



Joseph's Sons Blessed Level D

Genesis 48:1-22

Ages 15-18

Life Focus: Celebrate the blessing of walking with integrity.

Story Summary: Joseph heard that his father Jacob (Israel) was sick and took his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, to see him. Jacob sat up in bed, greeted Joseph and told him that Ephraim and Manasseh would be treated as *his own* children. Joseph presented his sons, and Jacob offered to bless them. Joseph approached with his sons, guiding his elder son, Manasseh, to his father's right hand and his younger son, Ephraim, towards his father's left hand. Jacob crossed his hands and stretched his right hand towards Ephraim and his left hand towards Manasseh and blessed Joseph. When Joseph realized what his father had done, he tried to switch Jacob's hands back, but Jacob would not let him do it, and he blessed both Joseph's sons.

Lesson 7

Materials needed

Supplied with Lesson

Additional Materials

		Supplied with Lesson	Additional Materials
1. Getting Started (2-3 min)	Welcome Warm-up Activity	Welcome Warm-up Activity directions p. 68	
2. Focus on the Word use all activities (5-7 min)	Read the Word		Bible or copy of Genesis 48: 1-22
	Talk About It discussion	Talk About It discussion guide p. 58	
	3. Engage with the Word choose 1 or 2 activities (15-20 min)	Explore students take turns reading quotations about blessings and write down blessings they have experienced	Blessing Jar directions p. 59 <i>Blessing Quotations</i> pp. 62-63
Explore students learn about the connection between integrity and decency and reflect on walking the path of integrity		The Path of Integrity directions pp. 59-60 <i>The Path of Integrity</i> p. 64	pens or pencils
Take Action students walk in a variety of ways, reflect on Joseph's life, and brainstorm responses to 3 scenarios		Walking with God directions p. 60 <i>What Does the Lord Ask?</i> p. 65	pens or pencils, open space for group to walk in a circle
4. Wrap It Up (2-3 min)	Take the Message Home a door hanger with a summary of the lesson and activities	Joseph's Sons Blessed Door hanger p. 66	color version available at www.newchurch.org/youth-journey-programs

1. Getting Started

Welcome Warm-up Activity

Open Mind

Draw an outline sketch of an empty head on a board or large piece of paper. Ask students to write words or draw symbols or pictures that illustrate the thoughts and feelings of a person who is acting with integrity. If students need help getting started, suggest that they think about Joseph's qualities. In what ways could people see that Joseph acted with integrity? Encourage students to add to the diagram until it shows a fairly complete picture of a person you would describe as having integrity.

2. Focus on the Word

Read **Genesis 48:1-22**

Talk About It



Select questions from the following to promote group discussion:

Joseph welcomed his family in Egypt. They were a large group. His brothers arrived with their wives, children, flocks of animals and all of their possessions. Joseph's father, Jacob (also called Israel), made the journey as an elderly man. Imagine the happy reunion they must have had!

At 147 years of age, Jacob knew he would soon die. He called for Joseph to come to him so he could lay his hands on him and bless him before he died.

What does the word 'blessing' mean? Blessings are things that make us happy, or blessed! They are both natural and spiritual. Stretch students to think about spiritual blessings. The Lord wishes to bless us with a daily sense of usefulness, of being loved, and the happiness, salvation and heaven.

The eldest son usually received a special blessing. This blessing would have been given by the father laying his hands on the son's head while he said a special blessing. The right hand stands for power and strength, and the touch of the right hand pictures a transfer of power from one person to another.

Have you witnessed someone giving a blessing where one or both hands are placed on the receiver's head? This is sometimes called the "laying on of hands." This kind of blessing is included in services of baptism, marriage, ordination and sometimes the Holy Supper.

Why did Jacob cross his hands so that his right hand rested on Ephraim's head? Jacob intended the younger son to receive the blessing of the firstborn. Spiritually this pictures the importance of learning true ideas first to guide our actions and through following this truth we can eventually come to live in a wisely loving way.

Can you think of another story in the Word in which a similar switch was made in the blessing of an elder and younger brother? Jacob himself stole his brother Esau's birthright and blessing.

The highest blessing the Lord wishes to give us is the blessing of our salvation—an eternal life in heaven. We receive this blessing by following the path of integrity which He lays out in His Word.

3. Engage with the Word

Choose one or two activities

Choice **Blessing Jar**

Students will share readings of short blessings from the Word and then reflect on the Lord's blessings in their own lives.

1. Seat the group in a circle and distribute one or more of the *Blessing Quotations* (pp. 62-63) to each person. Set the jar in the middle of the circle along with the pens and scraps of paper.
2. Invite students to take turns reading aloud the various quotations and commenting on them if they choose.
3. Introduce the idea that blessings may be on many levels—some are spiritual, whereas others are natural. Both kinds of blessings can be good. Natural blessings, e.g. honors and wealth, are good when the person receiving them loves the useful services he or she can do with them. Encourage students to share a few of the blessings they've experienced recently.
4. Invite students to take several scraps of colored paper and write a different blessing they've received on each scrap. You may wish to use quiet background music to promote a reflective atmosphere. When students have finished, have them fold their blessings and put them in the jar.
5. Take a minute to look at the jar full of colorful paper and take joy in the number of blessings people were able to think of in just a short time!
6. Pass the jar around the circle and have each student take out a couple of blessings (not necessarily their own) and read them aloud to the group. Invite students to think about the rich ways in which their lives have been blessed and to think of ways they can bless others during the coming week.

Choice **The Path of Integrity**

Invite students to explore ways they can walk along the path of integrity.

1. During this series on the life of Joseph, one of the themes we have been discussing is integrity. What are some words you associate with integrity?
2. Integrity is seen as an admirable trait. Saying that someone has integrity is a high compliment. What does it take to follow the path of integrity? Does it seem challenging to live up to that goal?
3. The Heavenly Doctrine says that "Integrity consists in sincerely wishing others well" (*Arcana Coelestia* 4574.3). Pay attention to what comes next: "Integrity consists in sincerely wishing others well. Decency consists in demonstrating that wish in speech and actions. Integrity is the source of decency. Decency is the form or image through which integrity shines."
4. What does acting "decently" mean to you? The word decent is also a compliment, but not necessarily a high one. Does being "decent" to other people seem like a more achievable goal than living with integrity?
5. The New Church teaches that we cannot control how we feel, but we can control how we act. If we genuinely treat people well, the Lord will gradually help us to genuinely wish them well inside. Showing decency to those around us is part of living with integrity.
6. Hand out *The Path of Integrity* (p. 64). Read the quotation again together.
7. Ask students to choose someone in their lives who they wish well—a friend, mother, father, sister, brother, grandparent, coach, teacher, etc.

Materials

Blessing Quotations pp. 62-63 cut apart, scraps of paper, pens or pencils, large glass jar or bowl

optional: colored paper, quiet background music

New Church Concept:

Are Natural Blessings Good?

Good people and evil enjoy honors and wealth. They are blessings in the case of good people, and curses in the case of evil people. They are blessings for people who do not place their heart in them, and they are curses for people who do place their heart in them. To place one's heart in them is to love oneself in them, and not to place one's heart in them is to love the uses, and not oneself, in them (see *Divine Providence* 217).

Materials

The Path of Integrity p. 64 for each student, pens or pencils

The Path of Integrity *continued*

8. Think about a good wish you have for that person—a feeling of integrity toward him or her—and write it in the first column. Then think of how you could put that wish into action in some way—how you can treat that person with decency. Write that idea in the second column. There are a couple of samples to help you get started.
9. Follow this process for a few different people who are important in your life.
10. Pick one of the actions to follow through on, and you will be one step further on the path of integrity!



Walking with God

Joseph walked with God. No matter what happened, he acted humbly, served justly, and showed mercy. Students will experiment with ways of walking and discuss the implication of walking with God.

1. Direct students to walk around the room as if: You are walking with your best friend; You are sad and lonely; You are skipping with joy; You are very angry; Your eyes are open to the beauty of nature; You are full of pride; You are walking with the Lord, and He is holding Your hand.
2. Ask the students to sit down and then discuss how each kind of walking felt.
3. One of the definitions of religion is “Walking with God”. Remind students that Genesis repeatedly tells us that God was with Joseph.
4. Hand out *What Does the Lord Ask?*. Read the quotation from Micah together. Invite students to brainstorm what the three elements could mean: doing justly, loving mercy, walking humbly with God.
5. In what ways did Joseph “do justly”?
He refused to betray his master, Potiphar (Genesis 39:8). He administered the prison wisely (Genesis 39:22). He saved grain so there would be enough for everyone during the famine (Genesis 41:35-36).
6. In what ways did Joseph show that he loved mercy?
He noticed and asked why the butler and baker were sad (Genesis 40:7). He forgave his brothers (Genesis 45:15). He gave many gifts to his family (Genesis 45:18-23).
7. In what ways did Joseph walk humbly with God?
He refused to sin against God with Potiphar’s wife (Genesis 39:9). He attributed his ability to interpret dreams only to God (Genesis 40:8, 41:16). He was grateful to God for the birth of his sons (Genesis 41:51-52).
8. Working individually or in pairs, have students complete *What Does the Lord Ask of You?* sheets. If time allows, gather students to share answers.

Materials

What Does the Lord Ask? for each student p. 65, pens or pencils

Preparation

Find an open space where group can walk in a circle.

Religion Is Walking with God

The universe was created for the sake of the human race, in order that from it an angelic heaven might be formed, wherein God might dwell.... To promote and accomplish this end, what mediate cause is there but religion? And what else is religion than walking with God? Religion also is like a seed producing just and true desires, and judgments and acts therefrom, in spiritual things, and by means of these in moral things, and by means of both the latter and the former in civil things (*Coronis 40*).

4. Wrap It Up

Closing

Gather the students together. We are completing the story of Joseph with the blessing of his two sons. Their blessings were not what they expected! Sometimes we experience unexpected blessings too. Look for the blessings that come each time you make an effort to act with integrity.

Hand each student a copy of the *Joseph’s Sons Blessed Door Hanger* (p. 66). Read the “The Path of Integrity” section at the top of the hanger with the students. Look at “Living in Harmony.” Encourage the students to do one or more of the activities this week.



Blessing Quotations

<p>Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it! Luke 11:28</p>	<p>Blessed are those who keep justice, And he who does righteousness at all times! Psalm 106:3</p>
<p>Real blessing is reception of love and faith from the Lord, and conjunction thereby, for this is the source of eternal happiness. <i>Heaven and Hell</i> 364</p>	<p>The Lord never curses anyone, nor is even angry. It is a person who curses himself by turning himself away from the Lord. see <i>Arcana Coelestia</i> 1093</p>
<p>Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. Revelation 22:14</p>	<p>Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We have blessed you from the house of the Lord. Psalm 118:26</p>
<p>Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul. And forget not all His benefits. Psalm 103:1-2</p>	<p>I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.... Oh magnify the Lord with me, And let us exalt His name together. Psalm 34:1,3</p>
<p>Blessed be the Lord God... Who alone does wondrous things! And blessed be His glorious name forever! Psalm 72:18-19</p>	<p>Blessed are [those]... who walk in the law of the Lord! Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart! Psalm 119:1-2</p>

Blessing Quotations

<p>Nothing is a blessing except what is given by the Lord. For that alone is blessed because it is Divine and eternal, and contains in itself heaven and eternal happiness; all other things...are not blessings, even though they may be so called. <i>Apocalypse Explained 340</i></p>	<p>Honors and wealth are blessings and they are curses.... With the good they are blessings, and with the wicked curses.... They are blessings with those who do not set their heart on them, and curses with those who do set their heart on them. <i>Divine Providence 217</i></p>
<p>In early times it was customary to say “Blessed be Jehovah”, by which people meant that every blessing, that is, all good, flows from Him. It was also a way of expressing thanks for the Lord’s having blessed them. <i>Apocalypse Revealed 289</i></p>	<p>The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26</p>
<p>By “blessing” is meant every good which a person receives from the Lord. <i>Apocalypse Revealed 289</i></p>	<p>God be merciful to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us. Psalm 67:1</p>
<p>Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever! Revelation 5:13</p>	<p>You, O Lord, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as with a shield. Psalm 5:12</p>
<p>Blessed be the Lord, Who daily loads us with benefits! Psalm 68:19</p>	<p>Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly... But his delight is in the law of the Lord. Psalm 1:1-2</p>
<p>The Divine blessing consists in being happy to eternity. <i>Arcana Coelestia 8717:3</i></p>	<p>Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb! Revelation 19:9</p>

The Path of Integrity

Integrity consists in sincerely wishing others well.

Decency consists in demonstrating that wish in speech and actions.

Integrity is the source of decency.

Decency is the form or image through which integrity shines.

(see *Arcana Coelestia* 4574.3)

	INTEGRITY	DECENCY
<i>Sample - Sister</i>	I want my sister to feel comfortable socially when she starts high school.	I can include her with my groups of friends sometimes and talk to her when I see her at school.
<i>Sample - Dad</i>	I wish my dad had more time to relax and do things he enjoys.	I can help dad with his work around the house so he gets finished more quickly and has time to relax.

What Does the Lord Ask?

He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justly, to love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8

Put your own endings on each of these situations in two different ways.

To Do Justly

Someone you have recently met calls and invites you over for the afternoon. You accept the invitation. The next day your best friend calls and invites you over on the same afternoon to go to a movie that you really want to see, and to stay overnight. What would you tell your best friend and why would you say this if you were acting justly? unjustly?

Justly

Unjustly

To Love Mercy

You are taking care of a young child. The child's mother has asked you not to let her child have any candy while she is gone. You hear the child in the kitchen and when you get there you find the child about to take some candy from the candy jar. The child looks at you and says, "Please." What would you do and why to act mercifully? unmercifully?

Mercifully

Unmercifully

To Walk Humbly with Your God

Your classmates are getting ready to leave school at the end of the day. One classmate who is not very popular pleads for someone to wait for him. Your popular friends are already leaving. You have to choose between looking "cool" with your popular friends and staying behind to wait for the unpopular student. What would you do, and why, if you were to act humbly? not humbly?

Humbly

Not Humbly (overly proud)

God will be with you

**Joseph's
Sons
Blessed**

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

The Path of Integrity

In the spiritual world a person's inner reality and outer appearance are brought into harmony, so that the internal and external become one, instead of being at variance and divided in two. They are divided in two in the natural world, and only in the case of people who have an honest heart do they become one. *Marriage Love 48:4*

Choosing to live with integrity is the way that we can be guided, more and more, by our higher nature. This is the part of us that is closest to God, that truly wants to follow His will and wisely love other people.

Following the path of integrity involves trying to act in a way that matches our higher nature. This takes a life-time of practice, but whenever we take a step on that path, our inner and outer selves are, for a moment at least, in harmony with each other and with God.

Living in Harmony

I want to be connected with my higher self...

Think about what kind of a person you would really like to be internally. Would you like to be courageous, generous, honest, etc.? Choose one characteristic or trait to focus on for now.

I can speak and act from my higher self...

For a few hours, try to react to everything that happens in harmony with who you would like to be internally. Before you act, stop and think "How can I respond to this courageously, or generously, or honestly?"

LIVING IN HARMONY

