



Joseph's Dreams

Genesis 37:3-11; 12-36

Level D

Ages 15-18

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

Story Summary: Joseph was Jacob's favorite son. One of the ways Jacob showed his love for Joseph was by giving him 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.

Materials Needed

Lesson 1

		Supplied with Lesson	Additional Materials
1. Getting Started (2-3 min)	Welcome Warm-up Activity	Welcome Warm-up Activity directions p. 6	
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. Engage with the Word choose one or two 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
	Action Replay partners act out scenarios depicting both integrity and a lack of integrity and replay the action to resolve issues with integrity	Act with Integrity directions p. 8 <i>Act with Integrity Readings</i> p. 10 <i>Act with Integrity Scenarios</i> p. 11	
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. 12	color version available at www.newchurch.org/youth-journey-programs

1. Getting Started

Welcome Warm-up Activity

Cooperate in Silence

Ask students to line themselves up in order of the day and month of their birthdays without talking! Once everyone is arranged in a line, each student shares his or her birth date aloud to see how well the group communicated without talking!

2. Focus on the Word

Read **Genesis 37:3-11, 12-36**

**Talk
About It**



Select questions from the following to promote group discussion:

How old is Joseph at the start of today's story? Seventeen

What kind of relationship did Joseph have with his brothers? Difficult! His brothers were jealous of his special relationship with their father. Their jealousy turned into open hatred when he received a special coat and when he told them his dreams. Joseph remained honest and open, e.g. he shared his dreams with them.

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

Joseph and his brothers stand for different personal qualities. What qualities might Joseph picture? A love for God and living from spiritual principles. He is sometimes characterized as our conscience. Joseph was born second to last in a family of twelve sons. He vanished through being sold into slavery and remained invisible to his family until age thirty, thirteen years later. He resurfaced unexpectedly, in Egypt, and saved his entire family from starvation. In a similar way conscience develops from a young age but is often invisible to us. It only fully matures later in life.

What qualities do Joseph's brothers picture? Factual knowledge from the Word that is important and necessary for developing a spiritual life.

Joseph dreamed that his brothers, his mother and his father would bow down to him. Which qualities in us should "bow down to" or do what our conscience tells us to? Self-centered impulses and ambitions e.g. successes that we achieve at the expense of others.

The Lord has a dream for each of us—it is the dream of bringing us into heaven after we die, where we will have a role and serve uses better than anyone ever has or ever could! The Lord protects this dream just as He protected Joseph. What dreams do you have that are worth protecting? Give students the opportunity to share their dreams.

3. Engage with the Word

Choose one or two activities



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

Act with Integrity

Students will work in pairs to act out scenarios for the class. The teacher freezes the action at a heated point for a guided class discussion. Action resumes with one student saying, “I’m sorry, let me start over” and concludes with a resolution that shows integrity.

1. Introduce the activity by reading *Act with Integrity* handout (p. 10) with the students.
2. Each person will act out a situation with a partner or small group. One partner will respond to the situation with anger, hatred, gossip or harsh words. The other partner may choose to act this way as well, or may choose to act with integrity.
3. Divide students into pairs. Hand an *Acting with Integrity Scenario* to each pair. Allow about 3 minutes for groups to brainstorm their actions.
4. Partners will then take turns presenting their scenarios to the group.
5. Stop each scenario when it has become heated. Ask the observers three questions: 1) Is this kind? 2) Is this true? 3) Is this useful?
6. Following the discussion, resume the action. To re-start the action, one actor says, “I’m sorry, let me start over.” Encourage the groups to choose a path that has integrity to solve their problem.
7. When all groups have finished, encourage the students to share insights they have gained as a result of the activity. Use the following discussion prompts to get started:
 - Certain ways of thinking or responding to disappointments can shut out heaven from our minds. In what ways is shutting out heaven like murder?
 - It’s often easier for us to see other people’s negative behaviors than our own. What can you do to help a friend who is struggling with “murderous” thoughts?
 - How could you alert yourself to murderous thoughts in your own mind before they overwhelm you?

Materials

Act with Integrity Readings p. 10 for each student; 1 *Act with Integrity Scenarios* card (p. 11) for every 2 students

Preparation

Cut apart the *Acting with Integrity Readings* and the *Acting with Integrity Scenarios* cards.

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. 12). 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.



Act with Integrity

Readings

Joseph did and said what he thought was true and good. He acted with integrity. But what he said and did angered his brothers, and they wanted to kill him. The Heavenly Doctrine explains the deeper meaning of murder:

The fifth commandment, “You are not to kill,” in its *earthly meaning* means not killing people, inflicting on them any fatal wound, or mutilating their bodies. It also means not bringing deadly evil against their names and reputations, since for many people their reputation and their life go hand in hand.

In a broader earthly meaning, murdering includes hostility, hatred, and revenge, which involve longing for someone’s death. Murder lies hidden inside these feelings like an area that is still burning inside a piece of wood under the ashes. Hellfire is nothing else. This is why we say someone blazes with hatred or burns for revenge. These feelings are murders at the level of intent even if not in act. If fear of the law, retribution, or revenge were taken away, these feelings would burst into action, especially if the intent involved deception or savagery.

In the *spiritual meaning*, murders stand for killing and destroying people’s souls. There are many different ways of doing this, such as turning people away from God, religion and divine worship; setting up roadblocks against such things; and persuading people to turn away from and even feel aversion to such things. All the devils in hell practice these methods (*True Christianity* 309-310).

We may experience murder from sources outside of ourselves as well as forces within ourselves. Just as Joseph’s own brothers wanted to take his life, forces from hell may work within our minds to turn us away from heavenly things.

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Act with Integrity Scenarios

Choosing a movie to watch

"I'm sorry, let me start over."

Choosing food for a party

"I'm sorry, let me start over."

Discussing a curfew with a parent

"I'm sorry, let me start over."

Moving a heavy object

"I'm sorry, let me start over."

Bargaining in a market

"I'm sorry, let me start over."

Talking to a sales person
on the phone

"I'm sorry, let me start over."

Cleaning up after a meal

"I'm sorry, let me start over."

Taking care of a brother or sister

"I'm sorry, let me start over."

Doing homework with a friend

"I'm sorry, let me start over."

Long wait for service
in a store/restaurant

"I'm sorry, let me start over."

Choosing a guest list for an event

"I'm sorry, let me start over."

Pitching a tent, digging a ditch, weeding a
garden or some other shared task

"I'm sorry, let me start over."

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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