



Joseph's Dreams

Genesis 37:3-11, 12-36

Level C

Ages 11-14

Life Focus: Dreaming about becoming a good or useful person helps us become one.

Story Summary: Joseph was Jacob's favorite son. Jacob showed his love by giving Joseph a special colorful coat. Joseph had two dreams as a teenager. First he dreamed that he was binding sheaves of grain with his family and that his brothers' sheaves bowed down to his sheaf. Later he dreamed that the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to him. He shared his dreams with his family. His brothers were jealous, resentful and hated him. His father rebuked Joseph but remembered the dreams. Joseph's father sent him to check up on his brothers. Seeing him coming, they plotted to kill him.

Lesson 1

Materials needed

		Supplied with Lesson	Additional Materials
1. Getting Started (2-3 min)	Welcome Warm-up Activity	Welcome Warm-up Activity directions p. 6	index cards, pens or pencils
2. Focus on the Word use all activities (5-7 min)	Read the Word Talk About It story discussion	Talk About It discussion guide p. 6	Bible or copy of Genesis 37: 3-11, 12-36
3. Engage with the Word choose 1 or 2 activities (15-20 min)	Video watch a video about Joseph's brothers and their role in your mind; discuss	Joseph's Brothers in Your Head online at www.bitly.com/JosephsBrothersInYourHead discussion questions p. 7	computer or other viewing device - watch online or download; see p. 4 for downloading directions
	Think & Create	Seeking Joseph directions p. 8 <i>Seeking Joseph</i> p. 9	scissors, pen or pencil for each student
4. Wrap It Up (2-3 min)	Take the Message Home a door hanger with a summary of the lesson and activities	Joseph's Dreams Door Hanger p. 10	color version available at www.newchurch.org/youth-journey-programs

1. Getting Started

Welcome Warm-up Activity

Who's Who?

Materials Needed: 1 index card and a pen or pencil for each student

Divide group into 2 teams. Give each student an index card. Invite the students to write five clues to their identities on their cards. The first clue should be the most obscure and each subsequent clue should be a little more obvious or well-known, e.g. 1) ambition: to sail around the world 2) loves cats 3) favorite food is ice cream 4) size 8 shoes 4) red hair. Each team draws a card from the other team's pile and tries to identify the person using as few clues as possible. *Note: Small groups may opt to have 3-4 additional clues so this isn't just a process of elimination.*

2. Focus on the Word

Read Genesis 37:3-11, 12-36

**Talk
About It**

If you were one of Joseph's brothers, what would your reaction have been when Joseph got a special coat from your father?

What are some other ways in which the brothers could have responded?

What special ability did Joseph have that his brothers did not? Dreams or visions of the future.

The hidden meaning of this story is about our relationship with the Lord, our Heavenly Father. Each member of Joseph's family pictures one of our qualities.

Joseph's father treasured him more than his brothers. What qualities does the Lord treasure most in us? His heavenly qualities, e.g. useful service, putting others first, honesty, integrity, etc.

The Lord develops a conscience in us from truths that we learn from the Word. By paying attention to our conscience we can know the difference between what's right and what's wrong. When we put right ideas and attitudes in charge of our actions, selfish ideas and attitudes have less power over us. In effect, we make our selfish ideas and attitudes bow down before what is right and good. In what ways is Joseph like our conscience in the story? His parents and brothers bow before him. Eventually Joseph rules the entire kingdom—just as our conscience can rule in us so that everything we do can be guided by the Word.

What kinds of attitudes and actions need to “bow down” to our conscience? Selfish impulses, world-centered ambitions, e.g. achieving success at the expense of others.

Our conscience often conflicts with what part of us *wants* to do. For example, part of our mind may care about the Lord and His Word, but another part may be worried that our friends will laugh at us if we are honest about this. We may hide our beliefs or even put them aside—just as Joseph's brothers put him in a pit.

But the story of Joseph does not end there. He lived and eventually saved all of his brothers.

Joseph had big dreams for his future. The Lord wants us to dream big about our future too. The most important dreams we can have are dreams about becoming a useful person like the angels in heaven. The Lord has this dream for each of us. He protects this dream just as He protected Joseph. And in the end, Joseph's dreams came true!

3. Engage with the Word

Choose one or two activities

Choice

Joseph's Brothers in Your Head

Each character in the Word pictures a spiritual quality in us, e.g. a thought or idea which may be true, false, or a mixture of both, or a motivation or affection that is good, evil, or a mixture of both. This video examines the idea that Joseph's brothers are qualities in a person's mind. Watch the video and explore the topic using the discussion questions provided. *Note:* Read through the questions and select the ones that will work best for your group.

1. What idea in the video seemed most significant to you?
2. When you think of the "older brothers" or patterns of thought and motivation in your head does it seem as if your "thought family" is large or small? What gives you this impression?
3. The video focused on the "Jock—being the best at everything" older brother and the "Popular" older brother. What other types of "older brothers" have you met—either in your own mind, or seeming to exist in the mind of someone you know?
4. What good things might come into a person's life through the thoughts and motivations of the "Jock" older brother?
5. The video described one of the problems that might arise from the "Jock" perspective. Can you think of others?
6. What good and bad things might come to a person's life through the thoughts and motivations of the "Popular" older brother?
7. In the story in Genesis Joseph is *almost* the youngest of the brothers—only Benjamin is younger. The video portrays Joseph as the thought and motivation to wisely love others. Why might the "Joseph" in your mind start out as almost the youngest brother?
8. What is the difference between acting "nice" and being *wisely loving* of others?
9. Can you think of an example of an action that might appear to be "nice" but is actually not wisely loving and, in fact, may hurt others?
10. Why do you think the qualities represented by Joseph's older brothers initially find the idea of being wisely loving as irritating and obnoxious?
11. Joseph is the voice speaking for the Lord in our thoughts and motivations. At first Joseph is rejected by his older brothers. Why does it take many people a long time before they allow the voice speaking for the Lord to become the respected ruler of their minds?
12. Some teens have lives that appear to go smoothly. They are affirmed by adults. Others have troubled lives. People may have important values and true ideas, even when the voice speaking for the Lord is not fully in charge of their actions. What "older brother" voices might support the parts of their lives that are going well. What could happen if these older brother voices continue to be the most important "voice" as these teens become adults?

Materials

computer or other device for showing *Joseph's Brothers in Your Head* video

Video Directions

View video at www.bitly.com/JosephsBrothersInYourHead

OR

Download video to your computer or other device. See downloading directions on p. 4.

New Church Concept: True Love for Others

The Golden Rule is that we should love others as ourselves (Matthew 7). New Church teachings expand on the idea, explaining *what we are to love* in others. "The neighbor is to be loved from the goodness in him" (see *Arcana Coelestia* 2718). If all people are treated equally as neighbors—regardless of whether their lives seem evil or good—a person may promote evil by supporting the welfare of people who are regularly doing evil things (see *Arcana Coelestia* 6703). To truly love others, we need to reach out to what is good in them—and we will treat everyone differently because each person has a unique way of responding to the Lord's love.

Choice

Seeking Joseph

Students identify “Joseph” and “brother” qualities in people their age. Each student will make a star that demonstrates what happens to “Joseph” if the brothers are greater than him, and what happens when they “bow down” to him.

1. Joseph stands for genuine or heavenly love joined to real wisdom. Heavenly love *actively* loves others. It makes the welfare of others as important as our own welfare.
2. When this kind of love is our first priority, everything else we do serves or “bows down” to this goal.
3. Can you think of times that you experienced this kind of love? Share your experiences.
4. Joseph’s brothers picture ideas that are not directed by a loving attitude towards others—even if they are true! For example, we may be more concerned about being right or winning an argument than listening to another person’s point of view. Or we may complain that something is unfair when a decision does not favor us. Can you think of other examples of a person being “right” but not useful in what he or she is doing?
5. Can you think of times when you were more interested in fairness or winning than in other people? (Give a personal example as a starter.)
6. Hand out *Seeking Joseph* (p. 11), scissors, and pens or pencils.
7. Start by cutting out the star.
8. Fold the points of the star inwards creating a pentagon and covering the picture of the Lord.
9. Write a word or two on the white side of each point of the star that states a fact that could be motivated by a good OR selfish attitude towards others, e.g. winning, success, wealth, obeying laws, helping others, donating to charity.
10. When these kinds of thoughts crowd out and cover over our sight of the Lord, they are behaving like the brothers when they resented Joseph and threw him in a pit. (Fold star points over the Lord’s image to demonstrate this.)
11. When we use the same qualities to support what the Lord wants us to do, He is in charge and our minds are filled with his love. The same actions then come from that love and support a heavenly life. (Fold star points under the Lord’s image and set the star on the table resting on the points to show how these qualities can support and uphold a heavenly life.)



Materials for each student

Seeking Joseph handout
p. 9, scissors, pen or pencil

4. Wrap It Up

Closing

Gather students. Why is it important for us to have dreams for our future? In what way might a dream change your future?

Hand each student a copy of the *Joseph’s Dreams Door Hanger* p. 10. Read “You are what you dream” section at the top of the hanger with the students. Look at “Listen to your dreams.” Encourage the students to do one or more of the activities this week.

Note: a color version of the door hanger can be printed from www.newchurch.org/youth-journey-programs.

Seeking Joseph



Joseph dreamed a dream...

Joseph's Dreams

Cut out the shaded doorhanger. Fold it in half and hang it over a door handle to help remind you to listen to your dreams this week.

You are what you dream

"Everything that brings us delight, satisfaction and happiness comes from our ruling love and relates to it." *True Christian Religion* 399

We were all born with a unique set of desires, talents and interests. The choices we make everyday begin to form a picture of who we are and what we love at our very core, which Swedenborg refers to as our "ruling love."

Everything we care about revolves around this ruling love in some way. For this reason, reflecting on our "dreams" can give us valuable insight as to who we truly are.

Listen to your dreams

It would be wonderful if I...

Write down as many answers as you can to finish this sentence. Keep writing until you find some things that really move you. Circle those.

I care about this because...

Look at the dreams you circled. Why are you passionate about these ones? What would your life be like if these dreams became real?

Let me tell you about my dream...

There is power in speaking your dreams aloud. Let others know what you hope for, and why these dreams are significant to you.

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