
BIG IDEA: FORGIVE LIKE GOD DOES

DATE: OCTOBER 16-17, 2021 — **STORY:** JOSEPH

BIBLE BASIS: GENESIS 41-47

SERIES: MADE FOR MORE

God has made each of us for something more than we can ever imagine! We will be reading through passages in the book of Genesis.

MEMORY VERSE

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. —ROMANS 8:28

SCHEDULE

0:00–0:10	Welcome Activities/Check-In
0:10–0:15	Transition to Large Group (B100)
0:15–0:30	Large Group (Worship, Memory Verse, Global Partner Spotlight)
0:30–0:35	Transition to Small Group (Back to Classrooms)
0:35–1:05	Small Group (Storytelling, Questions, Big Idea Connection, Respond Activity)
1:05–1:15	Dismiss/Additional Activities (During Check-Out)

SERIES OVERVIEW

Date	Story	Big Idea	Bible Basis
September 25-26	Abraham	God Is A Promise Keeper	Genesis 15, 17, 18, 21
October 2-3	Isaac	I Can Always Trust God	Genesis 22
October 9-10	Jacob & Esau	God Has A Plan For Me	Genesis 25, 27
October 16-17	Joseph	Forgive Like God Does	Genesis 41-47
October 23-24	The Burning Bush	God Is With Us	Exodus 1-7
October 30-31	The 10 Plagues	God Is Almighty	Exodus 7-10
November 6-7	The Passover	God Is Our Rescuer	Exodus 11-13
November 13-14	Red Sea Crossing	Be Thankful & Don't Grumble	Exodus 13-17

OCTOBER 16-17

STORY: JOSEPH

GENESIS 41-47

DEVOTIONAL

Every Halloween my neighbors and I collectively make the same two mistakes. We somehow repeatedly overestimate how much candy to purchase, and we leave our pumpkins out for way too long. The candy problem is fairly short-lived for me as I have both the sweet tooth and the metabolism of a twelve-year-old boy. The pumpkin issue, on the other hand, is a bit more problematic. I don't know if you've ever watched a pumpkin decay, but it's not a pretty sight. After a while they become rotten and begin to turn black. My neighbor and I watch each other contemplate the question, "How do I pick this thing up without it falling apart on me?" Decaying pumpkins can be a bit of a predicament, but it's nothing compared to the problems caused by a decaying relationship. We've all faced the dilemma of how to deal with a decaying relationship and we've all been daunted by the question, "How did it come to this?" For the pumpkin, the answer is simple—time. But for relationships it's usually much more complicated. It could be neglect, broken trust, harsh words, hurt feelings, or any number of other offenses, real or imagined. For most of us, we want to know the answer to the "why" question, but more than anything we want to know if things can ever be right again. We long for the one thing that can bring peace. We long for forgiveness. But how do we find it?

In Lewis Smedes' classic, *The Art of Forgiving*, Dr. Smedes outlines a process that he refers to as "radical spiritual surgery." Smedes says, "We rediscover the humanity of the person who hurt us. We surrender our right to get even. We revise our thoughts, feelings, and perceptions toward the person we forgive."

Sounds easy, right? Not so much! But with the help and grace of God, we can all walk this path. As we look at the story of Joseph, we can certainly see God walk him through these three phases. Joseph is betrayed, conflicted, lied about, impassioned, and is elevated to the status as the hero of an empire. But in the end, Joseph isn't just a hero to a kingdom, but a hero that would bring a forgiving and healing peace to his own soul and the souls of his brothers. As you prepare this week, identify those who you have yet to forgive, and receive forgiveness from the God who gives it freely.

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GO! Contributor

PROVIDED RESOURCES

Welcome Activities: Coloring/Activity pages; coloring supplies; playdough

Storytelling: Playdough, Story Cards

Big Idea Connection: Bananas (?)

Respond Activity: Playdough

Additional Activities: Word Cards

***If you need any additional resources, please let us know so that we can provide that for you!*

WELCOME ACTIVITIES

OPTION 1: COLORING PAGE/ ACTIVITY PAGE

Allow students to color or do the activity page on the back.

OPTION 2: PLAYDOUGH CREATIONS

An activity to get kids to interact with each other.

Give each kid in your group a container of playdough. At their tables, have kids make their own creations and allow other students to guess what it is. Some ideas are: animals, cars, plants, sports (i.e. a basketball), etc. Encourage kids to get to know each other's names and to talk about their week.

OPTION 3: STUDENT CHOICE

Allow students to choose which option they would like to do.

**Students can also choose to do the coloring/activity page while they wait their turn to participate in Option 2.*

STORYTELLING

Hand out playdough and story cards to kids. Give them a few minutes to shape the object on their story card with their playdough

In last week's story, we learned how Isaac had twin boys. Does anyone remember their names? *(Take answer.)* That's right—Jacob and Esau. Later in his life, God changed Jacob's name to Israel. In Genesis 37, we learn that Israel had 12 sons. He gave one of them a really cool gift. *Take a look.*

(Have the group or groups who made the "Coat or Robe" out of playdough hold it up for the rest of the groups to see. Let the other groups guess what it is. When they've guessed correctly, have someone from the group who looked up Genesis 37:3–4 read it aloud.)

How do you think you would have felt if your mom or dad loved your brother more than you and gave him special gifts? *(Take a few answers.)* Yeah—I don't think anyone would be too thrilled! Things got worse and worse and Joseph's brothers began to hate him so much that they threw him into an empty well and planned to kill him. Can you imagine what most people would be thinking about if their brothers threw them into a pit? *(Say in a comically maniacal voice.)* Revenge! *(Encourage kids to repeat that with you.)* Fortunately, one of the brothers began to have 2nd thoughts.

(Have the group who made the "Chains" hold it up so the other groups can guess. Have someone from the group who looked up Genesis 37:26–28 read it aloud.)

Can you imagine what most people would be thinking about if their brothers sold them into slavery? *(Prompt kids to say "Revenge" with you in a maniacal voice.)* It got worse, though. While Joseph was working as a slave, somebody accused him of doing something he didn't do. And guess what? He got thrown into prison. Can you imagine what most people would be thinking about if they got thrown into prison for something they didn't do? *(Prompt kids to say "Revenge" with you in a maniacal voice.)*

While he was in prison, though, people learned that Joseph could tell people what their dreams meant. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, heard about this and sent for Joseph to interpret one of his dreams. After hearing the dream, God gave Joseph the answer to what it meant. Joseph explained to Pharaoh that there would be seven wonderful years of crops, but after that there would be seven years of famine, a time when food wouldn't grow and there wouldn't be enough to eat. After hearing these things the Pharaoh did something completely unexpected.

STORYTELLING (CONT.)

(Have the group who made the "Ring and necklace" hold it up so the other groups can guess. Have someone from the group who looked up Genesis 41:39–42: read it aloud.)

Joseph was now the second most powerful person in Egypt! He would make sure that Egypt stored up food during the seven good years so that everyone would have enough to eat during the seven years when crops couldn't grow. When the famine finally hit, guess who showed up to get some food from Joseph? *(Kids respond.)* Joseph's brothers! Can you imagine that? These were the brothers who hated Joseph so much that they threw him in a pit, planned to kill him, and sold him into slavery. Now Joseph was in charge. If he wanted to, he could get revenge! He had the power to have them arrested or even killed. What do you think Joseph did? *(Take answers.)* Let's take a look.

(Have the group who made the "Tear drops" hold it up so the other groups can guess. Have someone from the group who looked up Genesis 45:1–5 read it aloud.)

Can you imagine that? Instead of getting revenge, Joseph forgave them. Later in the chapter, it says that Joseph threw his arms around his brothers and wept. He was so happy to see them again.

QUESTIONS

This can be done as a large group or in table groups

For Younger Kids:

1. If you were Joseph, do you think you could have forgiven your brothers for what they did?
2. How do you think Joseph was able to show that much forgiveness to his brothers?

For Older Kids:

1. How do you think Joseph was able to show that much forgiveness to his brothers?
2. What do you think this story teaches us about God?

BIG IDEA CONNECTION

Can you imagine how hard it must have been for Joseph to forgive his brothers for doing something so terrible? When people do or say really mean things to us, it can be hard to let it go and forgive them. *Choose a volunteer to come to the teaching area with you.*

Does anyone know what a grudge is? *(Take answers.)* Holding onto a grudge means you're not willing to forgive someone. Holding onto a grudge is kind of like holding onto a banana. *(Hold up the bananas.)*

(Address the volunteer kid.) Let's say that you are hanging out in your yard with your really good friend, Buster McFlusterpants—that's actually his name. At some point, these other neighbor kids come over and ask Buster if he wants to play with them, but they say they just want Buster, not you. And just like that, Buster says, "Sure" and walks away with the other kids. You can't believe it—he just totally ditched you! Now you have to figure out what to do. You can go talk to Buster McFlusterpants and try to work it out OR you can hold onto this *(hold up the two bananas)*—it's a grudge! Unfortunately, you decide to hold onto the grudge. *(Have the volunteer hold onto the bananas.)*

The next day at school, Buster finds you and says, "Hey. Sorry about yesterday. That wasn't cool! You wanna play something at recess?" Now you have to decide again—are you going to forgive or are you going to hold that grudge even tighter? You think about it for a second and then tell your friend to get lost. You decide to hold onto your grudge even tighter. *(Direct kid to begin squeezing both bananas.)*

Later that day, after school, Buster knocks on your door and asks if you want to play video games over at his house. That sounds pretty fun and you really want to do it, but you're still so mad. So now, once again, you have to decide—are you going to forgive your friend or are you going to hold that grudge even tighter? And just like before you decide to hold the grudge even tighter and you yell, "We're never playing again!" and you slam the door in Buster's face. *(Direct kid to squeeze the bananas as hard as they can. They should squish all over their hands.)*

Take a look at these bananas, everyone. This is what holding a grudge looks like. Grudges are ugly and sticky and gross, and when you hold onto them too tightly for too long they make a huge mess! *Thank your volunteer, and dismiss them.*

Instead of holding a grudge against his brothers, Joseph chose to forgive them. But I think there was something Joseph knew that made it easier for him to forgive. Joseph knew that he should forgive his brothers because God had already forgiven him.

Even though we sin against God, He doesn't hold a grudge against us. God is quick to forgive us. And in the same way that **God is quick to forgive us, He wants us to be quick to forgive others**, just like Joseph did for his brothers. Sometimes the best way to forgive others is to think about how God has forgiven you. Let's pray. *(Pray as you feel led by the Holy Spirit.)*

RESPOND ACTIVITY

In today's story, kids learned about how Joseph forgave his brothers despite all the hurt they put him through. God wants us to forgive others as He has forgiven us through Jesus.

LETTING GO OF A GRUDGE:

Directions: Have kids take their playdough in their hands. Tell the kids in your group to think about a time when someone did or said something mean to them. Tell them to squeeze their playdough tight in their hand so that squishes through their fingers. Tell them not to let go.

Say: Holding onto a grudge is kind of like squeezing this playdough. It might feel good, but it keeps us from having and using open hands. In the same way, when we hold onto a grudge, it keeps us from sharing God's love and forgiveness. Holding onto a grudge traps us and makes a mess of things. But when we let go of the grudge, and give it up to God, we can find freedom.

Directions: Ask the kids how they can show forgiveness to people who wronged them in the situation they thought about. Then, have them roll their playdough into a ball.

Say: God doesn't want us to hold onto grudges. Imagine your container is like God's hands and let's give up our grudges to him.

Directions: Give the kids a moment to think and pray about how to forgive others. Then, have kids place their playdough into their container and seal it up. Ask the following questions.

Questions:

1. Why do you think it's so much easier to hold onto a grudge than it is to let it go?
2. Is it easier for you to forgive others when you think about all the times that God has forgiven you? Why or why not?
3. Is there anyone in your life that you're having a hard time forgiving?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

*These **additional activities** are completely optional. These activities are meant to fill any time that you may have left. Students can participate or finish their respond activity. Have your adult helper check-out students while you do one or more of the options with the students who are waiting to be picked up by their parents.*

TELL THE STORY:

Bible Story Review Game

Tape up the word cards facedown to the board or a wall. Have kids come up one at a time and choose a card. They have to tell part of the story that includes their word. Keep going until every kid has had a chance to come up to play. Words can be reused.

SURVIVOR:

Bible Memorization Activity

Directions: Place the Bible verse sign in the middle of the group and read it carefully with your kids several times so they can begin to memorize it. When everyone is ready, turn the sign over so they can no longer read it.

Next, tell your group that they are all on a sinking ship and that you (the small group leader) are a part of a rescue team looking for survivors. To be a survivor the kids have to complete a task while saying the Bible verse out loud. If they complete both the task and the Bible verse successfully, they have to yell, "I'm a survivor." If they mess up on either the task or the Bible verse, they have to pretend to sink into the floor as if it were water.

Listed below are some optional actions. Use as many as you wish, but consider asking the kids for ideas for challenging actions to complete while reciting the verse.

Actions:

1. Hop on one foot while turning in circles
2. Pat head with one hand and rub stomach with the other
3. Jumping jacks
4. Dance
5. Quickly spin around in circles