

Joseph

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Session 1: **Happy Families?**

Series: **Joseph**

Themes: **Families, Sin, Changed hearts**

Bible Passage: **Genesis 37**

Suggested age group: **11-14's**

Session aim: **To look at how we respond to the difficulties in our families**

To look at how sin can grow in our hearts and how this can be dealt with

Way in 1 – Coin Conversations

Time: *5 mins*

Bible knowledge: *n/a*

With: *coin*

1. Each young person takes a turn to spin a coin. While the coin spins they say as many things as possible about a subject, e.g. my school; pets; my journey to school today; mathematics; table tennis; going to the hairdressers; DIY; clothes shopping.
2. For each thing said while the coin spins they get a point. The person with most points wins.

Way in 2 – Who's Who

Time: *10 mins*

Bible knowledge: *n/a*

With: *paper, pens*

1. Give each young person some paper and a pen. Allow two minutes for them to write down their name and five things about their family that they are willing to tell the rest of the group. (Example: 2 sisters, live with mum and step-dad, small, mostly happy, sometimes argue.) N.B. It may be helpful to warn the group that you will be reading their responses out.
2. Collect the pieces of paper and read out three or four. Can the group guess who it belongs to? (Be sensitive to young people with difficult family backgrounds.)

Way in 3 – Famous Families

Time: *10 mins*

Bible knowledge: *n/a*

With: *paper, pens*

1. Split into groups of four to six young people. Give each group a piece of paper and a pen.
2. Read out clues to the identity of famous families, real or fictional. The groups write down who they think the families are. Use a range of families from various sources – films, soap operas, comedy shows.
Examples:
 - Bald man, wife, two daughters, one son, enjoy watching TV together, church attendees [Answer: The Simpsons]
 - Woman, married to a man with a less important job than her, one daughter, three sons, three of the children have married and divorced, songs are often sung when they get together [Answer: The Royal Family]
 - One father, four mothers, twelve sons, second youngest son is the favourite, farming family, plenty of jealousy and anger [Answer: Jacob and his family]

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Connecting 1 – Jacob’s Imperfect Family

Time: 15 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: a recording of ‘Jacob and Sons’ from the musical ‘Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat’ on CD or DVD or its lyrics (available at

www.stlyrics.com/lyrics/josephandtheamazingtechnicolordreamcoat/jacob&sonsjosephscoat.htm), resource sheet 1 ‘Jacob’s Family’, Bibles or resource sheet 2 ‘Genesis 37’

1. In preparation take time as the leader to look at Jacob’s story in Genesis 27-35 to understand the background to his story.
2. With the young people listen to, or look at, the lyrics from the song ‘Jacob and Sons’ to help introduce Jacob’s family.
3. Explore in more depth Jacob’s family using resource sheet 1 ‘Jacob’s Family’. Go into as much depth as is appropriate. Emphasise how the complications led to rivalries.
4. Have two or three volunteers read out Genesis 37:1-8 and Genesis 37:17b-35.
5. Ask the young people what they think the problems are in this family.
6. Have the group imagine this family is featuring on a daytime TV talk show. What might their section of the show be entitled? (Initial suggestions: ‘Brother – your pride is putting you off-side!'; ‘Father – your favouritism is finishing this family!’)

Connecting 2 – Who Is To Blame?

Time: 15 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: paper, pens

1. Split into groups of three or four. Give each group a different character(s) from the narrative – Jacob, Joseph or Joseph’s brothers. They have five minutes to prepare a case as to why their character(s) is to blame for this family’s troubles. At the end of five minutes they need to give a 30 second presentation.
2. Draw out the following points:
 - There were problems in this family and it was not just one person or group who was to blame
 - Despite the problems God was still able to use this family as part of his big story that would eventually lead to the birth of Jesus
 - We will probably recognise some of the same issues in our family
 - As with Jacob’s family these issues will not automatically exclude us from being part of God’s family

Responding 1 – Making Our Families Better

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

1. In groups of three or four get people to talk about three good things in their own family. Emphasise that their family includes the wider family.
2. In the same groups get people to talk about one thing that is not good in their family. What positive action could they take to help change this?
3. In the same groups have people pray for their families, giving thanks for the good things and asking for help to take the positive action they were talking about. Alternatively the leader could pray for everybody.

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Responding 2 – Changing Our Heart

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: some

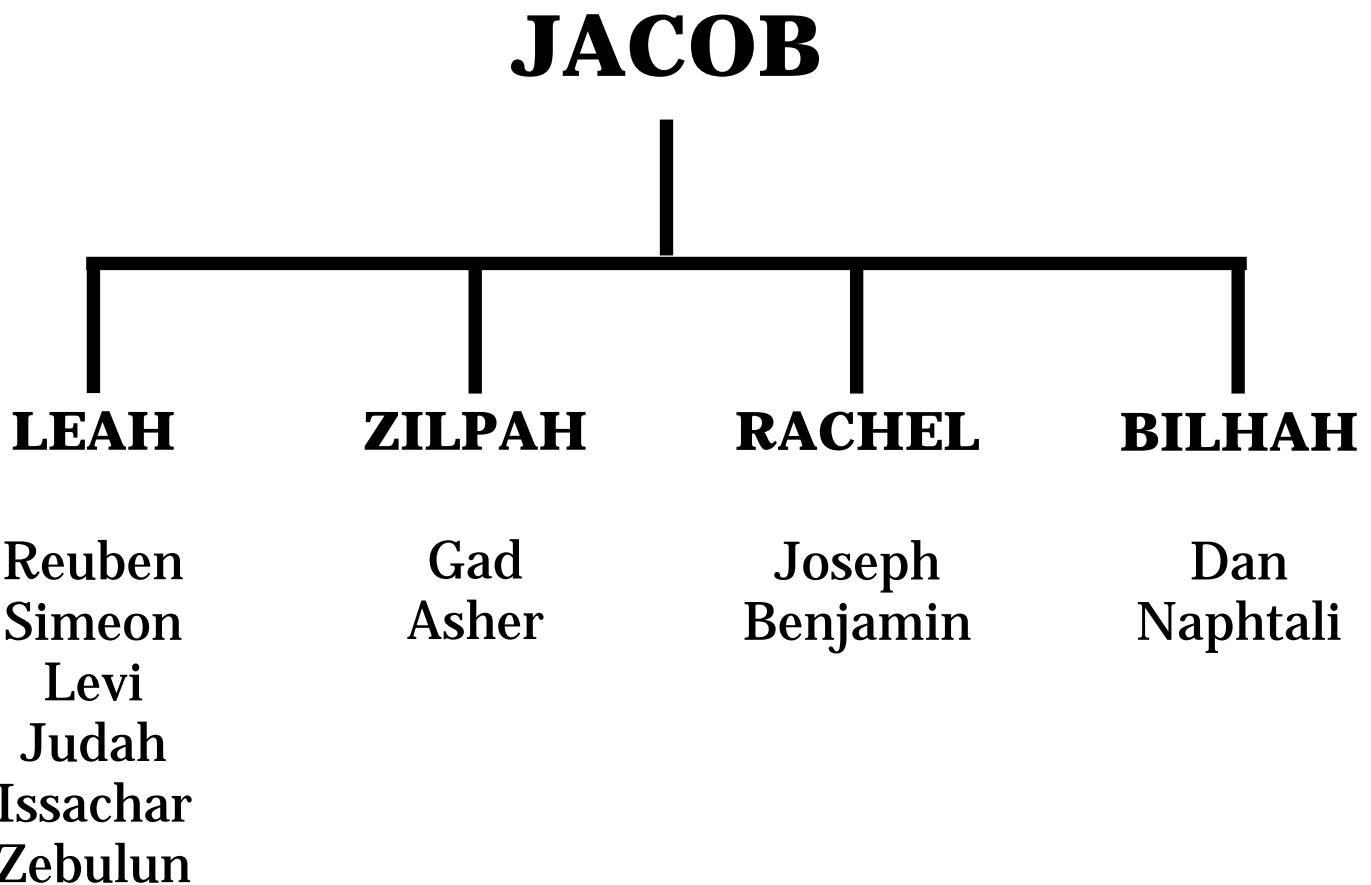
With: Bibles or resource sheet 3 'Changing our hearts', heart shaped pieces of paper, pencils, erasers, pens

1. Give each person a heart shaped piece of paper.
2. Have a volunteer read Mark 7:20-23.
3. Get people to write in pencil on their paper hearts sinful issues that feature in their lives.
4. Make the point that if our hearts are dark, sinful and angry then, like Joseph's brothers, that is what our outward responses will be.
5. Have another volunteer read Galatians 5:22-23.
6. Get people to now rub out the pencil words on their paper hearts and replace them in ink with words reflecting the Christ-like qualities we should be living out.
7. Draw out the following points:
 - We will never change our thought life, attitudes and actions by will power alone
 - Jesus is the only one who is able to renew our heart
 - This process happens when we let him, and the light of God, into our lives.
8. Have another volunteer read Ezekiel 11:19-20

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Resource Sheet 1 – Jacob’s Family



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Resource Sheet 2 – Genesis 37

Genesis 37: 1-8

Jacob lived in the land of Canaan, where his father had lived. This is the family history of Jacob:

Joseph was a young man, seventeen years old. He and his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives, cared for the flocks. Joseph gave his father bad reports about his brothers. Since Joseph was born when his father Jacob was old, Jacob loved him more than his other sons. He made Joseph a special robe with long sleeves. When Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved him more than he loved them, they hated their brother and could not speak to him politely.

One time Joseph had a dream, and when he told his brothers about it, they hated him even more. Joseph said, "Listen to the dream I had. We were in the field tying bundles of wheat together. My bundle stood up, and your bundles of wheat gathered around it and bowed down to it."

His brothers said, "Do you really think you will be king over us? Do you truly think you will rule over us?" His brothers hated him even more because of his dreams and what he had said.

Genesis 37: 17b-35

Joseph went to look for his brothers and found them in Dothan.

Joseph's brothers saw him coming from far away. Before he reached them, they made a plan to kill him. They said to each other, "Here comes that dreamer. Let's kill him and throw his body into one of the wells. We can tell our father that a wild animal killed him. Then we will see what will become of his dreams."

But Reuben heard their plan and saved Joseph, saying, "Let's not kill him. Don't spill any blood. Throw him into this well here in the desert, but don't hurt him!" Reuben planned to save Joseph later and send him back to his father. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they pulled off his robe with long sleeves and threw him into the well. It was empty, and there was no water in it.

While Joseph was in the well, the brothers sat down to eat. When they looked up, they saw a group of Ishmaelites traveling from Gilead to Egypt. Their camels were carrying spices, balm, and myrrh.

Then Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and hide his death? Let's sell him to these Ishmaelites. Then we will not be guilty of killing our own brother. After all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." And the other brothers agreed. So when the Midianite traders came by, the brothers took Joseph out of the well and sold him to the Ishmaelites for eight ounces of silver. And the Ishmaelites took him to Egypt.

When Reuben came back to the well and Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes to show he was upset. Then he went back to his brothers and said, "The boy is not there! What shall I do?" The brothers killed a goat and dipped Joseph's robe in its blood. Then they brought the long-sleeved robe to their father and said, "We found this robe. Look it over carefully and see if it is your son's robe."

Jacob looked it over and said, "It is my son's robe! Some savage animal has eaten him. My son Joseph has been torn to pieces!" Then Jacob tore his clothes and put on rough cloth to show that he was upset, and he continued to be sad about his son for a long time. All of his sons and daughters tried to comfort him, but he could not be comforted. He said, "I will be sad about my son until the day I die." So Jacob cried for his son Joseph.

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Resource Sheet 3 – Changing our hearts

Mark 7: 20-23

And Jesus said, "The things that come out of people are the things that make them unclean. All these evil things begin inside people, in the mind: evil thoughts, sexual sins, stealing, murder, adultery, greed, evil actions, lying, doing sinful things, jealousy, speaking evil of others, pride, and foolish living. All these evil things come from inside and make people unclean."

Galatians 5: 22-23

But the Spirit produces the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. There is no law that says these things are wrong.

Ezekiel 11: 19-20

I will give them a desire to respect me completely, and I will put inside them a new way of thinking. I will take out the stubborn heart of stone from their bodies, and I will give them an obedient heart of flesh. Then they will live by my rules and obey my laws and keep them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

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Session 2: **Indecent Proposal**

Series: **Joseph**

Themes: **temptation, honouring God**

Bible Passage: **Genesis 39:1-18**

Suggested age group: **11-14's**

Session aims: **To consider the various temptations we can encounter in life and how we can tackle these**

Way in 1 – Choices

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

1. Group members stand in the middle of the room. The leader calls out two choices indicating one side of the room for one choice and the other side of the room for the other choice. Group members move to whichever side of the room indicates the choice they would prefer. Examples:
 - Chips or chocolate
 - Be inside on a sunny day or outside on a rainy day
 - Bebo or Facebook
 - Work for MI5 or work for NASA
 - Watch a film on TV or watch sport on TV
 - Be a famous sport star or be a famous rock musician
 - Have your bedroom painted black or have your bedroom painted white
 - Be a superhero who can turn invisible or a superhero who can fly

Way in 2 – Don't Do It

Time: 7 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: fruit pastilles, pens, doughnuts

1. Play three challenges either with the whole group or with volunteers.
2. Challenge one – players are given a fruit pastille. Can they place it on their tongue and then resist the temptation to chew it or suck it for two minutes?
3. Challenge two – players are given a pen which they place horizontally between their top lip and nose. Can they resist the temptation for two minutes to let the pen drop?
4. Challenge three – While eating the doughnut, can they resist the temptation to lick their lips?

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Way in 3 - What Makes A Man?

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: Post-it notes, pens

1. Give each person three Post-it notes and a pen. On each Post-it note they write a word they associate with a 19-year-old male.
2. Gather in the Post-it notes and identify any common themes.
3. Make the following comments:
 - When we look at the Joseph we must remember that he was a normal young man with the same issues as any young man today
 - Omitting this fact means we do not do justice to what God did in his life and what he can do in ours

Connecting 1 – Tempting, Tempting

Time: 20 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: Bibles or resource sheet 1 'Genesis 39, large sheet of paper, newspapers, magazines, sticky tape

1. Read Genesis 39:1-18.
2. Make the following comments:
 - There is a big emphasis in verses 1-6 that the Lord was with Joseph
 - Joseph would have been very aware of this given the situation he found himself in at the end of chapter 37
 - Despite all initially going well there are still challenges in him living for God
 - Joseph was now faced with the temptations of Potiphar's wife and staying honest to his master
 - Joseph resolves not to betray Potiphar or sin against God because he knows what God wants him to do and so he flees from the issue
3. In small groups, looking at the Bible passage, discuss the following questions:
 - What are the challenges now facing Joseph? (Answers: not giving in to the repeated temptations of Potiphar's wife; staying honest to his master)
 - Why does Joseph act as he does? (Answers: not to betray Potiphar; not to sin against God)
 - How does Joseph deal with the temptation? (Answers: he knows what God wants him to do; he flees from the issue)
4. Give the group newspapers and magazines. Their task is to find pictures of things people might be tempted by. Collect these pictures and make a large poster.
5. Discuss which things are the most tempting and why. Also discuss why there are things that God would not want us to be tempted by.
6. Ensure the following points are drawn out:
 - Joseph was a 19-year-old man and the offer from Potiphar's wife would have been tempting
 - Joseph did not want to give in to the temptation because it would have affected his work life, the trust given to him by Potiphar and gone against a rule God gave to protect relationships between a man and a woman
 - Since God was with Joseph, God helped him to resist and flee the temptation
 - When we are tempted we need to act to get away from the temptation but also need to ask God to help us with that too

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Connecting 2 – Temptation In The Bible

Time: 20 mins

Bible knowledge: some

With: Resource sheet 2 'Temptations In The Bible'

1. In small groups look at the Bible passages on the resource sheet 'Temptations In The Bible' and answer the accompanying questions.
2. Altogether ensure the following points are made:
 - Jesus' temptations were to inappropriately use his power, rely on himself and not his Father and make fame and glory for himself. He knows God's Word though and relies on God's strength.
 - Temptation comes from the devil and when we let little thoughts grow into big thoughts in our minds. When this happens we should submit to God, be purified by God in our heart and thought lives and flee from tempting situations.
 - Inappropriate relationships are to be avoided as they hurt and damage us as well as affecting our life beyond that relationship.

Responding 1 – Problem Page

Time: 15 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: Resource sheet 3 'Problem Page'

1. In small groups give out copies of the resource sheet 'Problem Page'.
2. How would group members answer the people who have written in?
3. Discuss together the answers they have come up with and the merits of their solutions.
4. Pray for the group members in the situations where they will face temptation.

Responding 2 – Guided Reflection

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: some

With: CD 'Here I Am To Worship' by Tim Hughes, CD player

1. Listen to the song 'May The Words Of My Mouth'. Invite the young people to use the words of the song as a prayer that in their daily lives they will follow God first before following the desires of temptation.
2. Read the following prayer:

'Father God, you know the many different temptations and wrong desires that we face day by day. Help us to know by your truth when we are being tempted and give us the courage and strength to flee from that temptation.
Father may we rely on you as Christ relied on you when he was tempted.
Amen.'

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Resource Sheet 1 – Genesis 39

Genesis 39: 1-18

Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. An Egyptian named Potiphar was an officer to the king of Egypt and the captain of the palace guard. He bought Joseph from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man. He lived in the house of his master, Potiphar the Egyptian.

Potiphar saw that the LORD was with Joseph and that the LORD made Joseph successful in everything he did. So Potiphar was very happy with Joseph and allowed him to be his personal servant. He put Joseph in charge of the house, trusting him with everything he owned. When Joseph was put in charge of the house and everything Potiphar owned, the LORD blessed the people in Potiphar's house because of Joseph. And the LORD blessed everything that belonged to Potiphar, both in the house and in the field. So Potiphar left Joseph in charge of everything he owned and was not concerned about anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well built and handsome. After some time the wife of Joseph's master began to desire Joseph, and one day she said to him, "Have sexual relations with me."

But Joseph refused and said to her, "My master trusts me with everything in his house. He has put me in charge of everything he owns. There is no one in his house greater than I. He has not kept anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How can I do such an evil thing? It is a sin against God."

The woman talked to Joseph every day, but he refused to have sexual relations with her or even spend time with her.

One day Joseph went into the house to do his work as usual and was the only man in the house at that time. His master's wife grabbed his coat and said to him, "Come and have sexual relations with me." But Joseph left his coat in her hand and ran out of the house.

When she saw that Joseph had left his coat in her hands and had run outside, she called to the servants in her house and said, "Look! This Hebrew slave was brought here to shame us. He came in and tried to have sexual relations with me, but I screamed. My scream scared him and he ran away, but he left his coat with me." She kept his coat until her husband came home, and she told him the same story. She said, "This Hebrew slave you brought here came in to shame me! When he came near me, I screamed. He ran away, but he left his coat."

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Resource Sheet 2 – Temptations in the Bible

Matthew 4:1-11

¹ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

'He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a
stone.'

⁷ Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. ⁹ "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Questions

What are the temptations offered to Jesus?

Name one of the ways that Jesus fights temptation.

James 1:13-15

¹³ When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

James 4:7-10

⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will

come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Questions

Where does temptation come from?

What advice does James give to those being tempted?

Proverbs 6:23-29

For these commands are a lamp,
this teaching is a light,
and the corrections of discipline
are the way to life,
keeping you from the immoral woman,
from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife.

Do not lust in your heart after her beauty
or let her captivate you with her eyes,
for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread,
and the adulteress preys upon your very life.

Can a man scoop fire into his lap
without his clothes being burned?
Can a man walk on hot coals
without his feet being scorched?
So is he who sleeps with another man's wife;
no one who touches her will go unpunished.

Question

What are the consequences of being tempted into inappropriate relationships?

Resource Sheet 3 – Problem Page

PROBLEM PAGE

Your problems - our solutions

Dear Problem Page,

I'm struggling to get on with my science project that the teacher has given us to do. It's due in next Tuesday. My parents are keen for me to get a good mark for it. My friend has offered to let me copy his. It's a tempting offer! What should I do?

Dear Problem Page,

I have found out something about one of the people in my class that I think is a secret. It would make me really popular with people I want to be friends with if I told them about it. At the same time the person whose secret it is might be upset. Any thoughts?

Dear Problem Page,

My boyfriend and I have been going out for over a year now. We are slowly being tempted to take our relationship further and further. Is this inevitable? Isn't expressing our love a thing God would want us to do? Or is there something else I should be saying or doing? Please help!

Dear Problem Page,

I get £10 a week pocket money. This week I'm tempted to buy the new album by my favourite group which is cheaper than it will be next week. I'm also wanting to give to the urgent appeal at church for the project in Africa we support. How will I solve this when I've only got so much money to spend?

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Session 3: **God With Us**

Series: **Joseph**

Themes: **coping with difficult times, God being with us**

Bible Passage: **Genesis 39:19 - 40:23**

Suggested age group: **11-14's**

Session aims: **To think about how God is with us even in difficult situations**

Way in 1 – ‘It’s Not Fair!’ Quiz

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

1. Divide the group into two teams. Ask the teams alternate questions. (You may wish to offer a prize to the winning team).

Questions:

Team 1 – What colour is an orange?

Team 2 – How many days are in the song, ‘The 12 Days Of Christmas’?

Team 1 – On what day of the week is the *Sunday Mail* published?

Team 2 – What day of the week follows Tuesday?

Team 1 – Who wrote Beethoven’s Third Symphony?

Team 2 – What is the name of the British Prime Minister?

Team 1 – I have six chocolate buttons and I eat them all. How many do I have left?

Team 2 – What is the international dialling code for Algeria? (Answer: +213)

Team 1 – How many legs does a dog have?

Team 2 – What is the mathematical number pi to ten decimal places? (Answer: 3.1415926535)

2. Have a discussion about the quiz.

- How did it feel to be in the team that always got easy questions?
- How did it feel to be in the team that got the hard questions? (eg Want to give up? Get angry? Just got on with it?)

3. Can the group think of a situation which they felt was unfair or unjust? It could be something from home, school or the wider world? (Think of a couple of examples in advance.)

Way in 2 – ‘It’s Not Fair!’ Scenarios

Time: 15 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

1. Split into groups of three or four young people.
2. Give them the task of creating two 30 second dramas representing the theme ‘It’s Not Fair!’ that they will present to the rest of the group.
3. Allow each group to present their dramas then discuss:
 - Why are these situations not fair?
 - Are there any current positive aspects in these situations?
 - Are there any potential positive outcomes from these situations?
 - Where is God in these situations?

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Connecting 1 – Living In Difficult Times

Time: 15 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: Resource sheet ‘Joseph In Jail’, paper, red and blue pens

1. Get the young people into groups of two or three and give each group a copy of the resource sheet ‘Joseph In Jail’.
2. Read the Bible passage on the resource sheet together and ensure that the events of the passage have been understood.
3. On the resource sheet have groups:
 - Underline in blue pen a good thing that happens
 - Underline in red pen a bad thing that happens
 - Circle in blue pen parts of the story where God is doing something
4. Discuss what people have put on their sheet. Emphasise that through this difficult time God is with Joseph giving him a special role, helping him understand the dreams, helping him do his jobs well.
5. In small groups write a limerick based on the passage. The first line could be, ‘Into prison has gone our friend Joe,’ ‘Joseph has gone into jail,’ or ‘It’s prison time now for the dreamer.’

Connecting 2 – Finding God In Difficult Times

Time: 15 mins

Bible knowledge: some

1. Discuss the following questions:
 - Do you think God was still with Joseph? Why or why not?
 - What is Joseph’s response to being in prison? (Answers: he gets on with the jobs he is given)
 - Is it easier to trust God in good times or bad times? Why?
2. Either have a member of the group, or invite a special guest, to talk about a time when they were under pressure, fairly or unfairly. How did they know God was with them? Did anything positive ultimately come out of the situation?
3. If you did the Way in activity with the dramas remind people of these. (If you did the Way in activity with the quiz quickly suggest some unfair situations people might face.) Can people see where God might be at work in these situations?

For example:

- Helping people value the situations and relationships they are currently in
- Drawing fractured communities together
- Leading people to be more reliant on God in prayer
- Developing perseverance in people
- Changing and shaping our character
- Inspiring people to act and show God’s love in practical action

(Note – Be clear that God does not cause difficult times in order to bring about good things.)

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Responding 1 – The Suffering Church

Time: 15 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: stories gathered from websites such as www.csw.org.uk; www.barnabasfund.org; www.releaseinternational.org; www.opendoorssuk.org

1. Joseph was put in prison despite doing the right thing. Share some stories of Christians today who are put in prison because of their faith and doing what God wants them to do, or if you have internet access, get group members to look up some of the relevant websites and find the stories for themselves.
2. Discuss with group members an appropriate response to these stories. The websites will give some help on this but it could include praying and writing postcards to leaders in governments.

Responding 2 – Praying Together

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: some

With: paper, pens

1. Have the young people write down a personal issue for themselves or someone close to them where currently times are difficult.
2. Depending on the make up of the group have a time of prayer in response to the situations. This could include:
 - The leader prays for all the situations
 - Each person prays for their own situation
 - The pieces of paper are swapped round and group members pray for the person on that sheet

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Resource Sheet – Joseph in Jail

Genesis 39

¹⁹ When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, "This is how your slave treated me," he burned with anger. ²⁰ Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined.

But while Joseph was there in the prison, ²¹ the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favour in the eyes of the prison warden. ²² So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. ²³ The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

Genesis 40

¹ Some time later, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their master, the king of Egypt. ² Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, ³ and put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the same prison where Joseph was confined. ⁴ The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and he attended them.

After they had been in custody for some time, ⁵ each of the two men - the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were being held in prison—had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own.

⁶ When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected. ⁷ So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody with him in his master's house, "Why are your faces so sad today?"

⁸ "We both had dreams," they answered, "but there is no one to interpret them." Then Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams."

⁹ So the chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream. He said to him, "In my dream I saw a vine in front of me, ¹⁰ and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, it blossomed, and its clusters ripened into grapes. ¹¹ Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup and put the cup in his hand."

¹² "This is what it means," Joseph said to him. "The three branches are three days. ¹³ Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer. ¹⁴ But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. ¹⁵ For I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon."

¹⁶ When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given a favourable interpretation, he said to Joseph, "I too had a dream: On my head were three baskets of bread. ¹⁷ In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head."

¹⁸ "This is what it means," Joseph said. "The three baskets are three days. ¹⁹ Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat away your flesh."

²⁰ Now the third day was Pharaoh's birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his officials: ²¹ He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh's hand, ²² but he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation. ²³ The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.



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Joseph

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Session 4: **Forget and Forgive**

Series: **Joseph**

Themes: **sin, forgiveness**

Bible Passage: **Genesis 42-45**

Suggested age group: **11-14's**

Session aims: **To look at the way that we are offenders against God, who is the one we offend
To consider and respond to God's offer of acceptance and forgiveness**

Way in 1 – Adverbs

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: Resource sheet 1 'Adverbs'

1. Divide the young people into teams of four to six players.
2. One person from the team is given one phrase and a list of five adverbs. (Each team gets a different phrase and set of adverbs.) The team member's task is to say their phrase in the style of each adverb in the list. How many of the five adverbs can the team guess correctly in one minute? Adverbs and phrases are given on the Adverbs Resource Sheet.
3. To make the game easier, players saying the phrases can tell their team the first letter of the adverb after the first guess has been made.

Way in 2 – Target Game

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: pieces of equipment for the target game (e.g. ping pong balls & jar, tennis balls & bucket, Velcro dartboard & Velcro darts)

1. Divide the young people into teams of four to six players.
2. Each team is given two minutes to be on target as many times as possible with the target game you have provided. This might be bouncing ping pong balls off a desk into a jar, bouncing tennis balls off the floor into a bucket or throwing Velcro darts at a Velcro dart board. Which team is most on target?
3. After the games are over ask these questions:
 - What did it feel like to be on target?
 - What did it feel like to miss the target?
 - Did anybody who did not make the target feel the need to say sorry to the rest of the team?
 - How were you treated by the team if you did not make the target? Did they easily forgive?

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Connecting 1 – Freely Forgiven

Time: 20 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

With: paper, pens, Bible, *The Message* paraphrase, copies of resource sheet 2 ‘Freely Forgiven’

1. As a summary of where Joseph’s story from past weeks has got to and what has happened since the last session read to the group Acts 7:9-12. Emphasise that Joseph’s brothers are now in Egypt but they have not yet recognised him.
2. Get volunteers to act out Genesis 45:1-15 as you read it out. Use a translation such as the NIV or Youth Bible. You will need specific people to be Joseph and Benjamin and then others to be attendants and the other brothers.
3. After the acting discuss what the emotions are in the narrative (that may or may not have come out through the acting!) If you need to emphasise the emotions read the passage again from *The Message*.
4. Place around the room pieces of A4 paper, each of which has one of these situations written on it at the top.
 - The person who pushes in front of you in the lunch queue
 - The person who spreads a secret about you around the school
 - The person who accidentally breaks your favourite CD
 - The person who deliberately breaks your favourite iPod
 - The person who gets the rest of the class to laugh at you coming to SU
 - The person who phones for a chat when your favourite TV programme is on
5. Each person goes round the different pieces of paper to write down on it how they would like to respond to the offender who did this to them. Allow five minutes for this activity.
6. Looking at what has been written down how many people are looking to forgive the offender and how many are looking to get revenge as the offended?
7. Make the following points:
 - Joseph here is the person who has been offended by his brothers who are the offenders – they hated him, attacked him, sold him as a slave and lied to their father about what had happened to him
 - With their fate in his hands Joseph could have punished them for what they did
 - It is not easy for Joseph to forgive. The previous three chapters show Joseph tricking his brothers. Perhaps he is trying to decide whether he should forgive them, or whether he should take revenge
 - He decides to forgive, and he talks about what God has been doing in his life (verses 5-8), he encourages them not to let it be a burden of guilt to them (verse 5) and he backs up his forgiveness with actions (verses 10-11, 14-15)
 - Joseph gave up the right to take revenge and instead he freely offers forgiveness
 - Does this level of forgiveness surprise us?
 - Joseph’s actions echo what God is like with people – God is the one who is offended by us who are the offenders and yet he freely offers us forgiveness
8. Begin a whole group discussion using the Bible verses and questions on the Freely Forgiven resource sheet.

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Connecting 2 – A Forgiving Father

Time: 15 mins

Bible knowledge: some

With: Bible, *The Message* paraphrase, copies of resource sheet3 ‘A Forgiving Father’, pens

1. In small groups get the young people to discuss the Bible verses and questions on the A Forgiving Father Resource Sheet.

Responding 1 – Follow The Leader

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: limited

1. Have the whole group sit in a circle. One member of the group closes their eyes. Another person is silently chosen to be the leader. They will start to do an action that everybody else in the group must copy. They then regularly keep changing the action. The member of the group who had their eyes closed can now open their eyes and try to guess who is the leader.
2. Use the game to make the following points:
 - God sets the example for us on what forgiveness is by the way he offers to forgive us through what Jesus did while he was on earth
 - Even when dying on a cross Jesus offered forgiveness to those who were crucifying him (Luke 23:34)
 - Anybody who is a follower of Jesus today must follow his example and forgive others even when they cause us offence (John 12:26)

Responding 2 – Forgiveness Response

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: some

With: paper, pens, CD ‘Philippi’ by Ian White, CD player

1. Give each person a piece of paper and a pen. Allow time for them to write a prayer either of thanks to God for things they have been forgiven for or to ask for forgiveness for the first time. Alternatively some may prefer to draw a picture that symbolises what forgiveness and being forgiven means to them.
2. At the end of the meeting play the Ian White song ‘Burning Coal’. This song will give another scriptural back up to the forgiveness offered by God as experienced by Isaiah in Isaiah 6:1-9.

Joseph

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Resource Sheet 1 – Adverbs

Your Phrase - ‘Mary Had A Little Lamb’

Laughingly
Quickly
Wearily
Angrily
Stutteringly

Your Phrase - ‘Happy Birthday To You’

Worriedly
Silently
Happily
Stupidly
Seriously

Your Phrase - ‘Would You Like A Cup Of Tea?’

Scarily
Hurriedly
Joyfully
Quietly
Sleepily

Your Phrase - ‘The Sun Has Got His Hat On’

Slowly
Loudly
Childishly
Sadly
Jokingly

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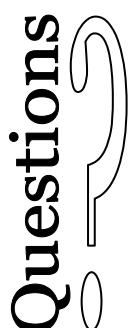
Resource Sheet 2 – Freely Forgiven

John 3:16-18

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Romans 3:21-24

²¹ But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.



Who is an offender of God? Are you an offender?

What are the potential consequences of offending God?

How has God proved that he is offering forgiveness?

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Resource Sheet 3 - A Forgiving Father

Look at the story of Joseph and his brothers and the story that Jesus told of the Prodigal Son. Can you see where the following elements are in each story? Draw arrows to point to the appropriate sections.

Genesis 45:1-15

¹ Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. ² And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it.

³ Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! ⁵ And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. ⁶ For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be ploughing and reaping. ⁷ But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

⁸ "So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. ⁹ Now hurry back to my father and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don't delay. ¹⁰ You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. ¹¹ I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.'

¹² "You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. ¹³ Tell my father about all the honour accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly."

¹⁴ Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. ¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

Tears of relief at the regret shown

An invitation to draw close

Remembering the spiritual aspect of the offence

A promise made of care and provision

Embracing and talking

Luke 15:11-24

¹¹ Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

¹³ "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.

¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.



How would you explain God's forgiveness to somebody who is not a follower of Jesus?