

PPT Title

Joseph Makes Himself Known

Main Point: God's grace is available to everyone.

Key Verse: *God's saving grace has appeared to all people.* - Titus 2:11

Props: A paper chain made of about 10 strips of white paper; one yellow strip of paper that says, "JOSEPH"; several extra strips of white paper; a stapler or tape

BACKGROUND/REVIEW

Say: Last week, something amazing happened! We saw a BIG change in Joseph's brothers!



Joseph had a test for his brothers when they returned to Egypt and brought their youngest brother, Benjamin, with them. Joseph purposely treated Benjamin better than all the others. He gave Benjamin five times more food than his brothers. Then, when they were heading home, Joseph had his servant hide a special silver cup in Benjamin's sack. The servant went after them and accused Benjamin of stealing the cup. He said Benjamin would have to become his slave. But the brothers would not allow it. They would not leave Egypt without Benjamin. Judah even begged to take Benjamin's place as Joseph's slave.

Years before, these brothers gladly sold their little brother into slavery, but now they would do anything to save their brother. **Given the chance to repeat their sin, they went the opposite way.** These men had a true change of heart. **Ask:** Who can remember the word for this BIG change? (The word starts with "R".) *Repentance.* **Say:** Repentance is changing your mind about sin. It is realizing that your sin is wrong, and turning away from your sin.

Repentance
changing your
mind about sin

Just as Joseph looked for repentance in his brothers, God looks for repentance in us. God rejoices when we repent - when we change our mind and turn away from our sin (Luke 15:10). God longs for every person to repent (2 Peter 2:9). Repentance leads the way to forgiveness from others and a restored relationship with them (Acts 3:19). Today we'll see how the brothers' relationship with Joseph was restored.

JOSEPH MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN (Genesis 45:1-15)



Say: Remember, the brothers still had NO idea who Joseph really was. Joseph so was filled with joy over his brothers' BIG change that he could hardly hold it in! The Bible says he could no longer control himself! He told all of his royal attendants and servants to leave the room.

Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers weren't able to answer him. They were too afraid of him. Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." So they did. Then he said, "I am your brother Joseph. I'm the one you sold into Egypt." - Genesis 45:3-4

Can you imagine what his brothers must have been thinking? Everyone give me your

most surprised and amazed look. These men were stunned! Up until this point, they thought he was an Egyptian - and not just any Egyptian - the most powerful Egyptian besides Pharaoh. Up until this moment, he had used an interpreter to speak to them. Imagine their shock when he started speaking to them in their own language! They could hardly believe their ears. But now, as this truth started to sink in, let's imagine the thoughts that went racing through their minds.

On one hand, now that they had realized how wrong they were to sell Joseph into slavery, they would have been thrilled that he was alive and well. Remember, they mentioned several times that they thought Joseph was probably dead (Genesis 42:13, 22). On the other hand, their long lost brother was now the second most powerful man in the world. They had done something terrible to him, and now he had the power to do anything he wanted to take revenge on them. This thought must have terrified them! Let's listen carefully to Joseph's next words:

"But don't be upset. And don't be angry with yourselves because you sold me here. God sent me ahead of you to save many lives.

"For two years now, there hasn't been enough food in the land. And for the next five years, people won't be plowing or gathering crops. But God sent me ahead of you to keep some of you alive on earth. He sent me here to save your lives by an act of mighty power. So then, it wasn't you who sent me here. It was God." - Genesis 45:5-8a

Say: Wow! There are so many lessons for us to learn here. Joseph made it clear that he was not going to take revenge on his brothers. Not only did he forgive them, but also he didn't even want them to feel bad for what they had done! This is because Joseph saw with **Kingdom eyes**. He didn't see his life as just the "here and now." He saw his life the way God saw it - as one part of God's amazing, eternal plan. Here's what I mean: Do you remember God's promises to Joseph's great-grandfather, Abraham? God promised Abraham that he would have as many descendants as there are grains of sand on the seashore (Genesis 22:17). Joseph's brothers were all descendants of Abraham. God allowed Joseph to rise to power in order to keep Abraham's great-grandsons and their children alive during the famine! Without Joseph in this place of power, all of Abraham's descendants would have died. Joseph's amazing life was God's way of keeping His promise! God ALWAYS keeps His promises!

Illustration: Here is a very simple way to look at it. Since before the beginning of the world, God has had a plan and a purpose. Let's say this chain represents God's plan.



Teacher: Hold up your paper chain. **Say:** God is so amazing that He can link all things together to fit into His plan. God told part of His plan to Abraham when He made his many wonderful promises to him (Galatians 3:8). One important promise that God made was to give Abraham lots and lots of descendants. God used Joseph's amazing life to accomplish this part of His plan. Hold up yellow strip that says, "JOSEPH" and **Say:** "God used Joseph to save Abraham's descendants." Link it to the end link, and staple it to form a link. Joseph's life was an important link in the chain of God's plan. Soon we'll see how this chain keeps going. Of course, this is just a symbol. God's plan is not flimsy like paper. His plan stands FOREVER (Psalm 33:11). (**Teacher:** We will use this chain in future lessons.)

Say: Joseph was thrilled to be used by God in His plan. He begged his brothers to understand God's amazing grace. It was God who had done this amazing thing for their entire family. None of them - not even Joseph - deserved God's promises. But God gave the promise to them out of His grace. By His grace, God saved all of them from dying in the famine.

Application: Ask God to help you see with **Kingdom eyes**. Ask to see beyond the "here and now." Ask God to use you like a link in the chain of His plan. And at times when you can't see all that God is doing, ask Him for the faith to trust Him. That's

what faith is all about: Faith is being certain of what you can't see (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is trusting that God is doing what is best for you, even when you can't see it with your eyes.



Say: Joseph was very glad to be used to save his family. And he was also excited to be reunited with his brothers. Because of their repentance and Joseph's grace toward them, their relationship was restored. **Ask:** Guess who else Joseph wanted to be reunited with? *His father.* **Say:** Joseph wanted to see his father, Jacob! He told his brothers to go home to Canaan and tell Jacob everything that had happened. Joseph warned them that there would be five more years of famine, and they should all move to Egypt so they would have enough food to eat.

"Tell my father about all of the honor that has been given to me in Egypt. Tell him about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly."

Then Joseph threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and sobbed. Benjamin also hugged him and sobbed. Joseph kissed all of his brothers and sobbed over them. After that, his brothers talked with him. - Genesis 45:13-15

Just think of all the stories Joseph wanted to share with his brothers! He must have told them about Potiphar, prison, the cupbearer, and the baker. He must have told them that God was with him wherever he was, and all about God's perfect timing!

The men hugged each other and cried together. The brothers accepted Joseph's forgiveness, and they were finally free from the guilt they had felt for so long.

PHARAOH BLESSES JOSEPH'S FAMILY (Genesis 45:16-24)



*The news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come. Pharaoh and all of his officials were pleased. Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Here's what I want you to tell your brothers. Say to them, 'Load your animals. Return to the land of Canaan. Bring your father and your families back to me. **I'll give you the best land in Egypt.** You can enjoy all of the good things in the land.'" - Genesis 45:16-18*

Say: Pharaoh even gave Joseph's brothers large carts to make their move easier. This was like an ancient Egyptian moving van! Pharaoh loaded the brothers up with new clothes, silver, and other wonderful supplies. Here is another one of God's promises that came true. God had promised to **bless** Abraham's descendants. God even used Pharaoh in His great plan. **Teacher:** Hold up a strip of white paper and add it to the paper chain. **Ask:** Do you think that being showered with gifts from the richest, most powerful man in the world would be a blessing? *Of course!* Did these men deserve this all-star treatment? *No!* **Say:** It was a free gift. It was grace. It was God keeping His promise to people who did nothing to earn it. Place the chain in a place of prominence in the front of the room to be used over the next two weeks.

JACOB HEARS THE GOOD NEWS (Genesis 45:25-28)



Say: The brothers were heading home to Jacob. **Ask:** What do you think he was doing while his sons were gone these past few weeks? *Listen for answers.* **Say:** I'm afraid he may have been pacing the floor with worry. As far as he knew, Joseph was dead and Simeon was in prison. And he feared that something terrible would happen to Benjamin. Perhaps one of his grandchildren came running in to tell him that a large caravan had arrived. Maybe Jacob peeked nervously out of his tent to see how many sons would be coming home to him. To his amazement, eleven sons came before him safe and sound.

They told him, "Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of the whole land of Egypt." Jacob was shocked. He didn't believe them. So they told him everything Joseph had said to them. Jacob saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back. That gave new

life to their father Jacob. (He) said, "I believe it now! My son Joseph is still alive. I'll go and see him before I die." - Genesis 45:26-28

Jacob may have been more shocked than anyone to hear that his twelfth son was alive. For the past twenty years, he believed that Joseph had been killed by wild animals. Next week, we'll see if Jacob makes it to Egypt to see Joseph.

COMPARISON

Sin caused separation

Say: Very often in the Bible, we find a real-life story that holds a spiritual meaning for us. Let's look at Joseph's life story to find the spiritual meaning that applies to you and me. Joseph's relationship with his brothers is a lot like our relationship with God. First of all, just as Joseph's brothers had sinned terribly against Joseph, each one of us has sinned against God (Romans 3:23). The brothers' sin separated them from Joseph. The Bible tells us that our sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2).

Could not earn forgiveness

When the brothers went back to Joseph, they took gifts to buy what they needed, but Jacob didn't accept the gifts. They could never pay the price for sin they had committed against him. There was nothing they could ever do to "undo" their sin. In a similar way, we often try to earn our way back into a right relationship with God, but no good work we could ever do can undo our sin (Isaiah 64:6, Ephesians 2:8-9).

Looks for repentance

Joseph looked to see if his brothers had changed; he looked for a repentant heart. Joseph was overjoyed to find out that his brothers had changed their ways. When they were given the chance to repeat their sin, they did just the opposite. Likewise, God also looks for a repentant heart. The Bible says that there is rejoicing in the presence of angels when a person repents (Luke 15:10). That means God is doing the rejoicing! He is overjoyed when we turn away from sin and turn back to Him.

Complete forgiveness

Joseph forgave his brothers completely. He did not hold a grudge. He didn't even want his brothers to feel bad for what they had done. When we turn from our sin and put our trust in Jesus, God forgives us completely. By His grace, He keeps no record of our sin (Jeremiah 31:34). God tells us that He throws our sins into the bottom of the ocean (Micah 7:9). God's grace takes our sin away.

Restored relationship

Joseph's relationship with his brothers was completely restored. They hugged and talked and ate and drank, as if nothing had ever happened. When we put our trust in Jesus, our broken relationship with God is completely restored. By grace, God no longer sees our sin (Romans 8:1). Instead, He sees the perfection of Jesus in us (Romans 10:4).

Undeserved blessings

Finally, Joseph's brothers were freely blessed with the best that Egypt had to offer. Joseph's brothers did not deserve these gifts. They just accepted them. When we become followers of Christ, not only are our sins forgiven, but we receive new life and eternal blessings that begin right here on earth! (Hebrews 9:15) We don't deserve any of these blessings. It is by God's grace that He gives us blessings we could never earn. John 1:16 says, "From the fullness of His grace we have all received one blessing after another."

The best part of God's amazing grace is that He offers it to everyone. He wants everyone to repent from his or her sin, trust in Jesus, and receive His eternal blessings.

PPT Verse

Key Verse: *God's saving grace has appeared to all people.* - Titus 2:11

PPT Main Point

Main Point: God's grace is available to everyone.

