

Dive into the Bible!

Joseph: Genesis 45–50 tells the end of the epic story of Joseph: best known for his crazy dreams, colorful coat, and rise to power in Egypt after being sold as a slave and presumed dead by his brothers. Despite sibling rivalry, jealousy, and harmful shenanigans, God made everything good. Explore “growing through difficulty” at home. Try any of the following ideas that fit your family the best.

Pre-K: Ask campers to show you their happiest face, then their saddest face. Have children stand up. Ask them to use their whole bodies to show “happy” and “sad.” Then invite them to sit down. Explain that they’re going to make a two-sided puppet that looks like themselves with a happy side and a sad side. Point out that God made each of them, and no one else is just like they are.

You can use whatever materials you have at home to create a puppet. This might look like a piece of paper, a paper plate, etc. Help them make a happy and a sad side to their puppet.

Point out that we all have happy and sad times. You will name something that could happen and campers will hold up their happy or sad side to show how they might feel.

It’s your birthday.

Your best friend moved away.

You got a new puppy.

You fell down and needed a Band-Aid for your knee.

You found out you are having pizza for dinner.

Your grandma is in the hospital.

You’re going swimming at a water park.

You’re going to the zoo.

Explain to campers that someone in the Bible story today had happy and sad times, just like they do. The children will help you tell the story by holding up the happy or sad side of their puppets when you give the signal. Practice the signal and response before reading the story. A thumbs-up means the happy side. A thumbs-down means the sad side.

Read the story of Joseph and his brothers from a Bible storybook. (Use a version that includes today’s Bible text, Genesis 45:1-15 and 50:19-20.) As you read, pause to give thumbs-up and thumbs-down cues and allow time for them to react.

Elementary: Kids in elementary school might have a hard time seeing evidence of God in their everyday lives. One way to help them begin to see God is to assure them that God is present in all things that are life-giving, loving, and beautiful. Look around your environment and name a few places you see God: in the warm sun; in a kind smile; in the beautiful flowers, lakes, and trees; in new friendships. Once you have given a few examples, invite your campers to add to the list. Take some time to draw them and take a walk as a family with a camera taking pictures of “God glimpses.”

Junior High: Read Psalm 118 once so campers get an introduction to the text. Psalm 118 talks about how faithful God has been and how God has always kept God’s promises. This Psalm highlights how people cannot do the things that God can do. Give each person a piece of paper for this activity. Divide the paper into 6 sections and explain what each section is:

1. ARROW POINTING UP: Write something these verses tell us about Jesus/God
2. ARROW POINTING DOWN: Write something these verses tell us about human nature
3. A LIGHT BULB: Write down any new discovery you have made reading these verses
4. AN EXCLAMATION MARK: Write down the most exciting verse in your opinion and why
5. QUESTION MARK: Write anything you don’t understand or want to ask about
6. ARROW POINTING TO SIDE: Write down something these verses say we should do

Read Psalm 118 again for them to reflect on these and write it down. In the best situations, we trust rule makers, like the people mentioned, to be fair and just, and to apply the rules in the same way to all people. Unfortunately, some people struggle to apply rules fairly. When rules are applied unfairly or inconsistently, we have injustice. Injustice hurts people. This psalm reminds us that people make mistakes and that mistakes cause injustice. God does not make mistakes and also works to heal injustices. This is why our ultimate trust belongs to God.

Senior High: Reframing is taking a thought or situation and looking at it in a new way. We do this all the time when we are hurt or confused by something that happens around us. We may try to shift the blame to someone else or to ourselves, or we may try to put a more positive spin on something that really stinks. Point out that reframing is essentially emotional or internal composting or recycling. We are using older or rotten materials to grow something new. Consider these questions:

What’s a situation you’ve reframed for yourself?

How can reframing be harmful? (Sometimes our reframing isn't honest. We may blame someone else for something that was really our mistake. Or we may take on blame or duties that aren't actually ours to own.)

Think about how this fits the story of Joseph.

Adult: Read the following Bible passages about focusing on God when facing disappointment or betrayal, and then listing the promises they find.

Psalms 27 (verse 10 assures us that our foundation is found in God)

Jeremiah 17 (verses 7-8 offer a promise that we can rely upon God, even when we have been unreliable)

Hebrews 6:13-20 (verse 18 reminds us that we move into an unknown future with the confidence that God's promise goes with us)

Spend some time reflecting on a time of betrayal or disappointment when you looked to God.

Which of the previously named biblical promises helped you at the time or helps them now understand God's blessing in that situation?

Invite campers to claim one of these promises and write it somewhere you will see it every day.

Craft: Cross Painting

Materials: card stock or construction paper, blue painter's tape, enough for each camper to make a cross on their paper, paint (watercolor or finger paints work best)

Directions:

1. Remind campers of today's story about Joseph and how he forgave his brothers. Talk about the cross as a symbol of forgiveness.
2. Give each camper a piece of paper.
3. Instruct campers to use the painter's tape to make the shape of a cross on their paper.
4. Allow campers to paint their papers. Encourage them to fill the entire space.
5. When campers are finished painting, help them gently remove the painter's tape.
6. Allow paintings to dry.

Environmental Education: Parts of a Promise Flower

Materials: paper, colored markers or pens

Directions:

1. Have campers draw a basic flower shape to fill the sheet of paper, including the flower head (blossom), stem, leaves, and roots. Have them leave the center of the flower blank, for now. Then review the four basic parts of a flower, as listed below, weaving in the theme of God's promised faithfulness and love from generation to generation.
2. God promised people a place to live, and this is symbolized by the roots that live in the dirt and provide stability and nutrients for the plant. Have campers draw or write at the root of the plant descriptions of things that represent the place they live and that give

them stability. (For example: home, family, food.)

3. God also promised us a purpose to live out, which is symbolized by the stem, which holds the flower upright and carries nutrients from the roots to other parts of the plant. Have campers draw or write along the stem of the plant the things that they do to support God's loving purposes.

4. God's promise of blessing is symbolized by the leaves. Leaves are where light from the sun meets water and carbon dioxide from the plant (photosynthesis). It provides the essential food the plant needs to survive and grow. Have campers draw or write on the leaves of the plant things that represent God's blessings in their lives.

5. Finally, invite campers to draw their face in the circular or top part of the flower. Flowers are important for making seeds for the next generation of plants. God's promise of love and faithfulness continues through us from generation to generation.



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