



## SESSION 4

## Joseph



## MEETING AIM

To understand that God has a plan.



## BIBLE PASSAGE

Genesis 37-47 (selections)



## BACKGROUND

Joseph's story is long, and younger children might struggle to understand quite how long it took for Joseph to go from boastful teenager to governor of Egypt. However, help the children to hear how, even though things didn't go Joseph's way for years at a time, God was with him and made it work out for good.

## + CIRCLE TIME



As the children arrive, sit everyone down in a circle. If you have parents, encourage them to sit with their children (but not to speak for them). Ask the children if they have done anything this week and encourage them to tell the group about it. Younger children may struggle to remember much, but listen to anything they would like to tell you. Share something that you have done this week too. Thank everyone for their stories and say a simple prayer thanking God for what you have discussed.

## + CHATTING ABOUT WAITING



**You will need:** piece of paper; pen

Chat together about what you're looking forward to. Maybe it's a holiday, a birthday or even Christmas! Make a list of everyone's birthday and see who has to wait the shortest and longest time till their special day. Talk about what it's like to wait for something good.

## + BIBLE STORY



**You will need:** a large roll of paper (lining paper is ideal); felt-tip pens

Spread out the large roll of paper and tell the children that you're going to draw a map to show God's plan. Start by drawing Joseph's home at one end of the paper and a pyramid in Egypt at the other. Next to the pyramid, add a palace and prison bars. As you tell the story draw on the characters and route - the ideas of what to draw appear

in brackets. You don't have to be an expert artist, stick figures would be fine!

Joseph (*draw Joseph near the house*) lived with his eleven brothers (*draw brothers but without faces*) in the land of Canaan. He was his father's favourite; his father even had a beautiful, coloured coat made especially for him. (*Draw a coat on Joseph and colour it in.*) This made his brothers feel jealous and angry. (*Give them angry faces.*)

Joseph had special dreams. One day he told his brothers that he had dreamt that they had all been working in a field. They were making bundles of corn and - what a surprise - the bundles his brothers had made bowed down to Joseph's bundle. (*Draw the sheaves of corn as you talk about the dream.*) This made his brothers even more angry and jealous. "You think you will be king and rule over us!" they said.

The brothers thought about killing Joseph. But instead they took Joseph's coat off him and threw him into a well. (*Draw Joseph in a well.*) Some traders came by and the brothers decided to sell Joseph to them as a slave. They took his coat, dipped it in animal blood and showed it to their father so he would think Joseph was dead.

The traders took Joseph to Egypt. (*Draw a dotted line to Egypt.*) There Joseph worked for an important man. But the man's wife told lies about him and he ended up in prison! (*Draw Joseph next to the bars.*) While he was in prison he met a servant who had served drinks to the king. (*Draw a glass of drink.*) The man had strange dreams and Joseph offered to explain them. What Joseph described came true! The cupbearer was set free and returned to the palace. But he forgot all about Joseph.

Some time later the king had a dream that made him worried. He asked lots of people what it meant but no one could explain it. The servant remembered Joseph and the king sent for him. (*Draw a dotted line to the palace.*) Joseph was able to explain the dream! It meant that Egypt would have plenty of food for a while, but then very little food after that. The king was so impressed he asked Joseph to take charge of putting food away for the hard times ahead. (*Draw piles of grain.*)

People came from far away to buy the grain that Joseph had stored. Joseph's family was so hungry that ten of his brothers went to Egypt to buy grain. (*Draw another dotted line to Egypt and then draw the brothers there.*) Joseph recognised them straightaway but acted as though he did not know them. He gave them grain but said they must bring back their youngest brother Benjamin with them.

The brothers went to fetch Benjamin. (*With your finger, trace the line from Egypt to Canaan and back. Then draw an extra*

*brother in Egypt.*) When they returned, Joseph asked them to dinner. (*Draw a plate of food.*) While they were eating, Joseph told his servant to fill the brothers' sacks with grain but to hide a silver cup in Benjamin's sack. (*Draw a sack with a cup in it.*) When the time came to leave, Joseph checked the sacks. He pretended to be very angry that Benjamin had stolen the cup. The brothers begged him not to harm Benjamin. They said their father would be very upset if Benjamin were put in prison.

Joseph saw that his brothers had become better men and forgave them. He told them who he was. He explained that it was God's plan that he should come to Egypt to save many people from the famine.

## + CHATTING TOGETHER



Ask the children these questions, making sure everyone has the chance to contribute:

- What's your favourite part of this story?
- How do you think Joseph felt when he saw his brothers again?
- Have you ever had to wait a long time for something to happen?
- Do you want to say anything to God?

## + CREATIVE RESPONSE



**You will need:** 'thank you' songs: live music or recorded tracks and the means to play them

Talk about how God had a plan for Joseph. Read out Genesis 50:20 - Joseph says this to their brothers after they have been reunited. Sing some of your favourite 'thank you' songs together. Thank God that he looked after Joseph.

## + PRAYER



**You will need:** *My big prayer book* (Scripture Union)

Say that God was with Joseph all his life. Use the prayers from pages 22 and 27 of *My big prayer book* to help children say thank you to God for being with them too.

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