Preschool–Grade 6

Joseph Forgives His Brothers

Sunday School Lesson for Preschool (Ages 3–5), 20–30 minutes

Main point: God wants me to forgive others.
Bible passage: Genesis 45. Read Genesis 45:1–15 yourself before class.
Memory verse: "God did send me before you to preserve life." *Genesis 45:5 (KJV)*. **Preserve life** means keep people alive.
You need: a Bible, a towel or small blanket, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at Genesis 45.

1. Opening game: Who Is It? (5 minutes)

Hold the towel up in front of your face and say, "Who is it?" Then lower it and say, "It's me, Miss (or Mr.) ___!" Let each child take a turn behind the towel while the others guess, then drop it and say, "I am ___!" Say: "Today we will hear a true story about a man whose brothers did not know who he was, until he said, 'I am Joseph!'"

2. Bible story (5 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Genesis 45. Say: "This story is true. It is in God's Word." Read each line slowly and do the motion. When you see **Say it with me**, the kids say the line back to you.

Joseph's brothers were mean to him. They sold him (Genesis 45:4). *(Make a sad face.)*
Joseph went far away to Egypt (37:28). *(Walk in place.)*
God was with Joseph (39:2). *(Point up.)*
Joseph became a ruler in Egypt (41:41). *(Stand up tall.)*
No food grew in the land (41:54). *(Rub your tummy.)*
His brothers came to buy food (42:3). *(Walk in place.)*
They did not know him (42:8). *(Shrug.)*
Joseph cried out loud (45:2). *(Rub your eyes.)*
He said, "I am Joseph!" (45:3). **Say it with me: "I am Joseph!"**
He said, "Come near to me" (45:4). *(Wave "come here.")*
"God did send me" (45:5). *(Point up.)*
He hugged his brother Benjamin and cried (45:14). *(Hug yourself.)*
He kissed all his brothers (45:15). **Say it with me: "I can forgive!"**

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3. Questions to ask (3 minutes)

1. What did Joseph say to his brothers? *("I am Joseph," Genesis 45:3)*
2. What did he ask them to do? *("Come near to me," 45:4)*
3. Who did Joseph hug? *(His brother Benjamin, 45:14)*

4. Memory verse (3 minutes)

Say: "Joseph told his brothers, 'God did send me before you to preserve life.' Preserve life means keep people alive." Teach the motion: point up on "God," walk your fingers forward on "send me before you," and hug yourself on "preserve life." Say the verse with the motion three times: in a normal voice, in a whisper, and in a happy loud voice. Then say "Genesis 45:5" and clap three times.

5. What this means for us (3 minutes)

Say: "Joseph forgave his brothers. God wants us to forgive too. God loves you! Everyone has done wrong things. That is called sin (Romans 3:23). Jesus is God. He came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins. He was buried. Then He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us what to do (Acts 2:38). We repent: we tell God we are sorry, and we stop doing wrong. We are baptized in Jesus' name, down under the water, and our sins are washed away. And God gives us the Holy Ghost. That is God's own Spirit in us. When people are filled with the Holy Ghost, they speak in other tongues, words God gives them (Acts 2:4)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: Come Near (5–10 minutes)

Kids stand across the room. Call each child by name: "Sam, come near to me!" The child comes and sits in a circle with you. When everyone is in the circle, say: "Joseph said 'Come near' to his brothers, even after they were mean to him." Then give each child a take-home sheet. In the drawing box, help them draw Joseph hugging his brother Benjamin. While they color, ask: "What did Joseph do? Who can you forgive?"

7. Prayer

Say each line, and the kids say it after you:
"Thank You, God, for loving me.
Help me forgive others. In Jesus' name, amen."

Tips for little ones: keep the story moving. Let every child say "I am Joseph!" and wave "come near." Send the take-home sheet home so parents can tell the story again this week.

If a child says someone hurt them: listen kindly, tell them that what happened matters, and pass it on to a parent and your church's child safety leader. Forgiving never means keeping a secret.

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