

Joseph Reveals Himself To His Brothers

Genesis 45:1-16

MEMORY VERSE

LUKE 6:36

“Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Blindfolds, paper, writing boards and markers.

As many small prizes (stickers, erasers, pencils, etc.) and prize gift certificates (template provided) as the number of children in your class.

Masking tape.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Blindfold Buffet

You will need blindfolds, paper, writing boards, and markers.

Form pairs and have the children sit in chairs facing their partners.

Have one child in each pair volunteer to be blindfolded. Give a few markers to the blindfolded child. Have the un-blindfolded child hold up to his or her partner a blank sheet of paper on a writing board. The object is to have the blindfolded child draw the best picture possible. Tell the children that the team with the best picture wins.

After a few minutes of allowing the partners to draw their pictures, have the children with the blindfolds remove them. Collect the pictures. Mix them up and display on the chalkboard. Conspicuously, pick the worst picture in the group as a demonstration of mercy and declare it the winner. Perhaps award a small prize to the team. Explain that this demonstrates our

lesson today. We will see that mercy is shown in a situation where mercy was not deserved. That is how God deals with us. He gives us mercy even though we do not deserve it. And because God is merciful towards us we should be merciful towards others. **Let us show mercy to others, for God is merciful to us.**

LESSON TIME!

In Luke 6:36, Jesus says, "Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful." We live in a wicked world where people use us, cheat us, hate us, and treat us spitefully; yet we are called to love people who mistreat us because our Heavenly Father first loved us. Joseph forgave and showed mercy to his brothers after they had mocked him, hated him, sold him into slavery, and had even conceived a plan to kill him. **Let us show mercy to others, for God is merciful to us.**

GENESIS 45:1-3

Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence.

Joseph had seen his brother's humble hearts and it probably encouraged him to reveal himself to them.

GENESIS 45:4-8

And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." And they came near. And he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.

"But now, do not therefore be grieved nor angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.

"For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting.

"And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

"So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

Joseph missed his family. He still loved his brothers even though they had shown hatred to him. This is a good picture of God's heart towards this world. God's love for us--when we were still enemies, when we wanted nothing to do with Him--compelled Him to send His only Son to reconcile us to Himself. Colossians 1:21 says, "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled."

Joseph called his brothers near just as our Lord does us. Although Joseph's brothers initially feared him, we need not fear our God, for by Jesus' blood and forgiveness we may come boldly to His throne of grace (Hebrews 10:19-23; Colossians 1:19-20). We are free from our sin and our pasts through our belief in Jesus and His forgiveness; we may have free fellowship with our God (Romans 8:1).

We see Joseph's brothers were dismayed (really amazed or blown away) that this was Joseph. Not only was it Joseph, but he was not having them thrown into prison or killed for their past actions. He was not bitter or angry towards his brothers.

Joseph knew that God had sent him to Egypt before his family to help them during the famine. God was using Joseph to protect the nation of Israel. Joseph was able to recognize that although his brothers meant evil toward him, God meant it all for good (Genesis 50:20). He acknowledged that God had been in control of his life; God's will, not man's, controlled the circumstances of his life. With this realization, he was able to forgive those who had wronged him. **Let us show mercy to others, for God is merciful to us.**

"Goofed-Up" Give Away

You will need small prizes (stickers, erasers, pencils, etc.), and prize gift certificates (template provided) that you prepare before class.

Give each child a treat, gift certificate, or small prize. Explain that this gift is not for them, but for a person this past week that has treated them in a wrong way. Maybe it is a brother or sister or friend at school.

Have them think of someone and write that name on their certificate. Instruct the children that the next time they see that person, they can give them the gift.

Next week remember to ask the children how it went and what some of the reactions were that they received. How is this like Jesus?

As an option you can have the children share next week what happened and then give those who participated a prize for doing the right thing. **Let us show mercy to others, for God is merciful to us.**

GENESIS 45:9-11

"Hasten and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry.

"You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have.

"There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for there are still five years of famine."

Not only will Joseph be joined with his family again, but he will provide abundantly for them. Again, Joseph's words remind us of the heart and love of God for His children. He desires to be near to us and draws us close to Him to dwell in His amazing goodness. Just as Joseph was to provide for his family, so God provides for His children. He has promised to "supply all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

GENESIS 45:12-13

"And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you.

So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here."

Joseph tells his brothers to make "haste" to tell their father that Joseph was alive and to tell him of all his glory in Egypt. Joseph wanted to see his father as soon as possible.

We see another picture. Our Heavenly Father commissions us to tell this spiritually dead world that Jesus lives and is wonderful. By His grace, we are to make haste and spread the news of the only One who can save man's starving soul.

GENESIS 45:14-16

Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck.

Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come." So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well.

Joseph then kissed all of his brothers expressing his love and care for them. Truly God had meant for good all that had happened to Joseph. He brought Joseph's family back together; He provided for them in time of severe famine. God was with Joseph through all of his difficulties and enabled him to stand strong and keep a tender heart. Ultimately, Joseph recognized that it was God, not man, who was in control of his life, allowing him to show mercy to those who offended him.

Jacob will one day well summarize Joseph's character—a character made strong through “fiery” trials. In Genesis 49:22-24, we read: “Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well, His branches run over the wall. The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and hated him. But his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob.”

As we look to our “Mighty” God, He will enable us to stand strong, even when others have treated us cruelly or unfairly, even in the face of betrayal by those we have loved. With His help, we can forgive those who have sinned against us. **Let us show mercy to others, for God is merciful to us.**

Note: Joseph was called to suffer before He would see God's promises fulfilled. Joseph's life in many ways is a picture for us of Jesus' life: he was greatly loved by his father, hated by his brothers, plotted against, sold for 30 pieces of silver, arrested unjustly, made to suffer, and then went from suffering to becoming the savior of those who had rejected him.

Mercy! Mercy!

Gather the children into a circle. Ask them to share with you times in their lives when someone has shown them mercy or when they have shown mercy towards others. How did they feel when someone showed mercy to them? How did they feel when they showed mercy to others? How has God shown mercy to us? Spend a few minutes in discussion and application of today's lesson: **Let us show mercy to others, for God is merciful to us.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be merciful, because God is merciful to us. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

Template – Goofed Up Giveaway

PRIZE CERTIFICATE

Date _____

This coupon is presented to

_____ as an act of

kindness. Because God loves me I also want to be nice to others. There is nothing that you have to give in return. God bless you.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

John 3:16

Signed _____

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