



Joseph Rules Egypt

Genesis 41

Level D

Ages 15-18

Life Focus: Treasure your connection with heaven.

Story Summary: Pharaoh had two dreams. First, he saw seven healthy fat cows come out of the river and graze. Then seven skinny cows came and ate up the fat cows. Next he saw seven plump heads of grain on a stalk. Seven blighted thin heads sprang up and devoured the seven full heads. Nobody could tell Pharaoh what the dreams meant. Then the butler remembered Joseph, and he was brought out of prison to interpret the dreams. The dreams meant that there would be seven years of good harvest followed by seven years of famine. Joseph advised Pharaoh to appoint a ruler to store food for the famine, and Pharaoh appointed Joseph to this role, second only to himself. When the famine began, people came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph.

Lesson 3

Materials needed

| | | Supplied with Lesson | Additional Materials |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1. Getting Started (2-3 min) | Welcome Warm-up Activity | Welcome Warm-up Activity directions p. 22 | |
| 2. Focus on the Word use all activities (5-7 min) | Read the Word Talk About It discussion | Talk About It discussion guide p. 22 | Bible or copy of Genesis 41 |
| 3. Engage with the Word choose one or two activities (15-20 min) | Video watch a video about natural and spiritual hunger and discuss the consequences of spiritual famine in your life | Natural and Spiritual Hunger online at www.bitly.com/SpiritualHunger discussion questions p. 23 | computer or other viewing device - watch online or download; see p. 4 for downloading directions |
| | Sketch draw a picture showing how a spiritual idea impacts your life | Gathering Spiritual Strength from True Ideas directions pp. 23-24 <i>How True Ideas Are Multiplied</i> p. 25 <i>Spiritual Strength from True Ideas Readings</i> p. 26 <i>Sample Sketches</i> p. 27 | markers, crayons or pencils; paper—any color and size |
| 4. Wrap It Up (2-3 min) | Take the Message Home a door hanger with a summary of the lesson and activities | Joseph Rules Egypt Door Hanger p. 28 | color version available at www.newchurch.org/youth-journey-programs |

1. Getting Started

Welcome Warm-up Activity

Attributes

- Give each student a piece of paper, and a pen or pencil. Focus students' attention by asking: What attributes does grain (wheat) have?
- Write down your answers. (can be dried, stored for a long time, frozen, ground up, carbohydrate, energy food, can be burned, etc.)
- Compare your list with a partner, and then with the whole group. How might these attributes help us understand the spiritual concept that grain represents? "An abundance of grain means...a vast wealth and sufficiency of religious knowledge; for 'famine' means an absence of it" (*Arcana Coelestia* 5276).

2. Focus on the Word

Read Genesis 41:1-7, 14-15, 25-30, 33-35, 38-42, 46-49, 56-57

Talk About It



Select questions from the following to promote group discussion:

Pharaoh's dreams foretold the future. They were "prophetic". Many people in the Word received prophetic dreams. The Heavenly Doctrine tells us that these dreams were different from our dreams. They were directly from the Lord (see *Arcana Coelestia* 1976). The Lord does not try to teach us about the future through dreams. Instead he wants us to learn from the Word and try to live according to it each day.

Why couldn't Pharaoh's wise men explain his dreams? The Lord alone knows the future, so only He could interpret them (see *Divine Providence* 179).

What did Pharaoh's dreams predict? Seven years of plentiful harvest and then seven years of famine.

What is the hungriest you have ever been in your life? What was it like?

What advice did Joseph give Pharaoh? Prepare for the famine by storing one fifth of the food during the years of plentiful harvest.

Why did Pharaoh choose Joseph to oversee the plan? The Spirit of God was with him.

What power did Pharaoh give Joseph? He was made second in command to Pharaoh himself and ruled Pharaoh's household. He was so powerful that everyone bowed down to him.

The deeper meaning of this story is about how a person forms a relationship with heaven and the Lord. When a person reads the Word and acts on the true ideas there, he or she forms a spiritual relationship with angels in heaven. These relationships are real—as real as the connections we make with people in the natural world—and they last forever. In the story these connections are pictured by the grain that is stored up during the times of plenty.

When a person goes through a difficult time (like Pharaoh, who could not understand his dreams), his or her spiritual values that have been connected to heaven (like Joseph) can help him or her see a way forward. The more connections to heaven a person has, the more clearly he or she can see wise ways to act.

Joseph's release from prison was a turning point in his life. His rise to power pictures the point in a person's life when spiritual priorities are given power over worldly priorities.

3. Engage with the Word

Choose one or two activities

Choice **Natural and Spiritual Hunger**

Spark students' curiosity by showing this video about natural and spiritual hunger. Natural hunger and its results on our bodies over time pictures what happens when our minds and spirits lack the spiritual food needed for a healthy spiritual life. Learn what can cause spiritual famine and how an apparent spiritual desert can be transformed into a garden in bloom when we willingly receive the gentle rain of the Lord's truth in our minds. Continue the conversation with the discussion questions below.

1. Picture a hard time you have faced. What helped you through it?
2. In hard times, a person may receive comfort from the Lord through His Word or through other people. In what ways have you helped others or been helped by others when going through a hard time?
3. Why might sharing a true idea be more important than giving a hungry person food?
4. Everyone experiences difficult times—times of “famine”. How can a person prepare for this? (Think of the ways Joseph helped Pharaoh prepare for famine in Egypt.)
5. Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of storing food. Which of our personal qualities should we put in charge of preparing for spiritual famine?
6. How differently would a prepared person act from one who was unprepared in a time of famine?
7. Explain what Jesus meant when He said “Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8). In what ways does this statement charge you to “feed the hungry”—either by giving someone food, or by sharing ideas from the Lord's Word?
8. What happens to a person who consistently turns away from the Lord, shutting the door on Him?
9. How does the Lord reach out to help a person who is spiritually needy?

Video Directions
 View video at www.bitly.com/SpiritualHunger
OR
 Download video to your computer or other device. See downloading directions on p. 4.



Choice **Gathering Spiritual Strength from True Ideas**

Students will consider how true spiritual ideas impact their lives by expressing the ideas as sketches. Just as Joseph stored grain to use during the future famine, we can gather true ideas into our minds to help ourselves make good spiritual choices and cope with challenges during hard times.



1. Pharaoh received word from the Lord that Egypt was going to experience a famine. Through Joseph, he learned that he should prepare for this by storing grain during seven years of abundant harvest.
2. Sometimes a person can wonder why spiritual habits like attending church, youth group, reading the Word and praying are important. It can seem like more spiritual food than a person needs. How might this story help us see the value of these habits?

Materials

Copies of *How True Ideas are Multiplied* p. 25 and *Gathering Spiritual Strength from True Ideas* p. 26 for each student; sample sketches p. 27 to show

paper—large (chart sized) or small (individual pieces); pens, pencils, markers in a variety of colors, tape, etc.

Preparation

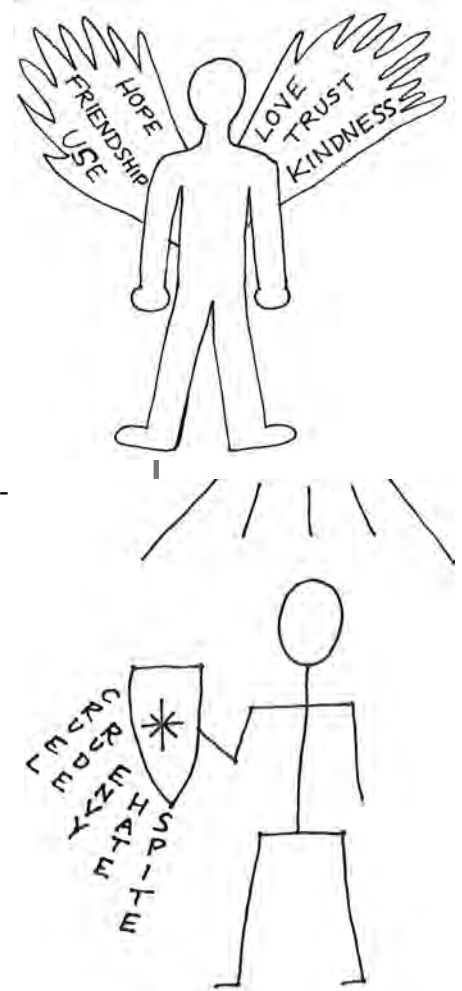
If you plan to make this a large-scale activity, tape large pieces of paper to windows or walls. Cut apart *How True Ideas Are Multiplied* pages.

Gathering Spiritual Freedom through True Ideas Continued

3. Read *How True Ideas are Multiplied* (p. 25) with the class.
4. What kinds of challenges might lead a person your age to experience a “spiritual famine”? Have you experienced one?
5. How might someone your age have experienced being protected by the Word during a struggle. What happened? What did you try? What helped?
6. It is said that “a picture is worth a thousand words.” Brainstorm ways you picture true ideas protecting you or someone your age. (Show the samples on p. 31 to help spark thinking.)
7. The Word gives us many ways to picture His protection through true ideas. Give each student a copy of *Spiritual Strength from True Ideas Readings* (p. 26).
8. Have the students choose partners. Partners will read the quotations and select one quote to illustrate. Allow 5-10 minutes for reading and drawing.
9. Gather the students back together. Students will share their sketches with the group.

Samples

There are larger versions of these sample sketches on p. 31.



4. Wrap It Up

Closing

Gather the students together. Why is it important to create relationships with heaven? In what way might these relationships change your actions?

Hand each student a copy of the *Joseph Rules Egypt Door Hanger* (p. 28). Read the “Your famine times” section at the top of the hanger with the students. Look at “Store up your good experiences.” 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.

How True Ideas Are Multiplied

From earliest childhood the person born within the Church learns from the Word and from the teachings of the Church what the truth of faith is and what the good of charity is.

But when he grows up he begins either to confirm for himself or else to refuse to accept the truths of faith he has learned; for now he looks at them for himself and in so doing either makes those truths his own or else casts them aside.

For no truth can be made over to another person as his own unless he looks at it and accepts it for himself, that is, unless he knows for himself that it is true and does not rely simply on someone else.

The truths therefore which he absorbed in childhood cannot enter any more deeply into his life than the outer gate, where they can either be let inside or else cast away outside.

With those who are being regenerated, that is, those who, as the Lord foresees, will allow themselves to be regenerated, those truths are multiplied exceedingly; for these people have an affection for knowing truths.

But as they draw nearer to the point when their regeneration is actually carried out they are seemingly deprived of those truths.

For those truths are withdrawn to a more interior position, and when this happens the person seems to experience desolation.

Nevertheless those truths are returned in consecutive stages to the natural, where they are joined to good while the person is being regenerated.

Arcana Coelestia 5376:1-2

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Spiritual Strength from True Ideas Readings

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>For You, O Lord, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as with a shield. Psalm 5:12</p> | <p>For the Lord God is a sun and shield; He will give grace and glory. No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. Psalm 84:11</p> |
| <p>Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. Psalm 91:3-4</p> | <p>If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. Psalm 139:9-10</p> |
| <p>You have delivered my soul from death, My eyes from tears, And my feet from falling. Psalm 116:8</p> | <p>“Lo, I am with you always....” Matthew 28:20 “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27</p> |
| <p>The Lord by means of Divine truth protects His own, for He surrounds them with a sphere of light. <i>see Apocalypse Explained 395.2</i></p> | <p>Good and its affection do not protect themselves, but are protected by truth and the understanding of it. <i>see Apocalypse Explained 1121</i></p> |
| <p>Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help and the sword of your majesty! Your enemies shall submit to you, and you shall tread down their high places.” Deuteronomy 33:29</p> | |
| <p>If the Lord did not protect a person in every shortest instant, he would immediately perish, for there is such murderous hatred reigning in the world of spirits against all forms of love and faith in the Lord as to defy description. <i>Arcana Coelestia 59.2</i></p> | |
| <p>The Lord’s combat against hell may also be compared to a conflict with all the wild beasts on the earth and their slaughter and subjugation, until not one of them dares comes forth to attack any person who is in the Lord.... By a like Divine power the Lord fights at this day against hell in every person who is being regenerated; for hell attacks all such with diabolical fury, and unless the Lord resisted and tamed that fury, a person could not but succumb. For hell is like one monstrous human, or like a huge lion, with which indeed it is compared in the Word. <i>True Christian Religion 123.4,6</i></p> | |
| <p>Temptations go on while a person is in the process of being regenerated, for no one can be regenerated unless he undergoes temptations. The evil spirits around him are the means through which those temptations are brought about. In temptation the person is brought into a state in which the evil that possesses him, that is, possesses his own essential self, is dominant. Once he enters this state, evil and hellish spirits surround him, and when they realize that inwardly he is protected by angels those evil spirits reactivate the false ideas he has previously contemplated and the evil deeds he has committed. But the angels defend him from within. This conflict is what the person experiences as temptation, yet the experience is so vague that he is aware of it as scarcely anything more than a feeling of anxiety. <i>see Arcana Coelestia 5036.2</i></p> | |

Sample Sketches



LOADS!

Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea...

Joseph Rules Egypt

Cut out the shaded doorhanger. Fold it in half and hang it over a door.

Your famine times

We all have good times and hard or difficult times. During good times, we can store up the good states of love and peace that we feel. The teachings for the New Church call these stored up states "remains".

"Remains are all the states of love and charity, innocence and peace, with which a person is gifted.... Without these states a person is not a person." *Arcana Coelestia* 1738

Remembering good times can help us to get through hard times. And even on our darkest days there are usually still a few moments that can lift us up.

Store up your good experiences

Something I did well today was...

Think of one success you had today. It could be as simple as spontaneously holding the door for someone else and smiling.

I feel grateful for the way...

What good thing happened today? Was someone kind to you? Did you see or hear something beautiful?

I'm really looking forward to...

Anticipating something good can be almost enjoyable as experiencing it. What is coming up that brings you excitement and happiness?

Blessed be the Lord, Who daily LOADS us with benefits.

Psalm 68:19