

Intermediate Level, Block 3, Week 1 **Jacob—Wanting to Be First**

Point to Emphasize: We can be those who trust in God's arrangement and God's timing.

Reference Reading: Genesis 25:20-34

Memory Verse: Blessed is he who trusts in Jehovah. (Proverbs 16:20)

Story Sample

Now we come to another important person in the Bible: Jacob. The name *Jacob* means two things: "heel holder" and "supplanter." Isaac had twin sons, and Jacob was the younger. He was named *heel-holder* because he was holding onto his older brother Esau's heel when they were born. Why was he holding Esau's heel? He held Esau's heel because he was a supplanter. A supplanter is someone who tries to take another's place or tries to gain something through sneaky ways. Jacob wanted to be born first, so he held onto Esau's heel to try to get ahead—to supplant him!

Jacob wanted to supplant Esau for the birthright. A birthright was an inheritance given to the oldest son. Now, God had actually chosen Jacob to be the one to receive the birthright, but Jacob could not wait for God to work it out. Instead, he just did things his own way. Even before he was born, he started trying to be first. Jacob and Esau were fighting for the birthright even when they were still in Rebekah's womb. But God arranged that Esau would be stronger. Although Jacob fought for the birthright and held onto Esau's heel, he was physically weaker. Esau was born first and gained the birthright. All that struggling was for nothing.

But Jacob did not give up. As he and Esau grew older, he waited until the right time to try to supplant his brother again. One day, Esau came back from the fields weak and tired. Jacob had made some stew, and Esau saw it and wanted some. Esau felt that he was going to die of hunger if he did not get the stew, and he asked Jacob to give him some. Jacob was so sneaky! He wouldn't just give Esau the stew, but he offered Esau a trade: a bowl of stew in exchange for the birthright.

Esau did a foolish thing. He did not see how valuable his birthright was. He only saw that he was hungry and that the stew looked good, so he agreed to Jacob's trade. He gave up his entire inheritance for one bowl of stew! So foolish!

Actually, Jacob did something foolish, too. Even though Jacob saw how precious the birthright was, tricking Esau wasn't the way to get it. Esau could not legally give it to him. Only their father could. So this trickery did not really give Jacob much—it just made Esau angry with him and caused Jacob to suffer a lot for many years. Jacob would have to use even more trickery later to get the birthright. In the end, he did receive the birthright, but he caused himself a lot of trouble by doing it his way. If he had just waited on God, God would have given him the birthright, and Jacob would have been saved a lot of suffering.

Maybe we can relate to Jacob—sometimes it is hard to wait. One time when I was little, I cut in line for lunch at the love feast. I wanted to eat RIGHT NOW! I got what I wanted, but I upset the other children! That was not right. If I had just waited, I would have still gotten food. I did not need to cut in line, but because I did, I hurt people's feelings and caused myself trouble. Jacob was the same. He did not need to trick his brother, but because he did, he suffered a lot. *[Storyteller, insert your own story about struggling with waiting for something.]* It is hard to wait, but God always does what He says He will do. We are blessed if we will trust in Him!

Intermediate Level, Block 3, Week 2

Jacob's Dream at Bethel

Point to Emphasize: We need to be those who are ready to hear God speaking to us.

Reference Reading: Genesis 28, 35

Memory Verse: Blessed...are those who hear the word of God and keep it. (Luke 11:28)

Story Sample

Last week we were introduced to a person named Jacob. We heard that he tricked his twin brother Esau into giving up his birthright. In the end, he did receive the birthright, but he caused himself a lot of trouble by doing it his way. When Esau found out that Jacob had tricked him, he got very, very angry. Esau was very strong and he was a hunter. He was not someone I would want to be angry at me. Esau was so angry and Jacob was so scared that Jacob had to run away and leave his family and home. He fled and ended up in the wilderness as a wanderer, someone who didn't have a place to go. He was not only homeless but he was probably also very lonely because no one else was with him. But he was not alone. Actually, God was with him and promised to always be with him.

One night, after traveling for a long time, Jacob needed to find a place to rest. He was tired and lonely, and when he lay down to sleep on the ground in the open air, he took a stone as his pillow. Have you ever used a stone as a pillow? I don't think that would be very comfortable, do you? Well, that's just what Jacob did. That night as he laid his head on a stone, God appeared to him and spoke to him in a dream.

In this dream, Jacob saw a ladder set up on the earth and the top reached to heaven. On the ladder the angels of God were ascending and descending. Jacob was amazed by this dream. When he woke up, he set up his pillow-stone as a pillar and poured oil on the stone. Why would he have oil with him while was running away and traveling by himself? Well, the Bible tells us that he had oil and he poured it on the pillar. So that's what happened. Because of the dream, Jacob realized that God was in that place. So he called the name of the place *Bethel*, which means the house of God.

Did you know that God speaks to people? In the Old Testament, like in Jacob's time, God spoke to people through dreams and taught His people by dreams. In those dreams, the person would see something that is not common, not an everyday thing. Rather, they would see an uncommon scene, something they've never seen before and something very meaningful. Their dreams were like visions that taught them something and spoke to them something about what God wanted.

Today, God may not speak to us in dreams anymore. What do you think are some ways that God speaks to us? *[Discuss with the children that God speaks to us through our conscience or our parents; through a verse, or a song, or even through children's meeting stories.]*

One time when I was younger, I was complaining to myself that I didn't have this and I didn't have that. And I was just unhappy and ungrateful for the things I did have. I happened to be listening to some hymns and a song came on—it was a Bible verse from the book of Psalms: "It's a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord and to sing praises unto our God." When I heard that song, I stopped what I was doing. I realized that I was being ungrateful and that I should thank the Lord for all that He has given me. I never lacked anything and I had everything I

needed. After that, I started singing along with the song, and it made my heart happy and full of thanks. That was the Lord speaking to me and reminding me through the verse and the song that I had so many things to be thankful for. *[Storyteller, insert your own story about God speaking to you through your conscience, through your parents, or through a verse or a song. Then encourage the children to share if they've had an experience of this.]*

Like Jacob, we must always be ready to listen to God's speaking. Let us be those who are ready to hear God's speaking at any time.

Intermediate Level, Block 3, Week 3

Jacob—Wrestling with God

Point to Emphasize: We can be those who learn to accept defeat and learn humility.

Reference Reading: Genesis 32

Memory Verse: God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. (James 4:6)

Story Sample

After Jacob had tricked his twin brother Esau into giving up his birthright, Jacob most have felt like a winner. Although in the end he did receive the birthright, he caused himself a lot of trouble and had to flee to his uncle Laban's house. He spent many years with his uncle; he got married and had children there. While he was with his uncle, Jacob also tricked him in order to win many things for himself. Years later his relationship with his brother had not yet been restored, and his father Isaac was getting very old. It was time for him to go back home. Today we want to talk about something that happened to Jacob while he was returning to his home with the hope of restoring his relationship with his brother. God had promised that he would be with him as he went.

One night, as Jacob was returning home, something unusual happened. That night he was alone and God came as a man and wrestled with him! God was with him all night, but not in the way Jacob thought He would be! They wrestled all night long—for six hours! And early in the morning, when they were done wrestling, Jacob was different. God had dislocated his hip and Jacob became crippled. God had to wrestle with Jacob because Jacob was too strong. Jacob always wanted to trick others in order to be first and win, and he needed to learn a lesson.

What do you think the lesson Jacob had to learn was? Was it, "Don't ever fight with God?" Well, though this is true, I don't think it was all he had to learn. Jacob needed to learn to accept defeat. He had been so proud up to that time, but now he needed to learn to be humble. He always wanted to win, but now he needed to learn to accept defeat.

I'm sure you all prefer to win, right? Maybe you want to be the star of your soccer team, or be the best student, or your teacher's favorite or the favorite among your group of friends. But that is not always going to happen. One day someone will be a better player, or smarter than you, or even more popular than you. The question is, how will you respond? Will you be bitter and resentful, or will you be humble and realize that you are not the strongest, the smartest or the most likeable?

When I was in school, I was really proud because I was a pretty good student. I got all A's in elementary school and in high school; I was one of the top 10 in my class. I thought I was so smart. But then, I went to college. There were a lot more students there than in my little high school, and they were all REALLY smart. Do you think I blamed them that I wasn't as smart as they were, or said "That's not fair—the professor likes them more than he likes me?" No, I needed to learn a lesson, just like Jacob. I needed to learn to be more humble. *[Use a personal example of how you were good at something, but later learned the lesson of being humble.]*

Jacob learned a lesson that day, and he was changed in more than one way. Now he walked differently (with a limp), he learned to be humble, and even his name was changed! God changed Jacob's name to Israel. The name Israel means "wrestler with God". This may not seem like a positive thing, but Israel was now a person that God was working to change and was no longer called "supplanter/heel holder". Throughout the rest of his life, God changed the man Israel little by little.

Intermediate Level, Block 3, Week 4
Joseph—Having Two Dreams and His Brothers Being Jealous of Him

Point to Emphasize: We need to be those who care and love others even when they don't care for us.

Reference Reading: Genesis 35:22-26; 37:1-11

Memory Verse: Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you. (Matthew 5:44)

Story Sample

In the last weeks we heard about some of the many unbelievable experiences of Jacob. Today we move forward to hear about Jacob's sons. Do you know how many sons Jacob had? Right! Jacob had twelve sons. These twelve sons were the sons of a chosen, holy family and they were to become the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel. But before they were the tribes of the children of Israel, they were just twelve brothers. Can you imagine having eleven siblings? I only have three siblings, and I have countless stories to tell. But let me say this to you, the best stories are found in the Bible! Out of the twelve sons, only two were good—Joseph and his brother Benjamin. The other ten were very naughty. These twelve brothers had the most unthinkable, unbelievable and incredible stories! Let's find out some of their stories!

Joseph was the second youngest brother and his father's beloved. His father gave him a coat of many colors, which made Joseph's brothers envious of him. More than that, God gave Joseph two dreams. In the first dream, Joseph saw eleven sheaves bowing down to his sheaf. In the second dream, the sun, the moon and eleven stars bowed down to him as well. Joseph told his dreams to his father and his brothers, and Jacob told him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers come to bow down to you?"

Let's imagine this for a minute. Imagine you are Joseph. Imagine you are your father's beloved and he gives you something that he didn't give to your eleven brothers. Now also imagine that God gives you dreams in which your family members are bowing down to you. Would you feel proud? Would you be bragging to your brothers about what your father and God gave you? *[Storyteller, don't let the children answer out loud, tell them to think and keep the answers to themselves.]*

Now, imagine you are one of Joseph's brothers. How would you feel if you see your father give something to your brother but not to you? How would you feel if your brother told you he is dreaming about you and your family bowing down to him? Would you be jealous of him? *[Storyteller, again, don't have children say their answers.]*

As some of you know, I have three sisters. And my dad was not like Jacob; my dad loved all of us the same! I am really happy about that! However, I remember that one day one of our uncles came with small gifts for all of us. I got this cool game but my all sisters got dolls. I was the oldest, so my uncle maybe thought I would like something different. And, was I happy! My sisters really liked my game and they wanted to have it. But there was only one and it was for me. I could see in their eyes how they really wanted it and they started saying not nice things to me. I loved my sisters SO much that what I decided to do was to make my game a family game instead, so everyone could use it. In fact, I still have it! Many children and young people have used it! *[Storyteller, tell a story of you being jealous of someone and they loving you back or someone being jealous of you and you loving them.]*

Joseph was very genuine, he was frank and he was transparent. Joseph was happy to tell his brothers about his dreams. On the other hand, Joseph's brothers were full of envy: they were jealous. Joseph's brothers couldn't even speak peacefully to Joseph. In the story of Joseph and his brothers, we can see that regardless of how we are treated by others, we still need to love them and care for them. This is not an easy thing to do. You might not want to be with them or play with them, but in the Bible, in Matthew 5:44, Jesus says, "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you." This is exactly what we need to do.

Intermediate Level, Block 3, Week 5 **Joseph—Cared For by God**

Point to Emphasize: Whether things seem good or bad, God is always taking care of us.

Reference Reading: Genesis 37:12-36; 39:1-6

Memory Verse: Jehovah was with Joseph, and He extended kindness to him. (Genesis 39:21)

Story Sample

One day, Joseph's brothers were out shepherding the flock, and their father sent Joseph to find them and see how they were doing. When Joseph's brothers saw him, they were not happy though. They were still angry and jealous that their father had given him the coat of many colors and that he had had those two dreams about his brothers and father bowing to him. They were so angry that they came up with a plan to get rid of him. How terrible! They decided to kill him, throw him into a pit, and lie to their father saying that wild beasts had devoured him. Can you imagine someone being so cruel to someone else—especially their own younger brother? Joseph's brothers were really terrible. They let their anger get the best of them.

The oldest brother, Reuben, realized they should not do these things to Joseph. He knew that this wasn't the right way to treat another person, so he tried to make things a little better. He suggested that rather than kill Joseph, they just throw him into the pit. Secretly, Reuben had planned to come back later and rescue Joseph. The brothers agreed to go along with Reuben's plan and let Joseph live—they would do as Reuben suggested and just throw him into the pit. This is not as bad as their original plan, but it is still a really terrible thing to do, isn't it?

Nevertheless, they did just as Reuben had suggested. When Joseph came to them, they tore off his coat of many colors and threw him into the pit. They were planning to leave him there, but one of the brothers, Judah, had another idea. Judah said that they should sell Joseph to some traders who were passing by. These brothers! They were really something. Because they were so angry and jealous, they did such terrible things. They sold their brother, and lied to their father saying that beasts had devoured Joseph.

Can you imagine how Joseph must have felt? His brothers treated him so badly. I think I can understand a little how he felt. When I was young, I had a group of friends at school. We were really close, and we played together every day at recess. Then one day, we had a fight, and after that all the other girls turned against me. Everyone else was still friends with the others, but no one liked me. I hadn't done anything wrong; it was just a big misunderstanding. But everyone was mad at me and I was so sad. Later, we all apologized and made up, but at the time, I felt so alone and disliked. *[Storyteller, insert your own story.]* I think that's how Joseph might have felt—alone and sad. And he was probably scared, too! But he was going to be ok, because God was watching over him. God took care of Joseph and arranged for him to be sold to a man named Potiphar, who worked for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Joseph's brothers might have wanted to see Joseph suffer a lot, but God was doing something else. Potiphar realized that God was with Joseph, and so he took care of Joseph and gave him authority and power in Egypt. Joseph ended up being one of the most powerful people in Egypt!

Sometimes we might feel like Joseph—it might feel like everyone has forgotten us, or doesn't like us, or that we are not wanted. But God is with us, just like He was with Joseph. God took care of Joseph, and He is taking care of us. He is watching over us, caring for us, and loving us. Do you remember how we learned of Abraham talking to God? Well, when we feel like Joseph, we can talk to God, too. We can tell Him how we feel, because He is with us all the time, caring for us.

Intermediate Level, Block 3, Week 6 **Joseph—Speaking Boldly and by Faith**

Point to Emphasize: We can be those who speak boldly and by faith.

Reference Reading: Genesis 39:17—40:23; 41:9-14

Memory Verse: All things are possible to him who believes. (Mark 9:23)

Story Sample

One day, while Joseph was living in Egypt and working for Potiphar, something terrible happened to him. Potiphar's wife lied and accused Joseph of doing something he hadn't done—and Potiphar believed her! In fact, Potiphar was so angry with Joseph that he had him thrown into prison. So there was Joseph, in jail for something he hadn't done!

If we were in that situation, we might have gotten discouraged. We might have thought, "I had incredible dreams in the past, even dreaming that my family would bow down to me, but look at me now. I am in prison. This is nothing like my dream. Those dreams were just nonsense." But Joseph did not think this way. He was not discouraged, he did not stop believing in the dreams, and he did not doubt God.

While Joseph was in prison, God was with him, and He caused the chief jailer to respect him. The chief jailer was so impressed with Joseph that he put him in charge of the prison and the other prisoners. One night, two of the prisoners had mysterious dreams. The royal baker and the royal cupbearer both dreamed something they could not understand, and both of them were worried. When Joseph saw them in the morning, he could tell something was wrong, so he asked about it. They told him, "We have had a dream, and there is no one to interpret it."

What Joseph did next is remarkable. He did not tell the baker or the cupbearer that he himself had dreams once, too, yet they had not come true. He did not tell them to go bother someone else with their problems. No, even though Joseph had been in prison a long time and his dreams from God had not yet come true, he had not stopped believing in them. So he spoke to these two prisoners very boldly. He said, "Do not interpretations belong to God?" and he asked them to tell him their dreams. Joseph was able to say these words because he believed the dreams God had given him. It was like he was saying, "I had dreams, and God showed me what they meant. Even though those dreams haven't come true yet, I believe that their interpretations were from God. And I believe that yours are from God, too."

This is called speaking by faith. Even though Joseph's own dreams weren't fulfilled, he didn't speak based on that. His speaking was based on his belief in God and his belief in what God would do.

After Joseph spoke, the cupbearer and the baker told Joseph their dreams. The cupbearer had dreamed of a vine with three branches that budded and grew grapes. In the dream, the cupbearer squeezed some of the grapes into Pharaoh's cup and gave the cup to Pharaoh. Joseph explained that the dream meant that the cupbearer would be freed from prison and would serve as Pharaoh's cupbearer again within three days. He asked the cupbearer to remember him once he was free and back in Pharaoh's house. He explained that he was innocent and asked the cupbearer to help him be set free.

When he heard this good interpretation, the baker told Joseph his dream, too. In his dream, the baker had three baskets of white bread on his head. The top basket was full of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds were eating them. The interpretation of this dream was not as pleasant as the other one, but Joseph spoke it honestly; within three days, he said, the baker would be sentenced to die.

Three days later, things happened just as Joseph had said: the cupbearer was made Pharaoh's cupbearer again, and the baker was sentenced to die. When the cupbearer went back to Pharaoh's house, at first he forgot about Joseph, so Joseph remained in prison even longer. But eventually, the cupbearer remembered, and he told Pharaoh about Joseph interpreting the dreams. When Pharaoh heard that, he sent for Joseph, bringing him out of prison. Next week we will see in details how Joseph was released from prison. In the end, Joseph's speaking by faith was what got him out of prison! Joseph was a person that fully trusted in God. Joseph was not afraid when interpreting the dreams. On the contrary, he spoke boldly by faith.

Maybe you're wondering how we can be like this today—we aren't in prison, and God doesn't really speak that much through dreams anymore. Well, let me ask you this: Don't you think that Joseph, the baker, and the cupbearer felt sad when they were in prison? Maybe even scared? Let me tell you a story about my two little boys. One day I had to drop them off somewhere, and the younger one got sad and scared as soon as I was gone. But the older one said, "Mom will be right back." This seems like a small thing, but actually, my older son gets scared when I'm not around, too, just like the younger one. But he believed that I would be back, and he decided to focus on that. So he said boldly that I would be right back. The younger one started to feel better when he heard that, and actually, the older one felt better, too. He was less sad and scared when he spoke by faith—just like Joseph who was released from prison when he spoke by faith! *[Storyteller, insert your own story about speaking by faith.]* Let's be like Joseph and be ones who speak boldly by faith!

Intermediate Level, Block 3, Week 7

Joseph—Being Encouraged

Point to Emphasize: We can be those who are encouraged towards a goal.

Reference Reading: Genesis 41

Memory Verse: Have I not commanded you? Be strong and take courage; do not be afraid or dismayed. For Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

Story Sample

While Joseph was still in jail, Pharaoh had two dreams. In his first dream, he was standing by the river Nile and he saw seven fine-looking and fat-flesh cows that were eating grass in the field. Then he saw seven other cows that were ugly-looking and thin-fleshed that came and ate the seven fine-looking and fat cows; then Pharaoh woke up. Then he slept and dreamed a second time. This time, there were seven ears of grains coming up on one stalk, fat and good. And then, there were seven thin and scorched ears that sprouted after them. The seven thin ears swallowed up the seven fat and full ears. Now, that's quite a dream, don't you think?

Well, Pharaoh was troubled! He didn't know what his dreams meant. So, he called all the magicians and the wise men to interpret his dream, but NO ONE could tell him the meaning of his dream. Remember the cupbearer? He was supposed to tell Pharaoh that Joseph interpreted his dreams but he forgot all about it! It was not until Pharaoh had those dreams that the cupbearer remembered Joseph. That's when he told Pharaoh that while in jail, he had met a Hebrew man who had interpreted a dream he had and things happened exactly according to the interpretation. When he heard that, Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph. Joseph shaved himself and changed his garments and was quickly brought to Pharaoh.

Pharaoh told Joseph his dreams and Joseph gave Pharaoh an interpretation of his dream as God had shown him. Joseph told Pharaoh that both dreams were just one and that through his dreams, God was letting him know what was going to happen. There were going to be seven years in which the land was going to produce abundantly followed by seven years of a severe famine. I wouldn't have thought that this was the meaning of that dream! Joseph not only interpreted Pharaoh's dream but also came up with a plan on how to store the food during the years of abundance to later have enough food during the years of famine. Well, Pharaoh knew that God had shown Joseph what was about to happen. And Pharaoh knew that there was no other as wise as Joseph in the whole land; so Pharaoh put him in charge.

Incredible! On the same day Joseph was released from prison, he was enthroned to be the actual ruler over the whole land of Egypt! Only Pharaoh was above him! Pharaoh took off his ring and gave it to Joseph. Pharaoh also clothed him with fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. Not only this, Pharaoh also made him ride in the chariot of his second-in-command and every one bowed their knee to Joseph. Can you believe this?

If I were Joseph, I would certainly have been encouraged that my dreams one day would be fulfilled! He must have felt really happy and cheered up! I've had moments like this. You see, even when I was your age, I always wanted to graduate from college. But before you graduate from college, you have to go through so much. You have to first graduate from elementary school; then from middle school, and then from high school. Then you have to apply for colleges and see if you get in. After you get in, you have to read many books. You have to memorize so many things. You have to write so many essays. I remember days when I would

ask myself, would I really make it? However, the day that I graduated from high school, I remember that I had a moment where I felt so encouraged! I felt I was not going to give up! I told myself that the idea of me going to college might actually be really happening one day!
[Storyteller, share a personal story where you felt encouraged towards a goal.]

Joseph was seventeen years old when he had his dreams. And he was already thirty years old when he began to reign over Egypt. Thirteen years had gone by. During those years he must have experienced many hardships. But he was never discouraged, because he was a man guided by the dreams he had been given by God. He didn't know when his dreams would be fulfilled, but at this very moment he is out of jail and he is starting to see things going upward!

Intermediate Level, Block 3, Week 8 **Joseph—Sober and Self-disciplined**

Point to Emphasize: We can learn and practice to be sober and self-disciplined.

Reference Reading: Genesis 41:27-57; 42—45

Memory Verse: But, you, be sober in all things... (2 Timothy 4:5)

Story Sample

Last time, in our story of Joseph, we saw that he was finally released from prison! He interpreted Pharaoh's dream and came up with a plan for the coming famine. Because his plan was wise and he was bold to interpret Pharaoh's dream, even though his own dreams had not yet been fulfilled, Pharaoh made him the ruler over the whole country. He oversaw the biggest project I have ever heard of—feeding the whole entire earth for seven years. God was with Joseph and gave him wisdom to plan for this. His plan was this: in the first seven years of abundance, overseers over the land of Egypt were appointed to take a fifth of the produce and to keep the grains and food in reserve in the cities. They gathered up all the food for storage. In those seven years, there was so much grain produced and stored that they had to stop measuring it because it couldn't be measured anymore, like the sand of the sea. Now that's a lot of grain! Then when the famine came, Joseph opened the storehouses of grain and sold it to all the Egyptians. In fact, the famine became so severe over the whole earth—not just in Egypt—that all the earth came to Joseph to buy food.

Jacob and his sons lived in the land of Canaan. The famine became so terrible that all the people there had to go to Egypt to buy grain. So Jacob sent ten of his sons to go to Egypt. A-ha! What do you think will happen when they go to Egypt? Isn't their brother Joseph there?

Joseph was the governor over the land. He was the one who sold grain to all the people. So Jacob's sons had to go to him to buy grain. When they arrived, you know what they did? They came and bowed down to him. Doesn't that sound familiar? Where have we heard this before? Right! This was Joseph's dream! His dream was finally being fulfilled!

If you were Joseph, wouldn't you have been so excited? I would have jumped up and down with excitement that my dreams were finally fulfilled after all these years. Joseph was about 17 when he got to Egypt. He became ruler of Egypt when he was 30, after 13 years in prison. And 9 years later, his brothers came and bowed down to him, just like in the dreams he had when he was 17. It took about 22 years for him to see the fulfillment of his dreams. What a long time to wait! I sure would have been overjoyed to see my brothers again and tell them how successful I had become.

However, you know what? Joseph did none of those things. He recognized his brothers immediately when he saw them. But he did not do things in a careless and foolish way. He also did not show off to his brothers. Rather, he was wise in dealing with his brothers. He did not let his excitement cause him to act foolishly or do things without thinking. Rather, he was sober, calm, and reasonable, and his excitement was under control.

I wish I could be more like Joseph. You see, one time when I was in elementary school, my teacher wanted to do something special for my class. She was going to surprise everyone in the class by giving us all special awards. She entrusted me with this surprise by telling me about it and asking me to keep it a secret. The award sounded so good, that I couldn't wait for that

special day. In fact, I was TOO excited that I actually started telling people. And not just one person, but the whole class. What's worse is that they started telling other people, too. When my teacher found out, she was so disappointed because I ruined the surprise. Had I only been sober and disciplined, I would have kept the secret. Had I been sober, I would have not been wild or too much in my excitement. It doesn't mean we can't get excited. Of course we can. But had I just been calm and more serious about keeping the secret, even though I was excited, things would have gone a lot better. But because I was not, not only was the teacher disappointed at me, but I also ruined the surprise for everyone. *[Storyteller, please share a personal story about being calm or self-disciplined.]*

You know, we may not always be able to control our emotions and remain calm all the time, especially when something exciting happens. But be encouraged. We sure can learn and practice. We have such a good example in Joseph.

Joseph never gave up on his dreams. Through the years when he was sold, became a slave, and was imprisoned, he was trained, prepared, and qualified to become someone who could rule over an entire country. And when time came for his dreams to be fulfilled, he was sober and self-disciplined. This was truly someone who was qualified to become a ruler. We can also be persons like Joseph. We can learn not to do things in a careless way by letting our excitement take us over. Rather, we can learn to control ourselves and be calm and reasonable.

Intermediate Level, Block 3, Week 9

Joseph—Dealing with His Brothers

Point to Emphasize: We need to be those who learn to accept how our parents deal with situations for our benefit.

Reference Reading: Genesis 42—45

Memory Verse: O Jehovah, You have searched me and known me. (Psalm 139:1)

Story Sample

We learned last week that Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to get some food and they bowed down to him. Joseph recognized them but didn't tell them right away who he was. On the other side, Joseph's brothers did not recognize Joseph at all.

I'm sure that when they saw this man who was the ruler of the ONLY land that had food in all the earth, they never thought this was the brother they had sold. Since they did not recognize Joseph, out of his love, he decided to test and discipline them. Joseph was not cruel. Joseph was very sober in the ways he did all these things. In order for Joseph's brothers to recognize him, they had to pass through a certain process. They went back and forth from Canaan to Egypt three times during a six-month span before Joseph revealed to his brothers who he was. This is the longest story in the book of Genesis!

Okay, here we go! When the ten brothers came to Joseph, Joseph wanted to disguise himself and accused them of being spies. The ten brothers told Joseph that they were not spies, but that they were twelve brothers of a man from Canaan. They told him that their youngest brother stayed home with his dad and that their other brother was no more.

To start testing them, Joseph decided to question them. He put them in different situations until they would admit what they had done wrong. So, he started by putting them in custody. After three days, he decided to keep Simeon and sent away the other nine brothers back to Canaan to bring to him their youngest brother. On their way back to Canaan, when they opened their sacks of food they found the silver they used to buy their food! Joseph had restored their money and gave them provision for their journey. This must have frightened them! Joseph showed them his love by giving back their money in their sacks. However, Joseph gave them limited food so that one day when it was all gone, they will be forced to return to Egypt with Benjamin. Joseph was so wise! But delaying to tell them who he was, also meant he couldn't see his father Jacob right away, even though I'm sure he was longing to do so. What a patient, forgiving and loving person Joseph was!

Well, when his brothers came back with Benjamin, Joseph sent a servant to invite them to his residence to eat with him. They brought Simeon out of custody and Joseph seated them according to the sequence of their birth. All the brothers looked at one another in astonishment! He had food brought to them and Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of the others. Even with all these hints that Joseph was giving them, his brothers couldn't recognize him!

Can you believe all these things? There is still one more test! When they were about to leave to Canaan, Joseph had his men fill all their sacks with food. But this time, he had them hide his silver cup in Benjamin's sack. When they were about to leave, Joseph called them and accused them of stealing his cup. When they all opened their sacks and found that Joseph's cup was in

Benjamin's sack, Joseph told them that he was keeping Benjamin with him. Then Judah told Joseph that their father would die if they don't return with Benjamin because their father had already mourned the death of one of his sons. That's when Joseph couldn't hold it any longer. Joseph wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him. Joseph said to his brothers, "I AM JOSEPH! Is my father still alive?" His brothers could not answer him! They were SO troubled they were in front of Joseph!

I've had multiple occasions where I had done something wrong and I tried to hide it. My dad knew the truth all along. But instead of coming and telling me what I had done wrong, he would come to me and ask me questions. He would try to draw the answers from me until I would admit what I had done wrong. Now, I realize that his ways of dealing with me were the best! *[Storyteller, insert a story you can share with the children of someone dealing with you in the best way for your benefit.]*

As children, we all go through many experiences where we might feel like Joseph's brothers. Maybe we did something wrong and we tried to cover it. We thought no one would find out! But, your dad knew all along what had happened and instead of just coming and telling you, he decided to test you. With this story we can be encouraged that the ones that God put over us know how to best care for us! Our parents and our serving ones know how to best deal with the situations to help us realize our mistakes. We need to learn to accept how they deal with the situations for our benefit!

Intermediate Level, Block 3, Week 10

Jacob and Joseph—The End of Genesis

Point to Emphasize: God knows what will become of each one of us.

Reference Reading: Genesis 45:1—46:8; 46:26-34; 47—50

Memory Verse: Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you... (Jeremiah 1:5)

Story Sample

Today we come to the end of the story of Jacob and his son Joseph. We have told you many stories about these two men and there are many more we could tell. Maybe you could ask your parents to read more to you about these two men from the book of Genesis.

After Joseph dealt with his brothers, as we heard last week, he sent them back to Canaan to return with Joseph's father, Jacob. When they brought him to Egypt, Joseph and his family were all together again at last. Joseph took special care of Israel and his brothers. Jacob and his twelve sons were together, but they were in Egypt, not in the land that God had promised Abraham.

Do you remember Jacob in the beginning? From the time he was born, he was a supplanter, using trickery to always get what he wanted. But God came to him again and again and he was changed. At the end of his life he became a man who no longer tricked others but blessed them. When Joseph brought Jacob to Egypt to live with him, Jacob blessed Pharaoh. There is a custom that the lesser person is always blessed by the greater. Here Pharaoh was the top person in all of Egypt and yet he was blessed by Jacob. That must mean that Jacob was greater than Pharaoh! Wow! Also, at the end of his life Jacob blessed all of his sons, one by one. God had done so much with Jacob during his lifetime!

And we also know that, after being mistreated and sold by his brothers, and then enslaved in Egypt, his son Joseph became the ruler of Egypt. But from the very beginning, he trusted in the dreams that came to him from God. Later, when he was in prison, he interpreted the dreams of others: the cupbearer, the baker, and even Pharaoh. Even though the dreams he had as a child were not yet answered, he still believed that God was over those dreams. When he was young he had dreamed that his family would one day bow down to him, and as the ruler of Egypt, he finally had his dreams fulfilled.

The book of Genesis ends with the stories of these two men. It is so encouraging to see two such different lives and how much they changed – Jacob, from being one who tricked people to one who blessed them, and Joseph, from being one who was mistreated to one who ruled. God led them through so many things in order to change them.

Myself, I was a rowdy child who thought I was the best at everything I did. I did well in school, so I thought I knew everything; I was good at sports, so I thought I would always win; I obeyed when I went to the children's meeting, so I thought I was a "good" girl; I was even respectful to my mom and dad (most of the time!), so I thought I was the perfect daughter. But eventually I failed at all those things; I failed a test at school, I lost a softball game, I was disobedient at children's meeting, and worst of all, one day I disrespected my dad in the worst way. God changed me to one who believes that only God is the best at EVERYTHING. It makes me wonder what will happen to each one of you here in this room today. What will happen to you as you grow up? Only God knows where He will take each one of you. *[Storyteller, insert your story of how you were changed as you grew older.]*