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Bible Passage: Genesis 37; 39—41
(Joseph, Part 1)

God Redeems

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

In junior high, I had an amazing youth group leader named Alex. At the time, I was doubting my faith, and Alex took my questions seriously and provided thoughtful answers.

When I was in college I saw Alex less frequently. When we did talk, he shared feelings of discouragement, frustration, and loneliness. He had stopped working with youth and was doubting God's calling. Then, one day, he suffered an aneurysm that left him in critical condition.

For six months, Alex lay unconscious in the hospital. At first the doctors gave him hours to live. They were amazed when he continued to live for days, then weeks, until he finally woke up. In their words, his recovery was miraculous.

Today, when I talk with Alex, his voice is full of joy and thankfulness. The effects of the aneurysm left him unable to play basketball and reliant on daily medication, but Alex is more optimistic and joyful than ever. Through a devastating experience that left his body broken, God restored his spiritual life. Praise be to God, the One who redeems.

Asriel Medina
TruStory Team

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

God redeems. In the life of Joseph, we see this man being captured by his brothers, sold into slavery, framed by the wife of Potiphar, forgotten in jail—and yet God redeemed him out of every one of these situations, no matter what role Joseph played in each one.

First, Joseph wore the coat of many colors given to him by his father Jacob. Jacob loved Joseph more than he loved Joseph's brothers because Joseph was the firstborn son of Jacob's beloved wife, Rachel. The first garment change occurred when Joseph's brothers took the coat from him, tore it into pieces, and soaked it in goat's blood to convince Jacob that Joseph was dead.

But we see in Scripture that “the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success” (Genesis 39:23). Because of this, Joseph was appointed to be an attendant instead of a slave in the house of Potiphar. His clothing changed from that of a slave to that of an overseer. This garment was taken from Joseph when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him. He left his garment in her hand when he fled from her advances.

Next, Joseph wore the garments of a prisoner. Later, after he interpreted Pharaoh's dream, Joseph was rewarded and put “in charge of the whole land of Egypt” and “dressed ... in robes of fine linen” (Genesis 41:41–42). God not only redeemed Joseph from his imprisonment but also dressed him in fine robes and gave him a position of responsibility. What a change from the days of wearing the garb of a slave!

As God's children we're clothed in Jesus' righteousness (Isaiah 61:10). God sees us as redeemed, although we sometimes can't see ourselves that way. No matter what we may think or feel, Scripture says “we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10). God sees us as holy—like Christ. The redemption we have received from Christ is extravagant; it is redemption we do not deserve and did not earn.

Support

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

When we choose to be in leadership, our stories cease to be ours alone. Instead, God uses our stories for the sake of the people, or the children, whom we lead. Because we've answered God's call to be in leadership, we're now living to bring the lost to Jesus. We're living with our whole lives—personal and public, internal and external—to share the message that God redeems.

God redeems souls from destruction and gives them eternal life. God redeems hearts from suffering and gives them joy. God redeems situations from hopeless to full of hope. How has God redeemed you—your soul, the pain in your heart, the difficulty of a situation in your life? How is God redeeming you right at this moment? What stories could you share this week with your kids about how God is a God who redeems? Share these stories with the faith that God will use them to transform the hearts of the kids you lead.

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.

Color Elimination

Joseph was his father Jacob's favorite son. Jacob loved Joseph so much that he gave him a beautiful and colorful coat to wear.

SUPPLIES

- Paper (several sheets)
- Scissors
- Pens or pencils
- Medium-sized bowl

SET UP

Cut the paper into strips about one to two inches wide. Make sure you have three to five strips per child.

RELATE

Invite your children to interact with each other in an activity that gets them thinking about colors. Have each child take three to five strips of paper and on each strip write a colorful description of an item she's wearing. For example, a child might write "blue striped shirt," "flowered brown skirt," and "brown sandals." Once they finish writing, have the children put their strips of paper in the bowl.

Now gather the children in a circle and have them stand. Give the bowl to a child and have her choose a strip of paper and read what it says. Anyone wearing an item of clothing described on the paper must sit down. Have children continue passing the bowl around the circle and reading the strips of paper until only one child is left standing.

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 the coolest thing you've ever found at a garage sale or thrift store? What made it the coolest?

The Big God Story

Storytelling Technique: "Mystery Box" Images

Bible Passage: Genesis 37; 39—41

God Redeems

SUPPLIES

- [Timeline image](#) (see Resources)
- [Mystery Box images](#) (see Resources)
- Bibles
- Whiteboard and dry erase marker
- Small prize (candy, small toy, etc.)
- Medium-sized box
- Construction paper or wrapping paper (enough to cover the box)
- Scissors
- Tape
- Marker

SET UP

Cover the box with colorful paper and write “Mystery Box” on it. Print or copy the eight *Mystery Box* images (preferably in color) and put them inside the box. On the whiteboard, draw six short horizontal lines next to each other, creating a blank for each letter in the word *redeem*. Place three chairs in a line on the stage.

RELATE

Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds. **Welcome! I need three volunteers to come to the stage.** Invite volunteers to the front and ask them to take a seat, lining up according to birthdate, with the oldest person in the first chair on the left. **Volunteers, today you’re going to guess the letters in a word with six letters.** Point to the board. **You’ll take turns guessing a letter, and if that letter is in the word, I’ll write it in the space or spaces on the board. During your turn you can also guess the word. If you guess correctly, you win a prize!** Begin the game. Once you have a winner, give him the small prize, invite a round of applause, thank the kids for participating, and ask them to return to their seats.

The word on the board is *redeem*. Does anyone know what *redeem* means? Allow responses. **To redeem something means to buy it back. Today we’ll hear about someone whose life was redeemed by God. God restored this person’s life. God redeemed all the bad things that happened to this person and used them for good.**

During the past few weeks we’ve heard about a man named Jacob—the grandson of Abraham—who stole his older brother’s birthright and blessing, ran away for 20 years and then struggled with God. God continued to reveal Himself to Jacob, and God changed Jacob’s heart, repaired his relationship with his brother, and renamed him Israel.

Jacob had 12 sons, and his favorite son was Joseph. Jacob gave Joseph something special. Let’s look in the Mystery Box to find out what it is. Reach into the Mystery Box and pull out the image of the coat. **Jacob gave Joseph a colorful coat! This made his brothers very jealous. Then Joseph had a dream about his brothers in which they tied up stalks of grain into bunches, and those bunches bowed down to Joseph’s bunch.** Invite kids to open their Bibles to Genesis 37:5–8. Read the verses aloud or ask a volunteer to read them.

Hearing about Joseph’s dream made his brothers even angrier, so they decided to kill him! One of Joseph’s brothers, Reuben, begged his brothers not to kill Joseph. So, instead, they tore off Joseph’s coat and threw him into a well. Rip the image of the coat in half. **Let’s find out what the brothers did next.** Pull the image of coins out of the box. **They decided to sell Joseph to a group of traveling businessmen. Instantly Joseph went from being the favorite son to a slave in Egypt!**

Although Joseph’s brothers abandoned him, God never did. God had a plan to redeem Joseph’s life. Read Genesis 39:2–4 while the kids follow along in their own Bibles. **Joseph was sold to a man named Potiphar, and because God was with Joseph, Potiphar saw something different about him and put him in charge of his household. But one day Potiphar’s wife got very mad at Joseph and made up lies about him. Then (pull handcuffs image out of box) Joseph was thrown in jail!** Read verses 21–22 while kids follow along. **Even in jail God stayed with Joseph and again redeemed him from a hard situation. God allowed Joseph to be put in charge of the other prisoners, and God even gave Joseph the ability to interpret dreams.**

Pull crown image out of box. **One night, Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, had a strange dream.** Pull cow image out of box. **He dreamed that seven skinny cows ate seven fat cows. He didn’t know what this**

meant. Read Genesis 41:15–16 while kids follow along. Then pull the image of 7 from the box. **When Joseph shared that the dream predicted seven years of lots of food and then seven years of very little food, Pharaoh was amazed!** Read Genesis verses 39–40 or ask a child volunteer to stand up and read it. **Joseph was released from jail and given gold, clothes, and chariots with horses. He became second-in-command over all of Egypt! Then he went to work gathering so much grain (pull grain image out of box) during the seven years of plenty that there was too much to count!**

God knew Joseph and had a plan all along for his life. Joseph knew God and chose to trust Him in the midst of many trials because He knew God was the One who could redeem his situation. God was faithful and redeemed Joseph's life over and over again and turned it into something beautiful for His glory. God knows us too, and we can know Him!

Joseph's life points to an even bigger part of The Big God Story. What do you think that is? Invite responses. Pull cross image out of box. **Right. It's the story of Jesus, the ultimate Redeemer, who came from Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph's family line. God kept Joseph's family alive during the time with little food in order to save the family line of the Redeemer, Jesus. And through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus paid our debt and freed us from sin. He redeemed us!**

God can redeem our lives—not just the difficult things we go through but also our hearts. What a great God! Share a time when God redeemed something difficult in your life.

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 Redeems

Encourage the kids to open their Bibles and read the suggested passages.

Questions for Younger Kids

- **Why were Joseph's brothers angry?** Genesis 37:4
- **How did God care for Joseph when he was in prison?** Genesis 39:21–22
- **What happened to Joseph after he interpreted Pharaoh's dream?** Genesis 41:39–40
- **Has God used a difficult thing in your life for something good? Tell us about it.**
- **What do you know about God from this part of The Big God Story?**

Questions for Older Kids

- **What special ability did God give Joseph?** Genesis 37:5–9
- **How did God care for Joseph when he was in prison?** Genesis 40:8–12
- **How did God redeem Joseph's situation in this portion of The Big God Story?** Genesis 41:39–41
- **What does it mean to redeem something?**

- **When has God redeemed something in your life?**
- **Is there something in your life you need God to redeem right now? What is it?**
- **What do you know about God from this part of The Big God Story?**

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

Encourage the kids to hold their hands in front of them, palms up, as a posture of receiving what God might speak to them today. Then open a Bible and read Psalm 40:1–4a:

I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the LORD and put their trust in him. Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD.

Then finish with these words of blessing:

May you know that the God of Israel redeemed you. May you trust in God your Redeemer.