

Supplies: This lesson requires the teacher or another adult in the class to learn two pretty simple magic tricks (instructions included at the end of this lesson plan) to perform in class and then teach to the students. You will need 1 spoon, preferably with a stout stem, 1 rope about 4 feet long, and a pair of scissors. Also, you might want to have some extra spoons and pieces of rope for the kids to be able to practice with and (with the rope trick) take home.

OPENING PRAYER

TELL

- For the opening question, I'm going to ask you a question and then we'll go around the circle and say our names and then give our answer to the question.
- I'll ask the question and then I'll answer first, ok?
- Opening question: *In the story we're reading today, Joseph tricks his brothers to see if they've changed or not. Have you ever played a trick on someone (maybe on April Fool's Day)? What was it?*

GO AROUND THE CIRCLE

TELL

- During this Session (Patriarchs, Joseph and Moses), we've been talking and learning about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses.
- These 5 individuals had a lot to do with the beginning of who we call the Israelites.
- By learning the stories of these 5 individuals, we are also getting the chance to learn and see how the relationship between the Israelites and God starts, struggles, and matures.
- All of these stories that we're hearing and talking about in this Session are from the Old Testament. This means these things happened well before Jesus was born. Between 1600 to 2000 years before Jesus was born. This means some of these stories are 4000 years old!
- Last week we heard and talked about Joseph, the son of Jacob, who was the son of Isaac, who was the son of Abraham.
- Joseph, as you may remember, was sold into slavery by his brothers. Then he interpreted dreams for Pharaoh about a 7 year famine. Pharaoh made Joseph into the 2nd most powerful person in Egypt to oversee the preparation for the famine.
- In today's story, Joseph's brothers have come to Egypt to get food. Joseph recognizes them, but they do not recognize him. He forces them to tell him about their youngest brother, Benjamin. He tells them that the next time they come for food, they must bring Benjamin with them.
- We start the story today with the brothers leaving for the second time. But Joseph has a plan. He's going to see if his brothers have learned anything since selling him into slavery. Let's listen for what happens.

READ Genesis 44:1-6, 13-34; 45:1-15 (The Message)

Gen 44:1 Joseph ordered his house servant: "Fill the men's bags with food - all they can carry - and replace each one's money at the top of the bag. **2** Then put my chalice, my silver cup, in the top of the bag of the youngest, along with the money for his food." The servant did as Joseph ordered. **3** At break of day the men were sent off with their donkeys. **4** They were barely out of the city when Joseph said to his servant, "Run after them. When you catch up with them, say, 'Why did you pay me back evil for good? **5** This is the cup my master drinks from; he also uses it for divination. This is outrageous!'" **6** The servant caught up with them and repeated all this word for word.

13 Joseph's brothers ripped their clothes in despair, loaded up their donkeys, and went back to the city. **14** Joseph was still at home when Judah and his brothers got back. They threw themselves down on the ground in front of him. **15** Joseph accused them: "How can you have done this? You have to know that a man in my position would have discovered this." **16** Judah as spokesman for the brothers said, "What can we say, master? What is there to say? How can we prove our innocence? God is behind this, exposing how bad we are. We stand guilty before you and ready to be your slaves - we're all in this together, the rest of us as guilty as the one with the chalice." **17** "I'd never do that to you," said Joseph. "Only the one involved with the chalice will be my slave. The rest of you are free to go back to your father."

18 Judah came forward. He said, "Please, master; can I say just one thing to you? **19** You asked us, 'Do you have a father and a brother?' **20** And we answered honestly, 'We have a father who is old and a younger brother who was born to him in his old age. His brother is dead and he is the only son left from that mother. And his father loves him more than anything.' **21** "Then you told us, 'Bring him down here so I can see him.' **22** We told you that it was impossible: 'The boy can't leave his father; if he leaves, his father will die.' **23** "And then you said, 'If your youngest brother doesn't come with you, you won't be allowed to see me.' **24** "When we returned to our father, we told him everything you said to us. **25** So when our father said, 'Go back and buy some more food,' **26** we told him flatly, 'We can't. The only way we can go back is if our youngest brother is with us. We aren't allowed to even see the man if our youngest brother doesn't come with us.' **27** "My father, told us, 'You know very well that my wife gave me two sons. **28** One turned up missing. **29** If you now go and take this one and something bad happens to him, you'll put my old gray, grieving head in the grave for sure.' **30** "And now, can't you see that if I show up before my father without the boy, this son with whom his life is so bound up, **31** the moment he realizes the boy is gone, he'll die on the spot. He'll die of grief and we will have killed him. **32** And that's not all. I got my father to release the boy to show him to you by promising, 'If I don't bring him back, I'll stand condemned before you, Father, all my life.' **33** "So let me stay here as your slave, not this boy. Let the boy go back with his brothers. **34** How can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? Oh, don't make me go back and watch my father die in grief!"

Gen 45: 1 Joseph couldn't hold in his emotions any longer. Not wanting his servants to see, he cried out, "Leave! Clear out - everyone leave!" So there was no one with Joseph when he identified himself to his brothers. **2** But his sobbing was so violent that the Egyptians couldn't help but hear him. The news was soon reported to Pharaoh's palace. **3** Joseph spoke to his brothers: "I am Joseph. Is my father really still alive?" But his brothers couldn't say a word. They were speechless - they couldn't believe what they were hearing and seeing. **4** "Come closer to me," Joseph said to his brothers. They came closer. "I am Joseph your brother whom you sold into slavery. **5** But don't feel badly. What you meant for evil, God has

made good. God is using me to save lives. **6** There has been a famine in the land now for two years; the famine will continue for five more years - neither plowing nor harvesting. **7** God has sent me to pave the way and make sure there was a remnant of food in the land, to save your lives in an amazing act of deliverance. **8** So you see, God has redeemed your mistake. God has set me in place as a father to Pharaoh, put me in charge of his personal affairs, and made me ruler of all Egypt. **9** Now hurry back to my father. Tell him, 'Your son Joseph says: I'm master of all of Egypt. Come as fast as you can and join me here. **10** I'll give you a place to live in Goshen where you'll be close to me - **11** I'll take care of you there completely..' **14** Then Joseph threw his arms around his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. **15** He then kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Only then were his brothers able to talk with him.

ASK

- What did Joseph instruct his servant to put on top of Benjamin's bag? (Joseph's silver cup)
- After the brothers left, then what did Joseph do? (he instructed his servant to bring them back with the accusation of Benjamin stealing his cup)
- What was Joseph telling the brothers he was going to do with Benjamin? (enslave him)
- What did Judah ask Joseph to do instead? (enslave him instead of Benjamin)
- Did Joseph enslave any of them? (No.)
- What did Joseph do? (Told them who he was. Told them to get their father and move everyone to Goshen, where Joseph would make sure they were provided for)

TELL

- So Joseph setup a situation similar to the situation he was in when his brothers sold him into slavery.
- So Benjamin was going to be enslaved, just like Joseph was, but this time the brothers, Judah in particular, do something very differently. Judah says, "Take me, instead."
- Once Joseph sees this difference in his brothers, then he knows he can talk to them and tell them who he really is.
- Just like Esau and Jacob were separated and then reconciled, so are Jacob's sons separated and then reconciled.
- In this story, Joseph uses some trickery to help him see if his brothers have learned from their decision to sell Joseph into slavery.
- So today, I'm going to show you two "magic" tricks that will hopefully help us think about how things that we think are impossibly broken can be healed by God.

TELL/DEMONSTRATE 1st Magic Trick (instructions are at the end of the lesson)

- For this first trick, I have in my hand a spoon.
- Let me tap it on the table to show you that it's a real spoon – strong metal and everything.
- And maybe one of you might try to bend it, just so that you can see it does not bend easily.
- Now, sometimes something can appear strong, but if you know the right way to push on it, then that thing won't appear strong at all.
- For instance, Joseph's brothers look like they are strong and brave. But when Joseph applies pressure to them, specifically on Benjamin, then they bend.
- Just like... ["bend" the spoon – grunt for effect] this spoon.

- [hold spoon in “bent” position] But because Joseph is seeking God, Joseph then is also seeking to heal what’s broken between him and his brothers, and what appears to be broken (1st Joseph thrown into slavery, then Benjamin threatened with it), is then restored when Joseph reveals himself to them.
- Then, just like that [snap fingers and hold up the unbent spoon], everything is restored for the brothers! Not only do they get Benjamin back, but they get Joseph back too!

REUNITING-THE-ROPE TRICK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ElICLWNkGeQ>

NOTE: If this link no longer works, please email me at support@rfour.org. I'll be able to set up a new link for you, then, to the video.

TELL

- Pretend this rope [show them the rope] is Joseph’s family.
- It is one unit that is all connected – all in one piece, right? [have the kids inspect the rope].
- Even though the family does not get along, at least they’re together.
- But the brothers hate Joseph so much that they are willing to cut their family apart [grab the rope, loop it as instructed in the video and cut it].
- But like Joseph says, what Joseph’s brothers’ meant for evil, God made into good.
- God brought Joseph and Joseph’s brothers back together [tie the knot] and healed their family [move the knot down the rope and off of it. Present the whole rope to the kids].
- God doesn’t remove challenges or obstacles from our lives, but God will lead us through them.
- And often, what God leads us to is healing and wholeness.
- But in order to be led through the obstacles, we have to seek God and pay attention to God in order to hear how God is guiding us.
- And when we do listen to God, things that might seem impossible become possible.
- At this time, I’m going to show you how to do the two magic tricks.

TEACH the tricks to the class. Start with the spoon one. Then do the rope one. Encourage the kids to perform in front of the class as a way to practice for home. Let them take a piece of rope home with them to demonstrate to their parents.

CLOSING PRAYER

1. Bending Spoon Trick – How to hold it: Using both of your hands, grasp the spoon and press the bowl of the spoon, open side up, onto a table. Don't let the top of the handle peek out over your thumbs.



2. Bending Spoon Trick – How to hold it revealed: This image shows the location of the spoons handle in your hands. We've removed one hand to show you the positioning, which is crucial.



3. Bending Spoon Trick - The Bend: As you appear to press down on the spoon's handle towards the table, the handle of the spoon slides through your hands until it's at the base of your hands, nearest the table. This shot shows how the effect looks to spectators, the next image shows what is actually happening.



4. Bending Spoon Trick - The Bend/What's Really Happening: This image shows the position of the spoon's handle when it appears that you have bent the spoon. The arrow shows the circular path of the handle. Of course, this action is covered by your other hand that is gripping the spoon. This trick will take some practice to be convincing.

When you're done, simply pick up the spoon off of the table with both hands and then show that the spoon is unbent.

