

Joseph Reveals Himself To His Brothers

Genesis 45:1-16

## **MEMORY VERSE**

LUKE 6:36

“Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

Blindfolds, paper, writing boards and markers.

As many small prizes (stickers, erasers, pencils, etc.) and prize gift certificates (template provided) as the number of children in your class.

Masking tape.

## **ATTENTION GRABBER!**

### **Blindfold Buffet**

You will need blindfolds, paper, writing boards and markers.

Form pairs and have the children sit in chairs facing their partners.

Have one child in each pair volunteer to be blindfolded. Give a few markers to the blindfolded child. Have the un-blindfolded child hold up to his or her partner a blank sheet of paper on a writing board. The object is to have the blindfolded child draw the best picture possible. Tell the children that the team with the best picture wins.

After a few minutes of allowing the partners to draw their pictures have the children with the blindfolds remove them. Collect the pictures. Mix them up and display on the chalkboard. Conspicuously pick the worst picture in the group as a demonstration of mercy and declare it the winner. Perhaps award a small prize to the team. Explain that this demonstrates our

lesson today. We will see that mercy is shown in a situation where mercy was not deserved. That is how God deals with us. He gives us mercy even though we don't deserve it. And because God is merciful towards us we should be merciful towards others. **We are to be merciful to others, because our Father is merciful to us.**

## LESSON TIME!

Jesus told us as Christians, "Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:36). We live in a wicked world where people use us, cheat us, hate us and treat us spitefully, yet we are called to love people who don't like us because our Heavenly Father first loved us. We can show mercy because God is merciful to us.

Joseph was able to forgive and show mercy to his brothers even though they mocked him, hated him, sold him into slavery, and even wanted to kill him. **We are to be merciful to others, because our Father is merciful to us.** Our Saviour Jesus was mocked, betrayed, scourged, tortured, and killed to forgive us while we were yet against Him. Because of His great love for us, we can, in turn, show His love to others.

## GENESIS 45:1-3

Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers.

And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence.

After Joseph had seen his brother's humble hearts he was able to reveal himself to them. There was no delay after the brothers had admitted their guilt. They had been brought into submission to God and had actually been used for God's purposes.

We see here that Joseph still loved his brothers even though they hated him. This is a very good picture of God's heart towards this world. The Bible tells us that God loves this world and desires that everyone would come to Him. But still so many in the world turn away from Him and want nothing to do with Him. Many even work actively against the ways of God and his people, hating them and trying to destroy them.

But Joseph missed his family. He still loved his brothers and desired to be reconciled or brought back together with them. God wants to have a relationship with everyone, even those who hate Him. He has shown mercy to this world by sending Jesus to die on the cross to pay for the world's sins. Have you received God's mercy?

We see here that Joseph's brothers were dismayed or really amazed or blown away that this was Joseph. And not only was it Joseph but he wasn't having them thrown into prison or killed because of what they did to him. Joseph was returning good for the evil that his brothers meant towards Him.

Again, what a picture of God's love for us! Even though we have sinned and turned away from God, He still loves us and has made it possible for us to come to Him and have eternal life. This is truly amazing! When we come to Jesus we become amazed at what He has done for us. **We are to be merciful to others, because our Father is merciful to us.**

## GENESIS 45:4-8

And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." And they came near. And he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.

"But now, do not therefore be grieved nor angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.

"For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting.

"And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

"So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

Joseph called his brothers near just as our Lord does us. Even though we are guilty of sin Jesus still calls us to Himself. Although Joseph's brothers initially feared him, we need not fear our God, for by Jesus' blood and forgiveness we may come boldly to His throne of grace (Hebrews 10:19-23; Colossians 1:19-20). We are free from our sin and our pasts through our belief in Jesus and His forgiveness; we may have free fellowship with our God (Romans 8:1).

Joseph explains that God had a purpose in what happened all along. Joseph wasn't bitter or angry towards his brothers. Sometimes we can allow things to bother us for a long time. Like when people are mean to us or treat us in a wrong way. We can

treat them like Jesus and still love them or we can let it bother us and allow it to cause problems in our lives.

When we walk by faith we need to trust that God has everything under control. Remember a few lessons ago when Joseph was in prison? It seemed like things were out of control in his life. But God knew all along what His plans were and He brought them to pass. Joseph knew that God had sent him to Egypt before his family to help them during the famine. God was using Joseph to protect the nation of Israel. For Joseph to be angry or try to get back at his brothers would be the wrong thing to do. He was able to extend mercy to his brothers. **We are to be merciful to others, because our Father is merciful to us.**

## "Goofed-Up" Give Away

You will need small prizes (stickers, erasers, pencils, etc.), and prize gift certificates (template provided) that you prepare before class.

Give each child a treat gift certificate and a small prize. Explain that this gift is not for them, but for a person this past week that has treated them in a wrong way. Maybe it is a brother or sister or friend at school.

Have them think of someone and write that name on their certificate. Instruct the children that the next time they see that person that they need to give them the certificate and the prize.

Next week remember to ask the children how it went and what some of the reactions were that they received. How is this like Jesus?

As an option you can have the children share next week what happened and then give those who participated a prize for doing

the right thing. **We are to be merciful to others, because our Father is merciful to us.**

Joseph assured his brothers of God's hand in his life. Joseph teaches us that God's will, not man's, controls all that happens on planet earth. God is completely in control of everything that we go through. Joseph was able to recognize that although his brothers meant evil toward him, God meant it all for good (Genesis 50:20). Because Joseph recognized God's hand in absolute authority and control, he was able to forgive those who had wronged him. **We are to be merciful to others, because our Father is merciful to us.**

#### GENESIS 45:9-11

"Hasten and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry.

"You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have.

"There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for there are still five years of famine."s

Here, through Joseph, we see the heart and love of God for His children. He desires to be near to us and draws us close to Him to dwell in His amazing goodness. Just as Joseph was to provide for his family, so does our Lord God who has promised to "supply all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Not only will Joseph be joined with his family again, but he will provide abundantly for them. The Lord wants to bless each one of us. It begins with a relationship with His Son Jesus Christ.

### GENESIS 45:12-13

"And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you.

So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here."

Joseph tells his brothers to make "haste" to tell their father that Joseph was alive and to tell him of all his glory in Egypt. Joseph wanted to see his father as soon as possible.

This reminds us that our Heavenly Father commissions us as well to tell this spiritually dead world that He is alive and of His awesome glory. By His grace we are to make haste and spread the news of the only One who can save man's starving soul. Jesus came because He loves each soul and doesn't desire anyone to die in sin. What unfathomable grace and love we see through His sacrifice. **We are to be merciful to others, because our Father is merciful to us.**

### GENESIS 45:14-16

Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck.

Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come." So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well.



Joseph then kissed all of his brothers expressing his love and care for them. God worked everything out. He provided for Joseph's family; He brought his family back together; He got Joseph out of several bad situations; and despite all the difficulties Joseph experienced, God enabled him to keep a right heart before Him.

This scene reminds us of the story of the Prodigal son and his father in the New Testament. Joseph's brothers were now accepted. This was a time for celebration. Just as there is celebration in heaven when someone come to know the Lord. We are brought back to God and begin a wonderful life of knowing and walking with Him. God is good to those who put their trust in Him. And certainly Joseph is a good example of a man who put his trust in God.

Joseph went through many trials and hard times because of his brothers' sins against him, yet through it all, he was able to completely forgive them of their wrongs toward him. Joseph recognized that it was God, not man, who was ultimately in control of his life, allowing him to show mercy to others.

When we look to God alone and see His great mercy and grace towards us we are then able to share this love and mercy with those who hurt us. Let each of us accept His love and mercy in our own lives and then allow that love and mercy to flow into the lives of others. **We are to be merciful to others, because our Father is merciful to us.**

## **Mercy! Mercy!**

Gather the children into a circle. Ask them to share with you times in their lives when someone has shown them mercy or when they have shown mercy towards others. How did they feel when someone showed mercy to them? How did they feel when they showed mercy to others? How has God shown mercy to us? Spend a few minutes in discussion and application of today's lesson.

Explain that we are to be merciful to others, because our Father is merciful to us.

## PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be merciful, because God is merciful to us. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

Template – Goofed Up Giveaway

PRIZE CERTIFICATE

Date \_\_\_\_\_

This coupon is presented to

\_\_\_\_\_ as an act of

kindness. Because God loves me I also want to be nice to others. There is nothing that you have to give in return. God bless you.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

John 3:16

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

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