

date: **10/29/17****Bible Passage: Genesis 42—47; 50**
(Joseph, Part 2)

God Saves

REMEMBER VERSE

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:6

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

I have a friend who tried to help a struggling family buy a house. In the end, she and her husband lost tens of thousands of dollars because the other family swindled them. This painful situation didn't make sense at the time. However, other neighbors had been watching it unfold. They had seen the faith of my friend and her husband in the midst of everything. These neighbors came to know the Lord because of it!

Hebrews 11 talks about believers who suffered even though they'd done nothing wrong. These were tortured, stoned, imprisoned, "destitute, persecuted and mistreated" (verse 37) They "were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised" (verse 39).

In our lifetime, some of us may see the outcome of our faith. Others may not. Bad things may happen without reason. Even so, God is sovereign. We have to believe that even though we might not understand why things happen, God knows why and intends to use these situations for good. Our faith can be used by God for "the saving of many lives" (Genesis 50:20).

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Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

God saves. He saved the life of Joseph, only one of two major characters in the Bible about which nothing

negative is mentioned (the other person is Daniel). Just about every other person in The Big God Story had some kind of flaw or issue he was dealing with. But it seems Joseph really knew who he was. He was confident in his God and knew that God saves. Even the arrogance some attribute to him in his youth can be seen simply as youthful honesty and naïveté.

At every opportunity where Joseph might have fallen, he reaffirmed his faith in the power, sovereignty, and salvation of God. One lesson he would learn through life experience is that the road to glory leads inexorably through suffering and trials—it is the way God grows our faith. Throughout Joseph's enslavement, he knew that God saves. Throughout all the false accusations and imprisonment, Joseph knew God saves. And throughout the severe famine, Joseph knew God saves. Through these trials, Joseph was learning obedience and endurance.

It was this confidence in who he was (and whose he was) that helped Joseph avoid the temptation of sin with Potiphar's wife, of taking credit for the interpretation of dreams, and of taking revenge on his brothers when they learned who he was. Joseph knew God's plans are higher than ours. When we trust in who God made us to be and we trust that He is the One who saves, we can learn that suffering is not always bad. It is a tool God can use to shape and refine us for His use. And we can learn that regardless of our circumstances, God is in control, and He is working for our good and His glory (Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28).

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word

Joseph's life gives us a powerful testimony to the greatness of God's saving power as well as His wise plans. What a roller coaster—sold into slavery, then granted the privilege of running an important official's household, then falsely accused of attempted rape, then thrown into prison, and then ultimately elevated to second-in-command of Egypt!

From our perspective, it's easy to see God's sovereignty and salvation in Joseph's life. We have the whole story. But, of course, Joseph didn't. Imagine bouncing along a dusty road, captured by slave owners who'd ripped you away from everything you'd ever known. Or imagine sitting in a jail cell, falsely accused of attacking a prominent man's wife. Imagine the hopelessness and fear of those moments when you have no idea what's ahead.

Today, as you read through a passage of Scripture you've likely heard before, ask God to give you fresh insight. Ask Him to give you a new appreciation and awareness of His control over every situation in your life. Pray that your children would know God's presence as they walk through difficult circumstances in their own lives and trust that He knows exactly what He's doing. Pray that they would take comfort in knowing that they're God's beloved children and that He is mighty to save.

SMALL GROUP

SECTION

EXPLORE// 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.

Hidden Identity

When Joseph's brothers saw him in Egypt, they didn't recognize him. How were they to know this was their younger brother whom they had sold as a slave many years before? Today children will play a guessing game as they attempt to uncover hidden identities.

SUPPLIES

- [Hidden Identity Questions](#) (see Resources)
- Bowl or basket
- Paper (2 sheets per child)
- Pencils
- Scissors

PREPARE AHEAD

Print or copy the Hidden Identity Questions for leader use only. Cut the paper into small pieces approximately four inches by two inches.

RELATE

As children arrive, invite them to sit in a circle. Pass out the papers and the pencils. **Today we're going to answer questions about ourselves and then guess who belongs to the answer we read aloud. To make it fun, your answers need to be secret, so be careful to hide your responses as you write them down.**

Choose a question from the Hidden Identity Questions and ask it of the group. Each child needs to write her answer on the paper, fold it, and place it in the bowl. Once every answer is in the bowl, the leader chooses an answer and reads it aloud. The child to the left of the leader gets to guess who wrote that answer. If he guesses correctly, he gets a point. If he guesses incorrectly, he gets no points and the turn moves to the child on his left. Continue around the circle until everyone has had a chance to try to make a match. If no one guesses correctly, allow the child who wrote that answer to reveal herself to the group. Keep choosing papers from the bowl until everyone's answer has been shared and guessed. (Hint: When you have two answers left, you can allow the whole group to vote, and each child can receive a point if she guesses correctly.) Continue the game with multiple rounds and questions until your EXPLORE time is finished.

LARGE GROUP
SECTION

DISCOVER// 30 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible Verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Traditions and Remember Verse

SUPPLIES

- Mementos for your church Traditions (rocks, marbles, gum balls, etc.)
- [Remember Verse image](#) (see Resources)

RELATE

Give the children mementos (such as rocks, marbles, or blocks) for accomplishments such as memorizing the Remember Verse or bringing their Bibles. Have them put the objects into a clear container or add them to a structure, and celebrate when it's complete.

This week's Remember Verse focuses on a character trait of God that's highlighted in today's portion of The Big God Story.

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:6

Connect

Encourage the members of your community to get to know one another through engaging questions, energizing games, and creative activities.

Question

What's your favorite food?

The Big God Story

Bible Passage: Genesis 42—47; 50

Storytelling Technique: Pantomiming

God Saves

SUPPLIES

- [Timeline image](#) (see Resources)
- Bibles

RELATE

Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds. **Imagine for a moment you're walking into the market to buy groceries for your family. As you look around, you see nothing but empty shelves—and no food! How would you feel?** Allow and interact with responses. **Something similar was happening in the part of The Big God Story we looked at last week. A famine, or a time without much food, was about to happen, and God had a plan to save His people. God helped Joseph interpret one of Pharaoh's dreams, alerting him to the dangerous time ahead. In return, Pharaoh brought Joseph out of prison and put him in charge of storing up lots of food for the famine.**

When the famine arrived, lots of people traveled to Egypt to get food.

Choose four child volunteers to help you act out today's passage. As they come onstage, whisper to them that at different points in the narrative you will give them a feeling or action, and they will have to act out that feeling or action and freeze in that position.

For the first action, ask the volunteers to act as if they're exhausted after traveling very far and freeze in place. **Joseph's father and brothers lived in Canaan, near Egypt. Joseph's father Jacob said, "I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us, so that we may live and not die"** (Genesis 42:1–2). Encourage your kids to open their Bibles to these verses and follow along. **All of the brothers except Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son, traveled more than 200 miles to Egypt for food. In a car today that would take three or four hours, but they didn't have cars or planes yet—they walked or rode animals. Walking that far would take weeks!** Have volunteers unfreeze.

Once the brothers got to Egypt, they bowed before the ruler distributing the grain. Ask volunteers to bow down and freeze. **Do you know who that was?** Allow responses. **Right—Joseph! Remember how Joseph dreamed that his brothers would bow down to him one day? That dream came true. The brothers didn't recognize Joseph, but Joseph recognized them.** Have volunteers unfreeze.

Do you remember what Joseph's brothers did to him years earlier? Allow responses. **They took his coat, made it look like he'd died, threw him into a hole, and sold him into slavery. Joseph went from a beloved son to a slave! But, as we've already seen, God had a good plan to save him in the end.**

Ask the volunteers to stand up and make a crying face and freeze. **First, Joseph accused his brothers of being spies and threw them in jail. Then Joseph told the brothers to go home with some food and return to Egypt with their brother, Benjamin. So the brothers returned home and told their father Jacob what had happened.** Have volunteers unfreeze.

Jacob finally agreed to send them back to Egypt with Benjamin. When they arrived, Joseph became so emotional that he ran out of the room and cried. Later, Joseph returned and prepared a feast for his brothers. Ask volunteers to act like they're eating and freeze. He also gave them grain to take home a second time. All this time, the brothers still didn't know who Joseph was! Have volunteers unfreeze. **Then Joseph secretly put a silver cup in Benjamin's bag and told his servants to chase the brothers and accuse them of stealing the cup.**

The brothers protested, saying they hadn't stolen anything, but the servants said, "Whoever is found to have it will become my slave; the rest of you will be free from blame" (Genesis 44:10). **The brothers agreed to be searched, and, of course, the cup was found in Benjamin's bag. The brothers knew their father would be heartbroken if Benjamin didn't return home with them.**

Finally, Joseph couldn't hide his secret any longer. He told his brothers, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into [slavery]!" (Genesis 45:4). Have the volunteers make a shocked or scared face and freeze. **The brothers were shocked and terrified! But Joseph told them not to be sad or angry about what they'd done to him. He told them that "God sent [him] ahead" of them so he could save their lives and take care of them** (verse 5). **Joseph could forgive his brothers because he knew God had chosen him to play a big role in His story!** Ask volunteers to look happy and freeze. **Joseph told them to bring their father Jacob back to Egypt so they could all live as a family again.** Have volunteers return to their

seats, and ask everyone else to give them a round of applause.

Can you imagine? Joseph knew that God had saved him and his brothers. Joseph knew that God had let him go through all of the things he did—rejection, slavery, jail—so God could use him. God didn't just save Joseph and his family; through them, God saved many other lives too.

Do you remember how God gave Joseph's father Jacob a new name? What was it? Allow responses. Yes—Israel. Israel was the grandson of Abraham. God promised to give Abraham more descendants that he could count, and the greatest descendant of all was Jesus Christ. God was in control, and He knew He would preserve Joseph's family even in the midst of the famine because Jesus would be one of their descendants.

Through all the hard times Joseph experienced, God was weaving His story, a story that saved Joseph and his family. And because they were saved, Jesus came to earth to die for our sins. By trusting and obeying Jesus, we can be saved too and become a part of God's family. Share a story of a time God used a difficult situation in your life for good.

SMALL GROUP SECTION

RESPOND// 15 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children reflect on what the Holy Spirit is teaching them and respond through creative activities and games.

Reflect: God Saves

Encourage kids to look up the following passages in their Bibles.

Questions for Younger Kids

- How did Joseph respond when he saw his brothers? Genesis 45:1–2
- How did God use the difficult parts of Joseph's life for good? Genesis 45:1–8
- What does God save us from?
- Have you been saved by God? If so, tell us about it.

Questions for Older Kids

- How did Joseph respond when he saw his brothers? Genesis 45:1–2
- How did God use the difficult parts of Joseph's life for good? Genesis 45:1–8
- Read Genesis 45:12–16 with the children. How do you think you might respond in a similar situation? Would you respond like Joseph, or do you think you'd have a difficult time forgiving them?
- God saved Joseph's family by bringing them into Egypt. What other family in The Big God Story did God save by sending them into Egypt? Matthew 2:13–15
- What difficult situations has God saved you from? How do you think He might want to use those situations for good? Genesis 50:20

BLESS// 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES

- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- Bible

RELATE

As you bless your kids, tell them they have the opportunity to also be a blessing to others. Encourage them to freely share the joy and love they have received from God.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands in front of them, palms up.

Sometimes, in the midst of challenging times, it can be hard to see that God is working things together for good. Sometimes we need to be reminded of that truth. Today, as I read this blessing over you, I want you to repeat each line after me. As you repeat it, think about the words and invite the Holy Spirit to make them personal to you.

Open a Bible and read Psalm 62:1–2, 5–8, pausing after each line to allow kids to repeat after you:

Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him. Kids repeat.

Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken. Kids repeat.

Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Kids repeat.

Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. Kids repeat.

My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. Kids repeat.

Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. Kids repeat.

Finish with the following blessing:

May you know that God loves you. He saved you. He protects you and will always be with you in difficult times.