

Lesson #3-3

Joseph and His Brothers

Genesis 37:3-8, 17b-22, 26-34; 50:15-21

3rd-6th

Key Verse:

“Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as [God] is doing today.”

Genesis 50:20

The Point:

Even when we hurt each other, God can turn our work towards good.

Making Connections:

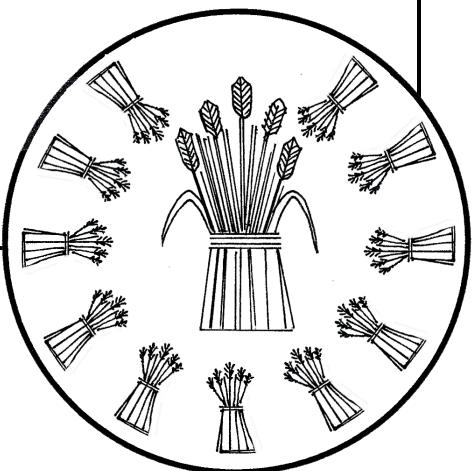
Promises Made, Promises Broken

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

Old Testament and Divisions

Spiritual Practice:

Fellowship



Activities a la Carte

Activities

Supplies

Into the Story

That's Not Fair!

Discuss how we react to what we think is unfair.

10 min.

† None

Bible Nuts & Bolts

Old Testament and Divisions

Make division bookmarks for the students' Bibles.

20 min.

† Bibles
† Activity Sheet #3-3.A
† Card stock paper
† Pens or pencils
† Scissors

Learning the Story

All for the Good

Create a circular timeline where things end as they started.

20 min.

† Bibles
† Activity Sheet #3-3.B
† Pens or pencils

Living the Story

Forgiving One Another

Make fellowship keepers to give away.

10 min.

† Index cards
† Pens or pencils
† White board and marker

Activities a la Carte

Additional Activities

The Road that Leads to Good

Mazes are created and tested.

15 min.

- † Classroom furniture
- † Optional: paper, pens or pencils

Joseph in Jeopardy

Play a Jeopardy-style game that reviews the Bible lesson.

20 min.

- † Bibles
- † Activity Sheet #3-3.C
- † White board and markers
- † Optional: Internet-connected devices

Joseph and His Brothers

Watch a video of Joseph forgiving his brothers.

15 min.

- † Internet-connected video player

Bible Book

Optional ongoing activity.

5 min.

- † Bible Book page (found at end of lesson)
- † Cardstock or plain paper
- † Pens or pencils
- † Markers or crayons
- † Optional: three-ring binders, hole punch

Sending the Story

5 min.

- † None

Background for Teachers

Making Connections

After God's promise to Abram for an uncountable number of descendants (Genesis 15) God promised Hagar (Sarah's maid servant, pregnant by Abram) a future for her son, Ishmael. God promised Abram (renamed Abraham) would be a father of nations. Male children were to be circumcised as a sign of this covenant. God promised Abraham and Sarah a son and fulfilled that promise in the birth of Isaac. Abraham kept his promise to follow God when he was later asked to sacrifice his promised son Isaac. Instead, God kept the promise of continuing Abraham's family line by providing a sacrificial lamb. As God promised, Abraham's family grew. Family members broke promises to each other, but God kept God's promises. Abraham's son Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Today we see that Jacob's son Joseph, Abraham's great-grandson, was promised a role in the nation's future.

Story Summary:

Joseph and His Brothers

Joseph's brothers were jealous of Jacob's love for him. God gave Joseph a dream about the future, and that dream upset Joseph's brothers even more. In the dream, Joseph was in charge over his brothers. Joseph's brothers decided to kill him. They would tell their father, Jacob, that a wild beast had attacked and eaten Joseph. Joseph's brother Reuben did not agree with this plan. When Reuben was not watching, the other brothers sold Joseph to some Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt to be a slave. Years later, Joseph worked for Pharaoh and was in charge of the land and supplies. During a famine, his brothers needed food and came to him as servants. Joseph forgave his brothers for the evil they did to him. They may have planned evil, but God worked that evil into something good for Joseph and for a nation.

The Point

Even when we hurt each other, God can turn our work towards good. That does not give us the freedom to harm each other, but it offers hope to those who suffer harm. It offers hope to us when we realize the acts of injustice we have committed. Although it may take time for that "good" to be experienced, God's hand of love can exchange evil intent for a greater purpose.

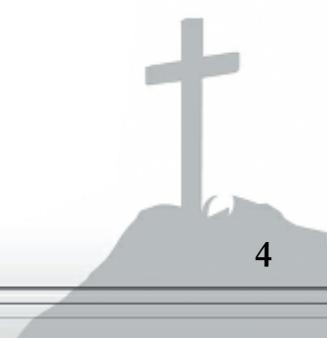
Bible Nuts & Bolts:

Old Testament and Divisions

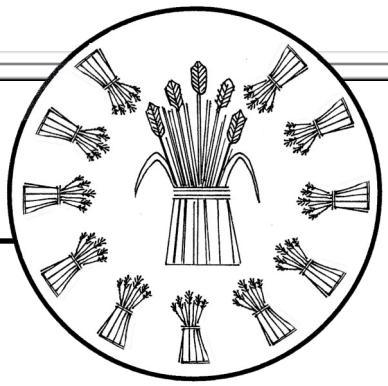
The Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) is a collection of books organized by type of literature more so than by chronology. The Pentateuch, or Torah, tells of beginnings, promises, and law (Genesis through Deuteronomy). The Histories (Joshua through Esther) tell of a nation's struggle to keep its covenant with God. The Poetry books, or Wisdom Literature (Job through Song of Solomon), hold wise counsel, praise, and longing for God. The remaining books are the Prophets (Isaiah through Malachi). The Prophets contain messages from God that guided people through hard times, warned people to return to God, and proclaimed the hope of the coming Messiah.

Spiritual Practice: Fellowship

Acts of fellowship are any actions that build love and caring relationships. Fellowship is not always easy to maintain, as we see in Joseph's story today. Even in the family of God there are quarrels, jealousies, and divisions. When we experience conflict, we can offer God's love, with God's help, to restore fellowship. Is there anyone you can reach out to today to help keep the fellowship?



Lesson Plan



Into the Story (10 minutes)

That's Not Fair!

Discuss how we react to what we think is unfair.

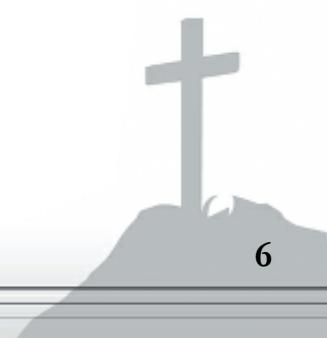
You will need:

† Nothing

During class:

1. Present the following scenarios:
2. Janet worked all afternoon and night until bedtime on a project for school. She missed playing with her friends, and she missed her favorite television shows, but she finished the project and was proud of her work. Most of Janet's classmates did not finish their work. They chose to do other things with their time. When the teacher saw that so many did not complete the project, the teacher decided to cancel the assignment. If you were Janet, how would you feel, and why? *[Answers will vary.]*
3. Thomas practiced a lot and earned a place on the baseball team. He attended every practice, used good game manners, and always did his best for the team. The coach's son skipped a lot of practices. When he did come to practice, he teased some of the newer players. For the big game on Saturday, the coach let his son start and made Thomas sit on the bench. If you were Thomas, how would you feel, and why? *[Answers will vary.]*
4. Bola waited for the light to flash the "walk" symbol. She still looked both ways before she crossed the street, and she made sure she stayed within the lines of the crosswalk. A car hit Bola as she crossed the street and she broke her leg. If you were Bola, how would you feel (other than physically hurt), and why? *[Answers will vary.]*

5. During a math test, Tanika whispered to Carla. She simply asked for an eraser, but the teacher said she could have been cheating. Because of this, Tanika earned a failing grade on the test. If you were Tanika, how would you feel, and why? *[Answers will vary.]*
6. Roy had plans with his friends. When it was time to go out, Dad told Roy to stay home and watch his little brother while Dad worked in the yard. If you were Roy, how would you feel? Why? *[Answers will vary.]*
7. That's not fair! What unfair experiences have you had that you can share with us? How did you handle them? *[Answers will vary.]*
8. Today we are going to hear about Joseph, who had some experiences that seemed anything but fair. Just wait until you hear how things turned out!



Bible Nuts & Bolts (20 minutes)

Old Testament Divisions

Make division bookmarks for the students' Bibles.

You will need:

- † Bibles
- † Activity Sheet #3-3.A
- † Card stock paper
- † Pens or pencils
- † Scissors

Before class:

1. Print the Activity Sheet #3-3.A on cardstock, one per student.

During class:

1. **The Bible is made up of two main parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is the first part and was written before Jesus was born. The New Testament is the second part and was written after Jesus was born. We will talk about the Old Testament today.**
2. Help the students locate the table of contents in their Bibles.
3. **How many books are there in the Old Testament?** Allow time for counting [39.]
4. Distribute copies of Activity Sheet #3-3.A and scissors.
5. **The first five books in the Old Testament are known as the Pentateuch or Torah.** Point to the words at the top of the first bookmark on your copy of Activity Sheet #3-3.A. **What are the names of the first five books?** Allow time for the students to look in the table of contents, count five books, and try to pronounce the names. Help them as needed. [*Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.*] **These books tell of the world's beginnings, God's promises, and the laws of Moses.**
6. **Cut the first bookmark out of your Activity Sheet and write the names of the first five books on it.** If you are limited for time, ask them to write the first book of the Pentateuch only, Genesis.
7. **What page is Genesis on in your Bible?** [*Answers vary depending on the Bible.*] **Place the bookmark at the first page of Genesis.**

8. **The next twelve books of the Old Testament are the Histories.** Point to the words at the top of the second bookmark on your copy of Activity Sheet #3-3.A. **What are the names of these twelve books?** Allow time for the students to look in the table of contents, count the next twelve books, and attempt to pronounce the names. Help them as needed, so they do not get frustrated. *[Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.]* **These books tell of the times when God's people followed God, the times when they turned away from God, the times when they were blessed by God, and the times when they experienced hardship.**
9. **Cut the second bookmark out of your Activity Sheet and write the names of the twelve books of Histories on it.** If you are limited for time, ask them to write the first book of the Histories only, Joshua.
10. **What page is Joshua on in your Bible?** *[Answers vary depending on the Bible.]* **Place the bookmark at the first page of Joshua.**
11. **The next five books of the Old Testament are the Poetry, or Wisdom Literature, books.** Point to the words at the top of the third bookmark on your copy of Activity Sheet #3-3.A. **What are the names of these five books?** Allow time for the students to look in the table of contents, count the next five books, and try to pronounce the names. Help them as needed. *[Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.]* **The poetry does not rhyme the way we might expect. These books are full of instructions and examples for making wise choices.**
12. **Cut the third bookmark out of your Activity Sheet and write the names of the five books of Poetry or Wisdom Literature on it.** If you are limited for time, ask them to write the first book of the Poetry or Wisdom Literature, Job.
13. **What page is Job on in your Bible?** *[Answers vary depending on the Bible.]* **Place the bookmark at the first page of Job.**
14. **The last seventeen books of the Old Testament are the Prophets.** Point to the words at the top of the fourth bookmark on your copy of Activity Sheet #3-3.A. **What are the names of these seventeen books?** Allow time for the students to look in the table of contents, count the next seventeen books, and try to pronounce the names. Help them as needed before they get frustrated. *[Isaiah, "eye"-ZAY-uh; Jeremiah, jair-ruh-MY-uh; Lamentations, lam-uhn-TAY-shunz; Ezekiel, eh-ZEE-kee-uhl; Daniel, DAN-yuhl; Hosea, "hoe"-ZAY-uh; Joel, jo'uhl; Amos, AY-muhs; Obadiah, oh-buh-DY-uh; Jonah, JO-nuh; Micah, MY-kuh; Nahum, NAY-huhm; Habakkuk, huh-BAK-uhk; Zephaniah, zeh-fuh-NY-uh; Haggai, HA-gy; Zechariah, zeh-kuh-RY-uh; and Malachi, MA-luh-ky.]* **These books contain the messages of God that guided, warned, and offered hope to the people.**

15. Cut any remaining edges off the fourth bookmark and write the first and last names of the seventeen books of Prophets on it. (Isaiah to Malachi)
16. What page is Isaiah on in your Bible? [Answers vary depending on the Bible.] Place the bookmark at the first page of Isaiah.
17. Who can tell me the four main divisions of the Old Testament? [Pentateuch or Torah, Histories, Poetry or Wisdom Literature, and the Prophets.]
18. With your bookmarks, you can keep track of which part of the Old Testament we read here as well as what parts you read at home. We learn about God's love when we read of God's involvement in the lives of the people who lived when the Old Testament books were written.

Learning the Story (20 minutes)

All for the Good

Create a circular timeline where things end as they started.

You will need:

- † Bibles
- † Activity Sheet #3-3.B
- † White board and markers
- † Pens or pencils

Before class:

1. Print copies of Activity Sheet #3-3.B, one per student.
2. Draw a circle on the white board and label it with the Scripture references as seen on the Activity Sheet.

During class:

1. As we read today's Scripture passage, we are going to make a circular time line for a story that may end up right where it started, at least in some ways.
2. Distribute the Activity Sheets and pens or pencils.
3. There are Bible references to help us along the way, but it is your job to add words such as "good" or "bad" or "fair" or "unfair" along with some symbols to the timeline. You may want to add to the symbols I

draw on the board, or you can make your own pictures or words. It is also your job to see when things change for the worse or for the better.

4. Read or ask for a volunteer to read Genesis 37:3.
5. **Do you think the love we read about is fair or unfair? Why?** *[Answers will vary.]* Use the key on the Activity Sheet as a guide and draw a heart at the top of the timeline on the board. **Add your words or symbols to the timeline.**
6. Read or ask for a volunteer to read Genesis 37:4.
7. **Do you think it made sense for the brothers to hate Joseph? Was it fair for them not to speak peaceably to Joseph? How do you think Joseph felt?** *[Answers will vary.]* Draw two or more brothers on the board. **Add your words or symbols to the timeline.**
8. Read or ask for a volunteer to read Genesis 37:5-8.
9. **Do you think Joseph's dream was good or bad? Why did Joseph's brothers hate him even though Joseph did not make the dream happen?** *[Answers will vary.]* Draw a dream cloud on the board. **Add your words or symbols to the timeline.**
10. Read or ask for a volunteer to read Genesis 37:9-10.
11. **Do you think Joseph's second dream was good or bad? Why did Joseph's brothers hate him even more? How would you have treated Joseph?** *[Answers will vary.]* Draw the brothers next to Genesis 37:8 on the board, and another dream cloud next to Genesis 37:9. **Add your words or symbols to the timeline.**
12. Read or ask for a volunteer to read Genesis 37:19-20.
13. **When Joseph's brothers saw him coming, do you think their plans were fair? Why? Was it okay to be hateful but not to act on it? After all, Joseph was loved more and was going to have power over them someday.** Help students to realize that hatred and acting on that hate are both wrong and unfair. Draw the brothers seeing the dreamer Joseph. **Add your words or symbols to the timeline.**
14. Read or ask for a volunteer to read Genesis 37:26-34.
15. **Think about where this all started. What direction do you see Joseph's situation going in?** *[From bad to worse or from good to bad.]* Draw a dollar sign near Genesis 37:26-34 on the board. **Add your words or symbols to the timeline.**
16. Read or ask for a volunteer to read Genesis 37:36.
17. **We have all had some unfair things happen to us, but this seems to be very unfair! What did Joseph do to deserve this?** Draw a dollar sign near Genesis 37:36 on the board. **Add your words or symbols to the timeline.**
18. **If you were Joseph, what would you be thinking?** *[Answers will vary. Some may assume Joseph thinks God will come to his rescue; others may assume he thinks he is doomed.]*
19. Read or ask for a volunteer to read Genesis 41:39-43.
20. **Who would have expected this turn of events? Do you think this is**



fair? Why? *[Answers will vary.]* Draw a picture of Joseph living what he dreamed near Genesis 41:39-43. Add your words or symbols to the timeline.

21. **Here Joseph's brothers meant harm for him, and it looked like that is what was happening. But God never left Joseph. It looks like God turned around the bad and made something good from it.**
22. Read or ask for a volunteer to read Genesis 45:7-11.
23. **How would you have responded if you were Joseph and you saw your brothers again? Do you think you would be fair to them?** *[Answers will vary.]* Draw Joseph seeing his brothers. Add your words or symbols to the timeline.
24. Read or ask for a volunteer to read Genesis 50:17-18.
25. **Just as Joseph dreamed, his brothers bowed down to him. Do you think Joseph believed all along that this would happen? What makes you think that?** *[Answers will vary.]* **What do you think the brothers were thinking when they were reminded of what they did to Joseph? What about when they remembered the dreams Joseph had?** *[Answers will vary.]* Draw the brothers bowing down to Joseph. Add your words or symbols to the timeline.
26. Read or ask for a volunteer to read Genesis 50:20-21.
27. **Love and forgiveness.** The story started with love and ended with love. Unfortunately there was some bad along the way. God did not remove all of the bad that others did to Joseph, but our loving God worked it out and used the bad to make something good. God does that. God looks out for us and has a way of taking bad situations and somehow using them for our good.

Living the Story (10 minutes)

Forgiving One Another

Make fellowship keepers to give away.

You will need:

- † Index cards
- † Pens or pencils
- † White board and marker

Before class:

1. Write the following three sentences on the board: I love you. I am sorry. I forgive you.

During class:

1. **We do not always get along with everyone, even here when in each other's company at church. Sometimes we say things that hurt others. We may not mean to hurt people, but it happens. Sometimes others hurt us. This breaks the relationship of love and caring that we call "fellowship" because Christians stop sharing God's love with each other when they are mad or hurt. We are going to make "Fellowship Keepers" to give to others here at church, in your family, or in your circle of friends to help mend fellowship when it is broken.**
2. Distribute several index cards to each student.
3. **Using these index cards, write the messages that you see on the board, or write your own messages that would show people love.**
4. After the Fellowship Keepers are made ask, **is there someone who you might need to give a Fellowship Keeper to today?**
5. **What will you say when you deliver the Fellowship Keeper? [I am sorry if I hurt your feelings. I forgive you if you hurt my feelings.]**
6. **How do you expect the person to respond? [Accepting, forgiving, not accepting but willing to think about it.]**
7. **Plan in your head right now who you will give the first Fellowship Keeper to, and be sure to mean what it says on the card.**

Additional Activities

The Road that Leads to Good (15 minutes)

Mazes are created and tested.

You will need:

- † Classroom furniture
- † Optional: paper, pens or pencils

During class:

1. Divide the class into teams. Assign each team the task of making a maze for the others to travel through. They can use classroom objects, chairs, baskets, shoes, coats, etc. Give them a designated amount of time to construct the maze and a certain amount of time to make their way through the maze.
2. For a quieter activity option, the teams can draw the mazes on paper.
3. While one team is making a maze, the other(s) should be talking about all that Joseph and his brothers went through. If you use the optional paper mazes, lead this discussion while the teams are working their way through each other's mazes. **What were the roadblocks in Joseph's journey in life?**
4. **Although it seemed like a long and complicated unfair path to each of the men, God knew what was going to happen in the end and was working it all out for good.**
5. After a team's maze is ready, take turns going through the maze (or everyone can work on the paper mazes at the same time). Repeat for each team.

Joseph in Jeopardy (20 minutes)

Play a Jeopardy-style game that reviews the Bible lesson.

You will need:

- † Bibles
- † Activity Sheet #3-3.C
- † Whiteboard and markers
- † Optional: Internet-connected device

Before class:

1. Draw a grid on the whiteboard to match Activity Sheet #3-3.C.

During class:

1. Divide the students into teams.
2. **We are going to play Joseph in Jeopardy. You will choose a category and a point amount between 10 and 50, and I will give you an answer that corresponds to that choice. Your team will then have two minutes to come up with the question for that answer. You may use your Bibles, but if you run out of time, the next team gets a turn at that question. Remember, your answer must be in the form of a question.**
3. Cross off the squares on the grid after they have been used.
4. Keep score on the board.
5. At the end of the activity say, **I am glad that we can count on God to work things out for our good.**

Optional: if you enjoy technology and have access to it when with the students, you might want to convert this activity to a digital experience by making use of this online jeopardy option, <http://www.superteachertools.us/jeopardyx/editor1.php>

Joseph and His Brothers (15 minutes)

Watch a video of Joseph forgiving his brothers.

You will need:

- † Internet-connected video player

Before class:

1. Do an Internet search for “video Joseph forgives brothers” and choose a video you think is appropriate for your students.
2. Cue the video past any commercials.

During class:

1. Show the video.
2. Lead a discussion where the students can talk about other possible endings for this story.
3. **If God had not intervened and worked things out for Joseph, what do you think might have happened to Joseph? Your answer can take place anywhere along Joseph’s journey, from when he had his dreams until he forgave his brothers.** *[Answers will vary.]*
4. **What might have happened if Joseph had not forgiven his brothers? How would that have affected Joseph? How might it have affected his brothers?** *[Answers will vary.]*
5. **What might have happened if Joseph’s brothers had followed their original plan to get rid of Joseph? How would that have affected them or Egypt?** *[Answers will vary.]*
6. **I am glad that we can count on God to work things out for our good.**

Bible Book (5 minutes)

Optional ongoing activity.

You will need:

- † Bible Book page (found at end of lesson)
- † Cardstock or plain paper
- † Pens or pencils
- † Markers or crayons
- † Optional: three-ring binders, hole punch

Before class:

1. Make copies of this week's Bible Book page on cardstock or copy paper for each student.

During class:

1. Hand out Bible Book pages.
2. **What are some of the important things we have learned from today's story?**
[Answers will vary.]
3. **On the bottom of your page, please write one or two important things that you have learned from the story today. In the middle of the page, draw a picture from the story or illustrate one of the important things you've learned. Don't forget to put your name on the back of the page, please!**
4. Optional: Collect and three-hole punch the pages, and put them in individual binders for each student to be kept at church until the end of the year. If you wish, you can investigate other options for binding the Bible books through a local print shop at the end of the year instead of using a three-ring binder.

Sending the Story (5 minutes)

Review questions.

It is sad that we do things to harm one another, but even when we harm others or others harm us, God can turn our hurtful work toward good.

- What is your favorite part of today's story?
- What special meaning does it have for you?

Prayer

Before ending class, make a point to come together to pray. Use the following or say your own prayer.

Joseph's brothers were sorry for the way they treated him. Is there anyone you need to apologize to? Is there anyone you need to forgive?

Find your own space in the room and talk quietly to God, asking God to help you say you are sorry and to work things out for good.

End with a group prayer:

God, thank you that you can take what seems bad and find a way to make it work for our good. Amen.

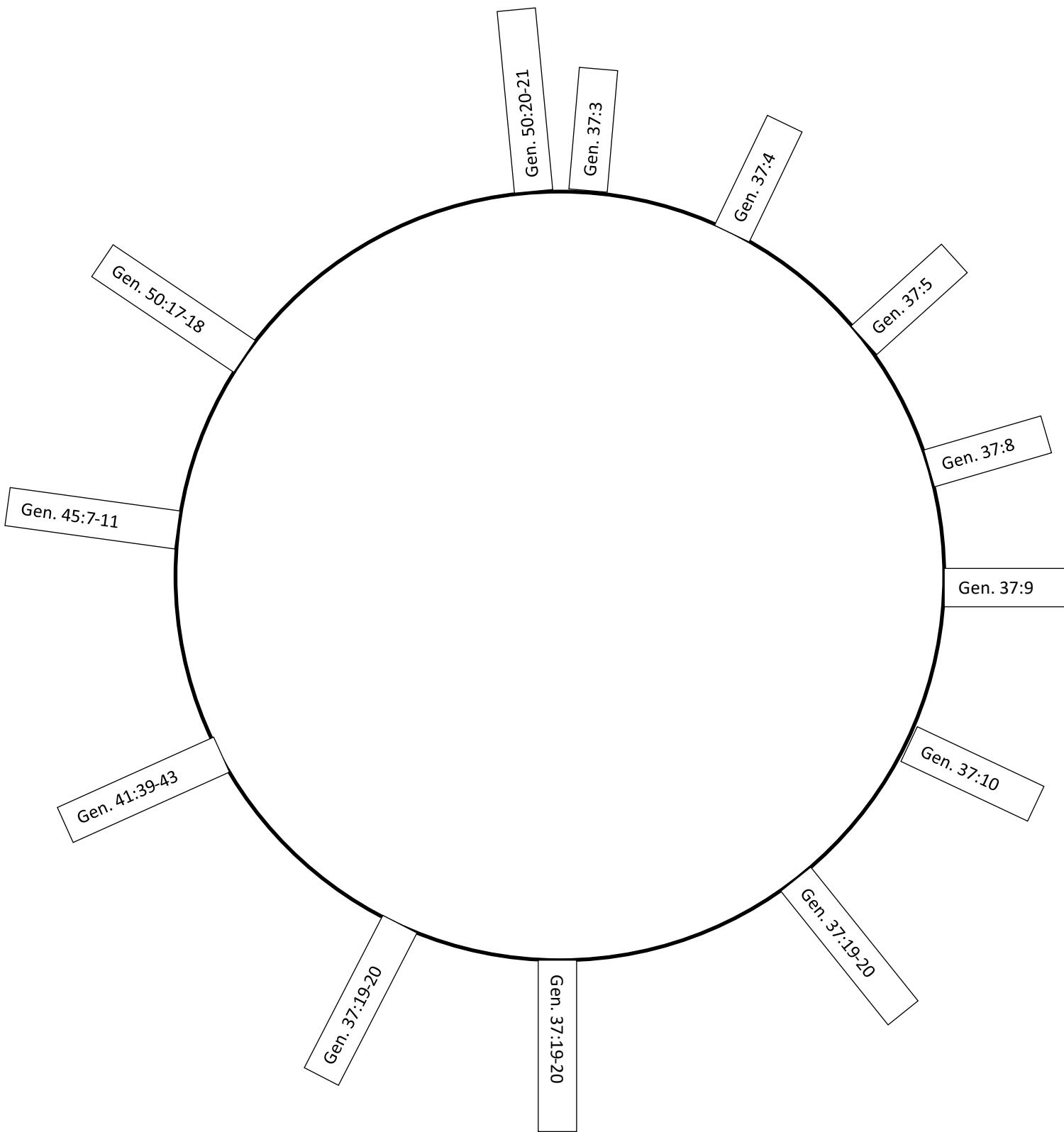
Old Testament and Divisions

Make division bookmarks for the students' Bibles.

Pentateuch/ Torah	Histories	Poetry/Wisdom	Prophets

All for the Good

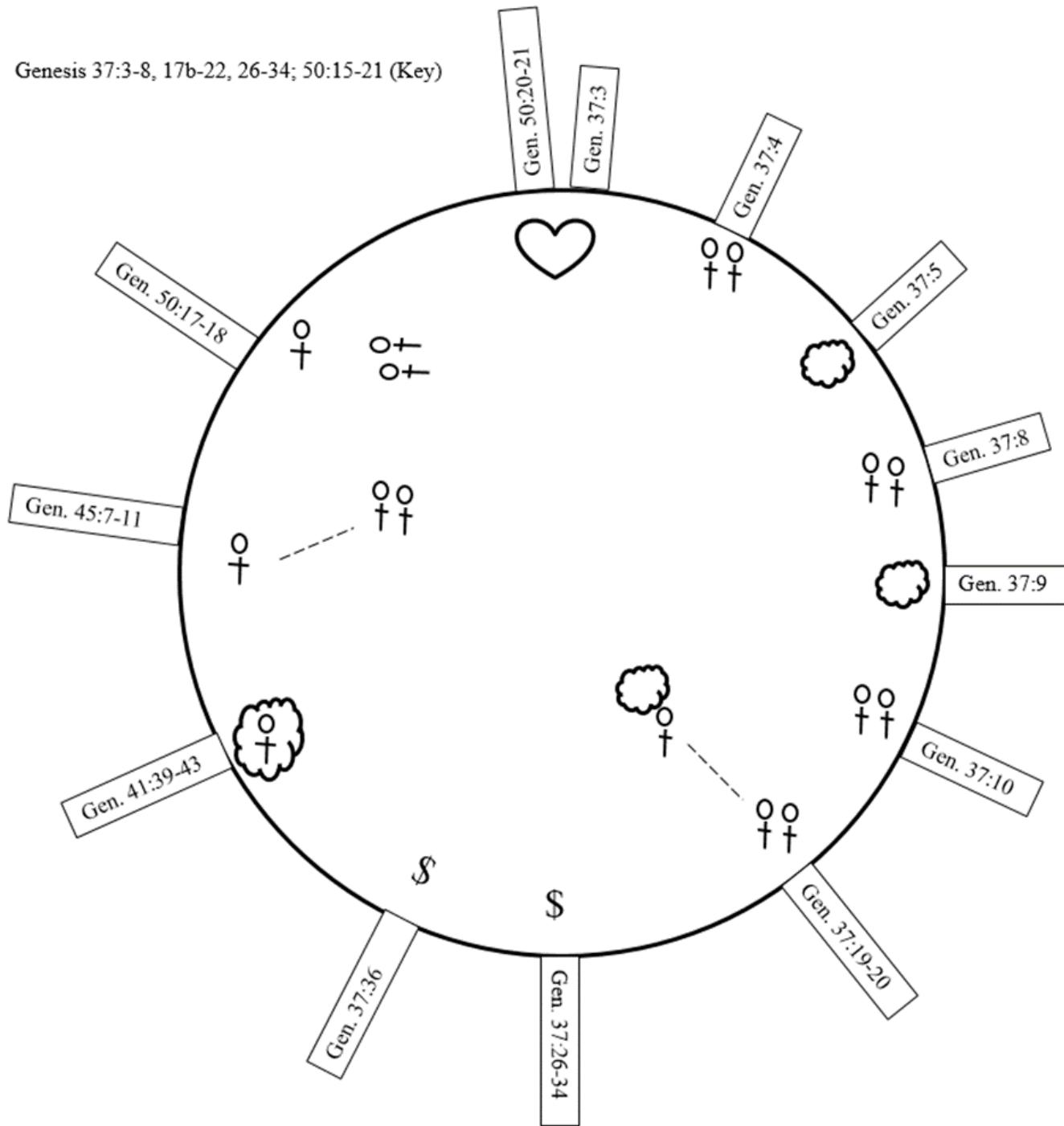
Create a circular timeline where things end as they started.



All for the Good (Answer Sheet)

Create a circular timeline where things end as they started.

Genesis 37:3-8, 17b-22, 26-34; 50:15-21 (Key)



Joseph in Jeopardy?

Play a Jeopardy-style game that reviews the Bible lesson.

People	Places	Events
10	10	10
20	20	20
30	30	30
40	40	40
50	50	50

People

10 - A dreamer of dreams. [*Who is Joseph?*]
 20 - Jealous, angry men. [*Who are Joseph's brothers?*]
 30 - A leader who saw good in Joseph. [*Who is Pharaoh?*]
 40 - One who loved one son the most. [*Who is Jacob?*]
 50 - Men who bought another. [*Who are the Ishmaelites?*]

Places

10 - Jacob and sons' dwelling place. [*What is Canaan?*]
 20 - Where his brothers found Joseph. [*What is Pharaoh's palace in Egypt?*]
 30 - The first place for getting rid of Joseph. [*What is the pit?*]
 40 - Where the Midianites sold Joseph. [*What is Egypt?*]
 50 - A field where the brothers tended flocks. [*What is the field in Dothan?*]

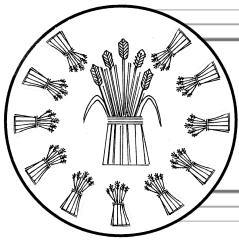
Events

10 - The tunic made of many colors. [*What did Jacob make for Joseph?*]
 20 - The brothers' sheaves bowed to Joseph's. [*What is Joseph's first dream?*]
 30 - Twenty-seven shekels of silver. [*What was the Ishmaelites payment for Joseph?*]
 40 - Joseph is set over the land of Egypt. [*What did the Pharaoh do for Joseph?*]
 50 - Forgiveness. [*What did Joseph offer his brothers?*]

Joseph and His Brothers

Genesis 37:3-8, 17b-22, 26-34; 50:15-21

I Learned:



The Story@Home

3rd-6th

Living the Word: Teaching Kids God's Story

Narrative Lectionary, Year 3 (2020-2021)

Lesson #3-3

Genesis 37:3-8, 17b-22, 26-34; 50:15-21

Last Week

God promises Abram (Abraham), that he and his wife Sarai (Sarah) will have many descendants, even though they are old and have no children (Genesis 15:1-6).

This Week

Despite many difficulties, God keeps Abram's great grandson Joseph safe and keeps the promise God made to Abram, too. (Genesis 37:3-8, 17b-22, 26-34; 50:15-20).

Story Summary

Joseph and His Brothers

Joseph's brothers were jealous because their father, Jacob, loved Joseph the most. Joseph's brothers hated him so much that they decided to kill him. But instead the brothers sold Joseph to some traders, who took him to Egypt to be a slave. Years later, Joseph worked for Pharaoh and was in charge of the land and food. During a famine, his brothers needed food and came to Egypt. Joseph forgave his brothers for the evil they did to him.

Practice: Fellowship

Fellowship is not always easy. Even in the church there are fights and hurt feelings. With God's help, we can forgive and restore fellowship. Joseph's brothers betrayed him, but there was forgiveness and restored fellowship in the end. As a family, bake cookies (or make cards) for someone in your congregation to reach beyond differences and build fellowship.

The Point

Even when we hurt each other, God can turn our work towards good.

Bible Nuts & Bolts

Old Testament and Divisions

The Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) is a collection of books organized by the type of writing more than chronology. The Pentateuch, or Torah, tells of beginnings, promises, and law (Genesis through Deuteronomy). The Histories (Joshua through Esther) tell of a nation's struggle to keep its covenant with God. The Poetry books, or Wisdom Literature (Job through Song of Solomon), hold wise counsel, praise, and longing for God. The remaining books are the Prophets (Isaiah through Malachi). The Prophets contain messages from God that guided people through hard times, warned people to return to God, and proclaimed the hope of the coming Messiah.

Next Week

Jacob's descendants stay in Egypt, but become slaves. God rescues the Israelites to take them to the land that God promised to Abraham. This story is celebrated in Passover (Exodus 12:1-13; 13:1-8).

Family Discussions

Use the questions below or other questions you think of to discuss today's Scripture reading (listed above) with your family.

- † What does this passage tell you about God's strength?
- † What does this passage tell you about humanity's weakness?
- † What does this passage tell you about the importance of following God?

Family Devotions

As you hear and study these stories each week, consider what God has to say to you and your family. What is God's message to us? How should we respond?

Sunday—Read Genesis 37:3-8, 17b-22, 26-34; 50:15-21

Joseph's brothers were jealous because they knew God was going to make Joseph their leader. Serve a favorite treat to one family member while the others watch that person eat it. How can we be gracious and not give in to jealousy? (Later, give the rest a treat.)

Monday—Read Exodus 1:8-22

The Egyptians treated the Israelites like slaves. They were very hard on them while they worked. Do chores while one family member keeps saying things like "hurry up," "move faster," or "do that over." Imagine being treated like that all day long. Thank God for freedom.

Tuesday—Read Exodus 2:1-10

To keep her baby alive, the mother put baby Moses in a basket by the river bank. Pharaoh's daughter allowed the mother to nurse her baby. Look through the children's baby pictures if you have them. Share what you went through the first time you left your baby to go to work or elsewhere.

Wednesday—Read Exodus 3:1-12

God appeared to Moses in a burning bush. God told Moses he was going to be the one to lead the people out of Egypt. Where we meet God is holy ground. Take off your shoes. Take turns talking to God, telling of your love for God.

Thursday—Read Exodus 4:1-17

Moses was afraid he could not do what God asked of him. God gave Moses miraculous power to help him lead the Israelites. Help each other do things like reaching for something, lifting something, making a bed, etc.

Friday—Read Exodus 7:14-17; 8:5-6, 16-17, 20-21; 9:1-3, 7

God sent plagues to Egypt to convince Pharaoh to free the Israelites. Identify the five plagues in the reading. Use the counting numbers to remember and repeat them in order. After each one, say "Let my people go!" (i.e. "One: Water to blood, let my people go!" "Two: Frogs," etc.).

Saturday—Read Exodus 9:8-9, 22-23; 10:1-2, 22-24; 11:9-10

God sent more plagues. Identify the five additional plagues in the reading. Use the counting numbers, beginning with six, to remember and repeat them in order. After each one, say "Let my people go!" (i.e. "Six: Boils, let my people go!" etc.) Extra: Can you count out all ten plagues?