

Lesson 6: From Pit To Palace

Key Takeaway

Even when bad things happen, I can trust God's good plan.

Scriptural Basis

Genesis 37-50

Bible Verse

"The Lord always keeps his promises; he is gracious in all he does" (Psalm 145:13b, NLT).

Learning Objectives:

- Kids will retell key events of the story and explain how God was with Joseph through every situation.
- Kids will describe how Joseph forgave his brothers and trusted God's plan, even when life was hard.
- Kids will identify one way they can trust God or show forgiveness in their own lives.

Materials Needed for Small Group:

- ☐ A Bible
- ☐ Name tags
- ☐ A snack per child

Activity: Heavy Backpack

- ☐ Backpack
- ☐ Books or heavy items
- ☐ Index cards with hurtful scenarios

Activity: Joseph's Journey Board Game

- ☐ Printout 2, Printable game board (one copy per small group)
- ☐ Dice (1 per group)
- ☐ Game pieces or markers (1 per player)
- ☐ Bible or summary of Joseph's story (Genesis 37, 39–50)

Activity: Bitter vs. Sweet Forgiveness

- ☐ Fresh lemon (cut into wedges)
- ☐ Sugar in a small bowl or packet
- ☐ Napkins or paper towels

Materials Needed for Large Group:

- ☐ A Bible
- ☐ Printout 1, one copy

Materials Needed for Games:

Game: Coat of Many Colors Relay

Materials:

- ☐ A colorful candy or small items
- ☐ Bowls for each team
- ☐ Spoons for each team.

Game: Brothers' Pit Escape – Team Challenge

- ☐ (optional: masking tape to mark a "pit" or boundary).

Game: Coat of Many Colors Relay – Candy Version

- ☐ Small colorful candies (e.g., Skittles, M&Ms) or small colorful items (pom-poms, beads)
- ☐ Spoons (1 per participant)
- ☐ Bowls or cups (1 per team at the starting point and 1 at the finish line).

Small Group Session 1

15 Minutes

Distribute name tags and snacks. Choose one of the following activities to do together while children eat their snack.

Share and Listen

Option 1

Ask the children to share their highs and lows (the best and worst things that happened to them either today or from the past week).

Option 2

Ask the children to take turns sharing how they are feeling today using the [“How Are You Feeling?” chart](#).

Pray Together

Collect prayer requests from the students. The leader or a student can pray for the entire group, or a leader can pair up students and invite them to pray for one another.

Opening Question

- “Have you ever had something unfair happen to you? How did you feel?”
- “Have you ever forgiven someone for hurting you? How did it feel?”
- “Have you ever had someone forgive you for hurting them?”

Activity: Heavy Backpack

Objective: Demonstrate the emotional weight of holding onto unforgiveness.

Materials needed:

- ☐ Backpack
- ☐ Books or heavy items
- ☐ Index cards with hurtful scenarios

Instructions:

Put the backpack on a volunteer and slowly add “weight” as you read through hurtful scenarios.

Ask how it feels to carry all that weight.

Then begin removing the items, saying: **“This is what it’s like when we forgive. We don’t have to carry it anymore.**

That backpack got really heavy, didn’t it? Every time we added another book, it was like carrying more and more hurt—just like what can happen when people

hurt us or let us down. It doesn't take long for all that pain, anger, and sadness to weigh us down and make us tired."

Hold up the empty backpack and say:

"But when we choose to forgive—just like taking out the heavy books—we don't have to carry all of that anymore. Forgiveness helps us let go of those heavy feelings. And the best part is, we don't have to do it alone. God helps us forgive others, just like he forgives us."

Now introduce the story:

"Today we're going to hear about a man named Joseph. He had every reason to be angry and hold onto hurt. His own brothers were jealous of him, threw him into a pit, and sold him as a slave. Joseph went through a lot of hard things—being treated unfairly, being forgotten, and feeling alone."

But at the end of his story, something amazing happens. Joseph sees his brothers again. He has a choice: to hold on to the heavy pain and get revenge—or to forgive them. Let's find out what he does and how God was with him every step of the way."

Large Group

10-15 Minutes

Welcome the students to Crossroads and tell them you are glad they came this week.

Optional Starters

“Who is Jesus” call and response

Prayer Prompt: “God, I want to praise you for...”

(Tell God something amazing about him and praise him for who he is.)

Opening Song: “Stories” by Go Fish

Opening Prayer

Tell kids that closing their eyes and folding their hands together can help keep them focused and not distract those around them.

Opening Question

- ***“Have you ever had someone hurt your feelings? Was it hard to forgive them?”***

“Forgiving others can be really hard, but Joseph’s story shows us how we can trust God and forgive, just like he does. Joseph is a man who faced a lot of hard times but still trusted God and forgave those who hurt him.”

Activity: The Good, The Bad — But God...

Objective: To help kids see that both good and bad things happened in Joseph’s life, but God never left him. This will reinforce the idea that God is with us no matter what we go through.

Material Needed:

- ☐ (Printout 1) Two large signs:
One that says “Good Thing” (green or happy design)
One that says “Bad Thing” (red or sad design)
- ☐ Optional: A third sign that says “But God was with him” (gold or bright)

Instructions:

Gather the kids and explain:

“Today we’re going to go through the story of Joseph together. As we hear each part of the story, we’ll decide—was it a good thing or a bad thing? But no matter what happened, we’re going to remember this important truth: God was with Joseph.”

Assign two kids (or leaders) to hold up signs.

- One holds the “Good Thing” sign.
- One holds the “Bad Thing” sign.
- Optional: A third person can hold or raise the “But God was with him” sign after each part.

Tell Joseph’s story in segments. After each segment, pause and ask:

- ***“Was that a good thing or a bad thing?”***
- ***“Have the correct sign-holder raise their sign.”***
- ***“Then lead the group in saying: “But God was with him!””***

The Story of Joseph with Prompts

1. ***“Joseph was one of 12 sons of Jacob. He was loved very much by his father, who gave him a special colorful coat.”***
→ Good thing!“But God was with him!”
2. ***“This made his brothers jealous. Joseph also had dreams from God that showed he would one day be a leader—even over his family—which made his brothers even angrier.”***
→ Bad thing!“But God was with him!”
3. ***“One day, his brothers took Joseph’s coat and threw him into a pit.”***
→ Bad thing!But God was with him!
4. ***“Then they sold him as a slave to people traveling to Egypt.”***
→ Bad thing!“But God was with him!”
5. ***“Joseph worked hard and did well in Potiphar’s house, who was a rich and powerful man.”***
→ Good thing!“But God was with him!”
6. ***“Joseph was falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife, he was thrown into prison—even though he had done nothing wrong. This was a very hard and unfair situation for Joseph.”***
→ Bad thing!“But God was with him!”
7. ***“The prison warden noticed that Joseph was trustworthy and wise, so he put Joseph in charge of the other prisoners. Joseph helped manage the daily tasks in the prison, and everything he did succeeded because God was with him.”***
→ Good thing!“But God was with him!”
8. ***“Joseph met two of Pharaoh’s officials—the chief cupbearer and the chief baker—who had been imprisoned. One night, both men had troubling***

dreams. Joseph noticed they were upset and asked them about their dreams. He told them that interpreting dreams was God's business, but he would listen and share what God revealed to him. The cupbearer was released from prison, just like Joseph had told after interpreting his dream."

→ Good thing!"But God was with him!"

9. **"Joseph remained in prison for two more years. Then Pharaoh himself had two puzzling dreams. In one, seven healthy cows were eaten by seven thin cows; in the other, seven full ears of grain were swallowed by seven withered ones. None of Pharaoh's wise men could interpret these dreams. The cupbearer remembered Joseph's gift and mentioned him to Pharaoh. Joseph was summoned, and he explained that both dreams predicted seven years of abundance in Egypt, followed by seven years of severe famine. He advised Pharaoh to store surplus grain during the plentiful years to prepare for the famine."**

→ Good thing!"But God was with him!"

10. **"Impressed by Joseph's wisdom and recognizing that God's spirit was with him, Pharaoh appointed Joseph as his second-in-command, granting him authority over all of Egypt. Joseph became a leader and helped save people from famine."**

→ Good thing!"But God was with him!"

11. **"Joseph's father, Isaac, on hearing that grain was available in Egypt, sent his sons to buy food. When the brothers arrived in Egypt, they bowed before Joseph, not recognizing him as their brother. Joseph remembered his earlier dreams of his family bowing to him."**

→ Good thing!"But God was with him!"

12. **"Joseph revealed his identity, and his brothers were scared because of what they had done to Joseph years ago. But Joseph forgave them, and explained that God had used these events to save many lives. Joseph forgave his brothers and brought his family to Egypt."**

→ Good thing!"But God was with him!"

Ask:

- **"Were there more good things or bad things in Joseph's life?"**
- **"What helped Joseph keep going even when things were hard?"**
- **"What does this teach us about God when we go through hard things?"**

"Just like Joseph, we might go through things that don't seem fair or feel really hard. But God is always with us. He has a plan even when we don't understand it yet.

Joseph went through many hard times. His brothers were unkind to him, he was taken far from home, and he even ended up in jail for something he didn't do. But Joseph kept trusting God.

Later, Joseph told his brothers:

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good."

God used Joseph's difficult experiences to help many people. This teaches us that even when things seem bad, God can turn them into something good.

Close in Prayer

"Dear God,

Thank You for teaching us about Joseph and how he forgave his brothers.

Help us to be kind and forgiving, just like Joseph.

Even when things are hard or unfair, remind us that you are always with us.

Thank you for forgiving us and helping us to forgive others.

In Jesus' name, Amen."

Small Group Session 2

20-25 Minutes

Share the Key Takeaway: Even when bad things happen, we can trust God's good plan.

Activity: Joseph's Journey Board Game

Objective: Help kids retell the story of Joseph and reflect on both the highs and lows of his journey, understanding how God was with him through it all.

Material Needed:

- ☐ Printable game board (Printout 1)
- ☐ Dice (1 per group)
- ☐ Game pieces or markers (1 per player)
- ☐ Bible or summary of Joseph's story (Genesis 37, 39–50)

Game Setup:

- Print the Joseph's Journey Board Game Map (Printout 1).
- Give each child (or team) a game piece to place at the start ("Joseph Growing Up").
- Each group needs one die to take turns rolling.

How to Play

Players take turns rolling the die and moving forward that number of spaces on the board.

When a player lands on a space, they:

Retell what happened to Joseph at that stop (use your Bible or summary if needed).

Share something good and something hard about that part of Joseph's journey.

Ask:

- ***"How do you think Joseph felt?"***
- ***"How was God with him at this time?"***

End the Game:

Once players reach the final stop ("Joseph Meets His Brothers"), reflect as a group:

- ***"How did God use everything Joseph went through for good?"***
- ***"Can God use hard things in our life for good too?"***

Activity: Bitter vs. Sweet Forgiveness

Objective: To help kids understand how holding onto anger can feel bitter, but forgiving others brings a sweet experience.

Material Needed:

- Fresh lemon (cut into wedges)
- Sugar in a small bowl or packet
- Napkins or paper towels

Instructions:

Say: ***“Today we’re going to do a taste test to help us understand something really important—forgiveness.”***

Give each child a plain lemon wedge.
Ask them to take a small bite or suck on it for a second.

- ***“How does it taste?”*** (Expected answer: sour, bitter, etc.)

“Sometimes when we hold onto anger, frustration, or hurt, it feels like this—bitter and uncomfortable.”

Now dip another lemon wedge in sugar (or sprinkle a little sugar on it) and give it to each child.

Let them taste it and ask:

- ***“How is this one different?”***

“When we choose to forgive, it can still be hard, but it brings peace and joy—it’s like a sweet experience.”

Just like the lemon changed when we added sugar, our hearts change when we choose to forgive instead of staying angry. God forgives us, and he wants us to forgive others too.”

Going Deeper

- ***“Joseph faced a lot of unfair and hard situations. How do you think he stayed hopeful and trusted God?”***
- ***“Have you ever gone through something hard where it was tough to see the good? How did you handle it?”***
- ***“How can trusting God help you when things don’t go the way you want?”***

- ***“Joseph told his brothers, ‘What you meant for evil, God meant for good.’ What does this tell you about God’s plan for our lives?”***
- ***“How does Joseph’s story help us trust that God is in control, even when we don’t understand what’s happening?”***

“Forgiving others reflects God’s love and helps us trust him with the big picture of our lives, just like Joseph did.”

Ending Together

5-10 Minutes

“Just like Joseph trusted God and forgave his brothers, we can trust God to work for good in our lives and forgive others when they hurt us. Forgiveness shows God’s love to others.”

- ***“What’s one thing you learned from Joseph’s story?”***
- ***“How can you forgive someone this week?”***

“Joseph trusted God and forgave his brothers. We can trust God and forgive others because God forgives us through Jesus.”

Response and Reflection

Close in Prayer

Lead kids in a prayer thanking God for his forgiveness and asking for help to forgive others.

Print out the memory verse.

Practice the memory verse for this unit (Psalm 145:13b). Take a look at the [Memory Verse Game Ideas](#).

Pray with the students and dismiss them.

Games

25 Minutes

Joseph's Journey Maze

Materials:

- ☐ Chairs, small bag or cup for each team
- ☐ Cones or tape to mark pathways.

How to Play:

- Create a simple obstacle course or maze to represent Joseph's journey from his family, to Egypt, to Pharaoh's court.
- Kids take turns navigating the maze while carrying a small object (e.g., a small bag or cup).

Connection to Lesson: Highlights Joseph's perseverance and trust in God through life's challenges.

Coat of Many Colors Relay

Materials:

- ☐ A colorful candy or small items
- ☐ Bowls for each team
- ☐ Spoons for each team.

How to Play:

- Divide the group into two teams.
- Place the colorful item at the end of the room.
- One by one, team members run to the item, put it on, and shout, "God's plan is good!" before running back and tagging the next teammate.
- The first team to have all members complete the relay wins.

Connection to Lesson: Joseph's coat symbolizes God's special plan for him, even during hard times.

Brothers' Pit Escape – Team Challenge

Materials: None (optional: masking tape to mark a "pit" or boundary).

How to Play:

- Divide the group into one or two teams, depending on the number of kids.
- If using a "pit," mark a small area with masking tape or cones to define the boundary where the team must stay.

- Each team stands in a circle and extends their arms into the center. Each person grabs two different hands (not from the same person) to create a tangled "human knot."
- The goal is for the team to untangle themselves back into a circle without letting go of any hands. They must communicate, twist, turn, and step over each other to solve the puzzle.
- If using a "pit," the team must remain inside the boundary while untangling, adding an extra challenge.
- For multiple teams, see which team can untangle the fastest.
- Encourage cheering for other teams to build a sense of unity.

Connection to Lesson: The tangled knot represents the "mess" of Joseph's situation when his brothers threw him into the pit and sold him into slavery.

Just as the team works together to solve the knot, Joseph trusted God to bring good out of bad circumstances.

After the game, discuss how forgiveness and trust in God can help "untangle" hard situations in our lives.

Coat of Many Colors Relay – Candy Version

Materials:

- ☐ Small colorful candies (e.g., Skittles, M&Ms) or small colorful items (pom-poms, beads)
- ☐ Spoons (1 per participant)
- ☐ Bowls or cups (1 per team at the starting point and 1 at the finish line).

How to Play: Divide the group into two or more teams.

- Place a bowl of colorful candies or items at the starting point for each team. Place an empty bowl at the finish line for each team.
- Each player must use a spoon to carry one piece of candy or an item from the starting bowl to the finish bowl.
- After placing the candy/item in the finish bowl, they run back and pass the spoon to the next teammate.
- The team continues until time runs out (e.g., 5 minutes) or until all the candy/items are transferred.

Variations:

Instead of holding the spoon with their hands, players must hold the spoon in their mouth to carry the candy/item.

Add a "no dropping" rule: if candy is dropped, the player must return to the starting bowl and try again.

The team with the most candy or items in their finish bowl when time is up wins.

Connection to Lesson: The colorful candies/items represent Joseph's coat of many colors, symbolizing God's special plan for him.

The challenge of transporting the candy relates to the difficulties Joseph faced but overcame with trust and perseverance.

Highlight teamwork and perseverance as important lessons, just like Joseph trusting God to work out His good plan.

Printout 6.1A

GOOD THING



Printout 6.1B

BAD THING



Printout 6.2

JOSEPH'S JOURNEY BOARD GAME

