph could stand it no longer. He sent out all the Egyptians who were with them and told his brothers who he really was.

**Read Genesis 45:1-9.** What reason did Joseph give that the brothers should not feel so badly about selling him so long ago? (That the Lord had sent him to become great in Egypt so he could save his family from starvation.)

What did Joseph want the brothers to tell their father? (To come to live in Egypt with the whole family while the famine continued.)

How much longer would the famine continue? (Five more years.)

Joseph gave his brothers gifts as they left for home. He gave Benjamin extra gifts. What a wonderful thought that the whole family would be together again! When the brothers told Jacob about seeing Joseph, Jacob's heart stood still at first in disbelief. But when Jacob understood what this meant, he was determined to go to see his lost son.

## The Golden Rule

Joseph's brothers seemed to have learned their lesson. Many years ago they had done a terrible thing to Joseph out of jealousy, causing their father to suffer terribly. Now, when harm threatened Benjamin, they were more concerned for him and their father than themselves.

The Lord wants each of us to learn this lesson too. He tells us to treat others the way we would like to be treated. This is the Golden Rule. This is not the way we always think or act at first. But we can learn to think about others and to speak words with care, so they are helpful and do not hurt feelings or start a fight. We can think about how to do thoughtful things for others so that what we do might bring a smile to someone's face.

### Discussion Questions

- Why didn't Jacob want Benjamin to go with his older brothers to get more grain from Egypt? (Benjamin was the son of Rachel, his beloved wife, and Jacob did not want any harm to come to him, as it had to Joseph.)
- What did Joseph do on the second visit when he saw Benjamin was with the older brothers? (Joseph sent them all to his house so he could have dinner with them.)
- Why do you think Joseph forgave his brothers for what they had done to him? (Joseph loved his family, and he could see that the Lord had made something very good come from the bad thing they had done.)
- What things could you do today to try to follow the Golden Rule?

# Activity Overview | Joseph's Family United

## 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 | Benjamin's Sack of Grain from Egypt
- Activity 2 | Forgiveness Experiment
- Picture to color

## Additional Activity Ideas

- Watch the *Forgiveness Experiment* (above) at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-forgiveness-experiment/>

## Activity 1 | Benjamin's Sack of Grain from Egypt

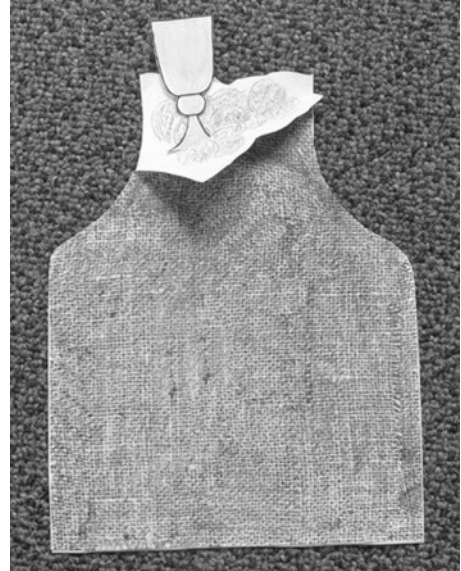
Joseph's family brought sacks to Egypt so they could buy grain. Make a paper "sack" and fill it with grain using a crayons or colored pencils *or* by gluing on grains of rice or another grain to the inside. Make coin rubbings at the mouth of the sack to represent the money Joseph returned. Place Joseph's cup in the mouth of Benjamin's sack

### Materials

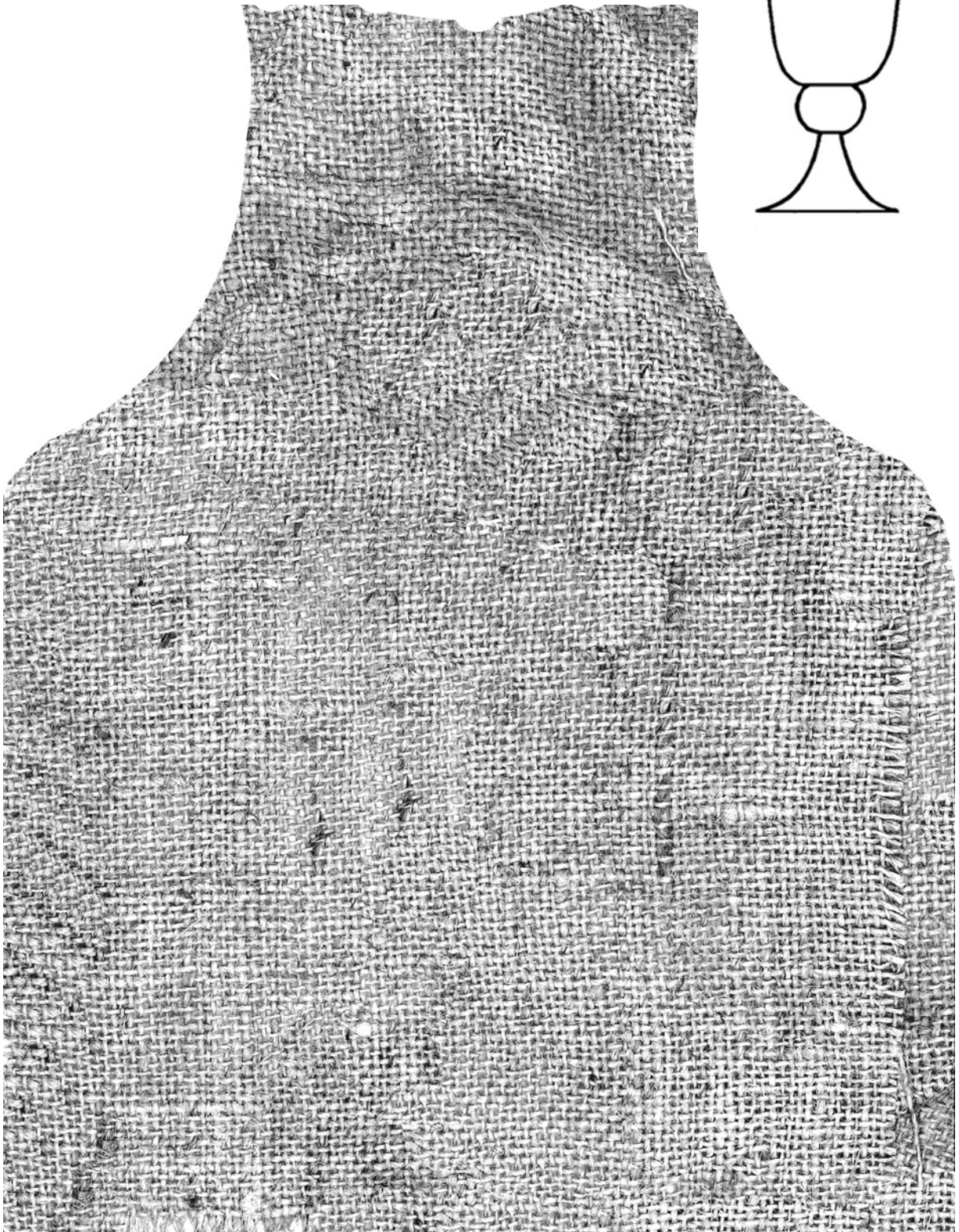
a copy of each of the *Sack of Grain* pages  
stapler or tape  
scissors  
crayons or colored pencils  
small coins to make coin rubbings  
*optional*: rice or another grain, and glue

### Instructions

1. Color the outside of the grain sacks and Joseph's cup using crayons or colored pencils.
2. Use scissors to cut out the sacks and cup.
3. With the "inside" of one of the paper sacks (back of picture) facing you, draw grain on to the sack. (When the sacks are stapled together, the grain will be inside the sack.)
4. *Optional*: Instead of drawing grain in the sack, spread glue on the "inside" of one of the sacks and sprinkle with rice or another grain. Be sure to stay away from the edges. Set aside to dry.
5. Turn the second sack so the "inside" is facing up. Place a coin under the page at the mouth of the sack. Make a series of coin rubbings illustrating the coins Joseph put at the mouth of the sacks.
6. Place the two sacks together with the insides of the sack facing each other. Staple or tape the sides of the sacks together.
7. Place Joseph's cup in the mouth of the sack.

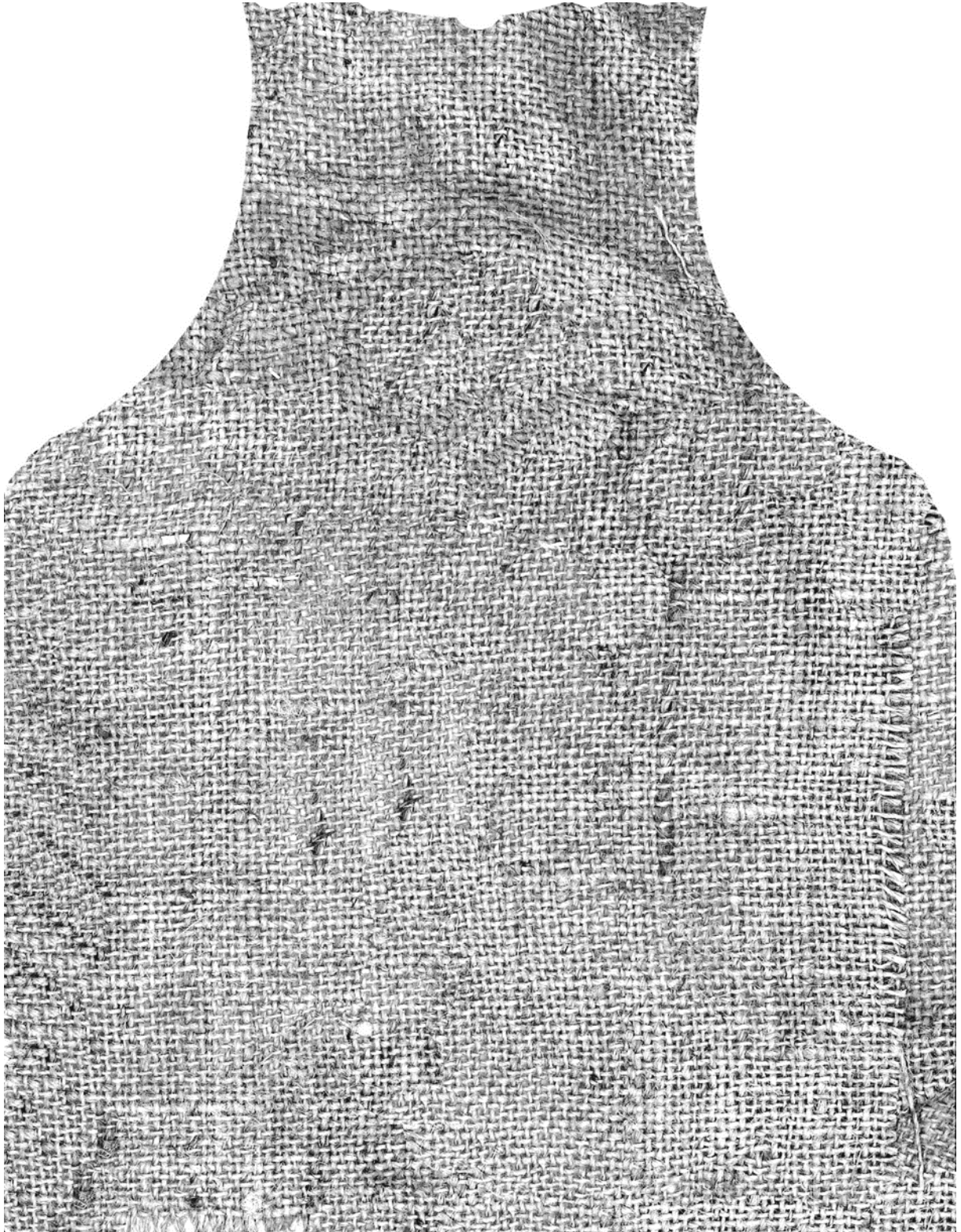


Sack of Grain





Sack of Grain



## Activity 2 | Forgiveness Experiment

Sincerely saying “I’m sorry” can help clear up problems and pave the way for forgiveness. This experiment is a great way to illustrate this concept. Sprinkle pepper into a dish of cold water. Put a drop of soap into the water and watch the pepper scatter to the edges. Watch the experiment at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-forgiveness-experiment/>

### Materials

cup or dish for each child  
pitcher of water  
ground black pepper  
soap (dish soap, hand soap and bar soap all work)

### Instructions

1. Pour water into a cup or dish until it is half full. The sparkling clear water stands for true ideas from the Word. Just as water helps clean ourselves, cook, and stay healthy, true ideas from the Lord’s Word help clean our thoughts, cool our tempers, etc.
2. Sprinkle some ground pepper on the water and see what it does. (The pepper will spread out over the surface of the water.)
3. Self-centered thoughts and actions are like the pepper. They can make us feel ‘unclean’ and sad. Joseph’s brothers were worried about the wrong things they had done to Joseph many years before. They felt guilty and could not forget what they had done.
4. The Lord tells us that when we have done something wrong we should tell the truth about it, say we are sorry, and try not to do it again.
5. Now put a drop of soap into your cup or dish. Watch what happens to the pepper. (The pepper scatters to the edges of the dish.)
6. Saying we are sorry when we hurt someone, and forgiving others when they have hurt us helps our minds become clear again. The things we have done or said do not completely disappear, but they move further and further to the edge of our lives. If we try hard to stop doing them, the Lord will hold us in goodness and our sins will almost disappear!

