

**Story Time - Read the story to the children**  
**Lesson 31: JOSEPH TESTS HIS BROTHERS**  
**GENESIS 42:1-44:34**

**\*NOTE TO TEACHERS – Due to the length of this passage consider telling this lesson in story form. You will need to familiarize yourself with the highlights of the story and make application throughout. You probably will not have sufficient time to read all of the verses and make application within the class session.**

During the famine in Canaan, Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt. So he said to his sons, "Why are you sitting here doing nothing? I have heard that there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go there and buy grain for us so that we will live and not die!" So ten of Joseph's brothers went to Egypt to buy grain. Jacob did not send Benjamin. (Benjamin was Joseph's only full brother.) Jacob was afraid that something bad might happen to Benjamin. The famine was very bad in Canaan, so there were many people from Canaan who went to Egypt to buy grain. Among them were the sons of Israel. Joseph was the governor of Egypt at the time. He was the one who checked the sale of grain to people who came to Egypt to buy it. Joseph's brothers came to him and bowed before him. Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted like he didn't know them. He was rude when he spoke to them. He said, "Where do you come from?" The brothers answered, "We have come from the land of Canaan to buy food." Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not know who he was. Then Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed about his brothers. Joseph said to his brothers, "You have not come to buy food! You are spies. You came to learn where we are weak." But the brothers said to him, "No, sir, we come as your servants. We have come only to buy food. We are all brothers--we all have the same father. We are honest men. We have come only to buy food." Then Joseph said to them, "No, you have come to spy on us!" And the brothers said, "No, sir, we come as servants from Canaan. We are all brothers, sons of the same father. There were twelve brothers in our family. Our youngest brother is still at home with our father, and the other brother died a long time ago." But Joseph said to them, "No! I can see that I am right. You are spies. But I will let you prove that you are telling the truth. In the name of Pharaoh, I swear that I will not let you go until your youngest brother comes here. One of you must go back to get your youngest brother while the rest of you stay here in prison. Then we can prove whether you are telling the truth or not. If you are not telling the truth, then by Pharaoh, I swear that you are spies!" Then Joseph put them all in prison

for three days. After three days Joseph said to them, "I am a God-fearing man. Do this, and I will let you live. If you are honest men, one of your brothers can stay here in prison, and the others can go and carry grain back to your people. But then you must bring your youngest brother back here to me. Then I will know that you are telling the truth, and you will not have to die." The brothers agreed to this. They said to each other, "We are being punished for the bad thing we did to our younger brother Joseph. We saw the trouble he was in. He begged us to save him, but we refused to listen. So now we are in trouble." Then Reuben said to them, "I told you not to do anything bad to that boy, but you refused to listen to me. Now we are being punished for his death." Joseph was using an interpreter to talk to his brothers, so the brothers did not know that he understood their language. He heard and understood everything they said, and that made him want to cry. So he turned away and left the room. When he came back, he took one of the brothers, Simeon, and tied him up while the others watched. Joseph told the servants to fill the bags with grain. The brothers had given Joseph the money for the grain, but he didn't keep the money. He put the money in their bags of grain. Then he gave them what they would need for their trip back home. So the brothers put the grain on their donkeys and left. That night the brothers stopped at a place to spend the night. One of the brothers opened his sack to get some grain for his donkey. And there in the sack, he saw his money! He said to the other brothers, "Look! Here is the money I paid for the grain. Someone put the money back in my sack." The brothers were very afraid. They said to one another, "What is God doing to us?" The brothers went back to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. They told him about everything that had happened. They said, "The governor of that country spoke rudely to us. He thought that we were spies! We told him, 'We are honest men, not spies. There are twelve of us brothers, all from the same father. But one of our brothers is no longer living, and the youngest is still at home with our father in Canaan.'" Then the governor of that country said to us, 'Here is a way to prove that you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers here with me. Take your grain back to your families. Bring your youngest brother to me. Then I will know if you are honest men or if you were sent from an army to destroy us. If you are telling the truth, I will give your brother back to you. I will give him to you, and you will be free to buy grain in our country.'" Then the brothers started taking the grain out of their sacks, and every brother

found his bag of money in his sack of grain. When the brothers and their father saw the money, they were afraid. Jacob said to them, "Do you want me to lose all of my children? Joseph is gone. Simeon is gone, and now you want to take Benjamin away too!" But Reuben said to his father, "Father, you may kill my two sons if I don't bring Benjamin back to you. Trust me. I will bring him back to you." But Jacob said, "I will not let Benjamin go with you. His brother is dead, and he is the only son left from my wife Rachel. It would kill me if anything happened to him during the trip to Egypt. You would send me to the grave a very sad, old man." The famine was very bad in that country. The people ate all the grain they had brought from Egypt. When that grain was gone, Jacob said to his sons, "Go to Egypt and buy some more grain for us to eat." But Judah said to Jacob, "But the governor of that country warned us. He said, 'If you don't bring your brother back to me, I will refuse to talk to you.' If you send Benjamin with us, we will go down and buy grain. But if you refuse to send Benjamin, we will not go. The man warned us to not come back without him." Israel said, "Why did you tell him you had another brother? Why did you do such a bad thing to me?" The brothers answered, "He asked lots of questions. He wanted to know all about us and about our family. He asked us, 'Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother at home?' We only answered his questions. We didn't know he would ask us to bring our brother to him!" Then Judah said to his father Israel, "Let Benjamin go with me. I will take care of him. We have to go to Egypt to get food. If we don't go, we will all die--including our children. I will make sure he is safe. I will be responsible for him. If I don't bring him back to you, you can blame me forever. If you had let us go before, we could have already made two trips for food." Then their father Israel said, "If it is really true, take Benjamin with you. But take some gifts to the governor. Take some of the things we have been able to gather in our land. Take him some honey, pistachio nuts, almonds, spices, and myrrh. Take twice as much money with you this time. Take the money that was given back to you after you paid last time. Maybe the governor made a mistake. Take Benjamin, and go back to the man. I pray that God All-Powerful will help you when you stand before the governor. I pray that he will let Benjamin, and also Simeon, come back safely. If not, I will again be sad from losing my children." So the brothers took the gifts to give to the governor. And the brothers took twice as much money with them as they took the first time.

**\*\*\*DO THE CRAFT WITH THE WATER BOTTLE, WATER & OIL NOW SO THAT WAY IT CAN BE BACK TO NORMAL BY THE TIME YOU FINISH READING THE VERSES TO THE CHILDREN.\*\*\***

This time Benjamin went with the brothers to Egypt. When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to his servant, "Bring these men into my house. Kill an animal and cook it. They will eat with me at noon today." The servant did as he was told. He brought the men into Joseph's house. The brothers were afraid when they were taken to Joseph's house and said, "We have been brought here because of the money that was put back in our sacks the last time. They will use this as proof against us and steal our donkeys and make us slaves." So the brothers went to the servant in charge of Joseph's house. They said, "Sir, I promise this is the truth. The last time we came, we came to buy food. On the way home, we opened our sacks and found our money in every sack. We don't know how it got there, but we brought that money with us to give it back to you. And we have brought more money to pay for the food that we want to buy this time." But the servant answered, "Don't be afraid; believe me. Your God, the God of your father, must have put the money in your sack as a gift. I remember that you paid me for the grain the last time." Then the servant brought Simeon out of the prison. The servant led the men into Joseph's house. He gave them water, and they washed their feet. Then he fed their donkeys. The brothers heard that they were going to eat with Joseph, so they worked until noon preparing their gifts for him. When Joseph came home, the brothers gave him the gifts they had brought with them. Then they bowed down to the ground in front of him. Joseph asked them how they were doing. He said, "How is your elderly father you told me about. Is he still alive and well?" The brothers answered, "Yes, sir, our father is still alive." And they again bowed before Joseph. Then Joseph saw his brother Benjamin. (Benjamin and Joseph had the same mother.) Joseph said, "Is this your youngest brother that you told me about?" Then Joseph said to Benjamin, "God bless you, my son!" Joseph felt a strong desire to show his brother Benjamin that he loved him. He was about to cry and didn't want his brothers to see him, so he ran into his private room and cried there. Then Joseph washed his face and came out. He regained control of himself and said, "Now it is time to eat." The servants seated Joseph at a table by himself. His brothers were at another table by themselves, and the

Egyptians were at a table by themselves. The Egyptians believed that it was wrong for them to eat with Hebrews. Joseph's brothers were seated at a table facing him. The brothers were looking at each other because, to their surprise, they had been seated in order, from the oldest to the youngest. Servants were taking food from Joseph's table and bringing it to them. But the servants gave Benjamin five times more than the others. The brothers continued to eat and drink with Joseph until they were drunk.

Then Joseph gave a command to his servant. He said, "Fill the men's sacks with as much grain as they can carry. Then put each man's money into his sack with the grain. Put the youngest brother's money in his sack too. But also put my special silver cup in his sack." So the servant obeyed Joseph. Early the next morning the brothers and their donkeys were sent back to their country. After they had left the city, Joseph said to his servant, "Go and follow the men. Stop them and say to them, 'We were good to you! So why have you been bad to us? Why did you steal my master's silver cup? My master drinks from that cup, and he uses it to learn secret things. What you did was wrong!'" So the servant obeyed. He rode out to the brothers and stopped them. The servant said to them what Joseph had told him to say. But the brothers said to the servant, "Why does the governor say these things? We wouldn't do anything like that! We brought back the money that we found in our sacks before. So surely we wouldn't steal silver or gold from your master's house. If you find the silver cup in any of our sacks, let that man die. You can kill him, and we will be your slaves." The servant said, "I agree, except that only the man who is found to have the cup will be my slave. The others will be free." Then every brother quickly opened his sack on the ground. The servant started looking in the sacks. He started with the oldest brother and ended with the youngest. He found the cup in Benjamin's sack. The brothers were very sad. They tore their clothes to show their sadness. They put their sacks back on the donkeys and went back to the city. When Judah and his brothers went back to Joseph's house, Joseph was still there. The brothers fell to the ground and bowed down before him. Joseph said to them, "Why have you done this? Didn't you know that I have a special way of learning secrets? No one is better at this than I am!" Judah said, "Sir, there is nothing we can say. There is no way to explain. There is no way to show that we are not guilty. God has judged us guilty for something else we have done. So all of us, even Benjamin, will be your slaves." But Joseph said, "I will not make you all slaves! Only the

man who stole the cup will be my slave. You others can go in peace to your father." Then Judah went to Joseph and said, "Sir, please let me speak plainly with you. Please don't be angry with me. I know that you are like Pharaoh himself. When we were here before, you asked us, 'Do you have a father or a brother?' And we answered you, 'We have a father--he is an old man. And we have a younger brother. Our father loves him because he was born while our father was old. This youngest son's brother is dead, so he is the only son who is left from that mother. Our father loves him very much.' Then you said to us, 'Bring that brother to me. I want to see him.' And we said to you, 'That young boy cannot come. He cannot leave his father. If his father loses him, his father will be so sad that he will die.' But you said to us, 'You must bring your youngest brother, or I will not sell you grain again.' So we went back to our father and told him what you said. "Later, our father said, 'Go back and buy us some more food.' We said to our father, 'We cannot go without our youngest brother. The governor said he will not sell us grain again until he sees our youngest brother.' Then my father said to us, 'You know that my wife Rachel gave me two sons. I let one son go away, and he was killed by a wild animal. And I haven't seen him since. If you take my other son away from me, and something happens to him, I will be sad enough to die.' Now, imagine what will happen when we go home without our youngest brother--he is the most important thing in our father's life! Our father will die if he sees that the boy isn't with us--and it will be our fault. We will send our father to his grave a very sad man. "I took responsibility for the young boy. I told my father, 'If I don't bring him back to you, you can blame me for the rest of my life.' So now I beg you, please let the boy go back with his brothers, and I will stay and be your slave. I cannot go back to my father if the boy is not with me. I am very afraid of what would happen to my father."

## 31. JOSEPH TESTS HIS BROTHERS (GENESIS 42:1-44:34)



“And he searched, and began at the eldest, and ended at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.”  
**GENESIS 44:12**

# 31. JOSEPH TESTS HIS BROTHERS

## (GENESIS 42:1-44:34)

### MEMORY VERSE:

*"For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light." LUKE 8:17*

### TRUE OR FALSE:

1. Joseph's brothers went down to Egypt to buy horses. TRUE or FALSE
2. Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, just in case anything bad happened. TRUE or FALSE
3. When Joseph's brothers bowed down before him, he recognized them, and they recognized him too. TRUE or FALSE
4. Joseph told his brothers that they had to bring Benjamin to Egypt to prove they were telling the truth, so Judah went back and got him and brought him to Egypt. TRUE or FALSE
5. Joseph invited all the brothers to eat with him that night after he saw Benjamin came with Judah to Egypt. TRUE or FALSE
6. Joseph had his cup put in Benjamin's sack when his brothers were leaving, along with the money he brought for buying grain. TRUE or FALSE
7. When Joseph's cup was found in Benjamin's sack, the brothers were very happy that it wasn't found in their sacks. TRUE or FALSE
8. Judah told Joseph that their father Israel would probably die if anything happened to Benjamin, because he was the only son left from his wife Rachel, who he loved very much. TRUE or FALSE

### ANSWER THE QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Joseph's brothers have to go to Egypt?
2. Which brother stayed at home with their father Israel?
3. Did Joseph recognize his brothers when he saw them bowing before him? Did they recognize him?
4. What did Joseph tell his brothers they had to do before he would believe they weren't spies and they were telling the truth?
5. When Joseph's brothers all bought their grain, what did Joseph tell his servants to do with their sacks? What did he have put in Benjamin's sack?
6. What was Joseph going to do to the man whose sack had his cup in it?
7. What did Joseph's brothers tell him when Joseph said he was going to make Benjamin his slave?
8. What would probably happen to their father Israel if Benjamin didn't come back with them?



## LESSON 31 ACTIVITY

**Shake It Up** (do this during the lesson – about halfway through)

You will need a clear plastic water bottle, baby oil, water, and food coloring (food coloring is optional). Fill the clear glass bottle half-full of baby oil, and half full of water (leave a little air space). Add a few drops of food coloring and let the children shake it up (to represent the trials and trouble we experience).

Tell the children that sometimes God does not work on our timetable. “We usually want an immediate rescue when we call on God for help.” Set the bottle aside and go on with other activities. Tell them the fizzy mess in the bottle will get back to being beautifully clear in a little while. Ask them to keep checking.

**OPTIONAL ACTIVITY - Puzzles** You will need magazine pictures (or other pretty pictures), sheets of cardboard or poster board, rubber cement, scissors, and markers. Glue several pretty pictures to the sheets of cardboard, trim the edges neatly, and cut the glued boards into pieces to create home made puzzles. In class, mix all the pieces of all the puzzles together and form as many groups as you have finished puzzles. Let the class work on them collectively. Explain that even when things are a great big mess God can still put things together. God is in control of our circumstances.

**PRAYER** Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for God’s grace in working our circumstances for good. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity.