

Joseph Is Rejected and Accused

Focus: Joseph Is Rejected

MEMORY VERSE

Ephesians 4:31–32

MEMORY WORK

• Write the Memory Verse on the board or a chart. Begin by covering one word at a time and repeating the verse together as a class. As students become more proficient, progress to covering phrases and finally large portions of the Scripture while calling on individual students to say the missing parts of the verse.

EXTENSION

1A Read **BLMs 4A–B The Surprise Party, Parts 1–2** to your class. Ask students to imagine themselves in the place of Jeanie, the main character. Discuss how Jeanie's choices affected the outcome, and what godly choices she could have made.

1B Instruct students to complete **BLM 4C Scavenger Hunt** by rereading **Genesis 37**. Indicate that the answers found in **Genesis 37** are in sequence. Divide students into groups of two or three and have them choose group names. Then tell the groups to quickly find the answers to all the questions. After verifying with you that all questions are complete, have students write their group name on the board. The group that finishes first with all the right answers is the winner. Review each question to allow students to check their answers. Give a **TREAT** or special privilege as a reward.

Introduction

Tell students that before Jacob took his family back to Canaan, his two wives, Leah and Rachel, and their two female servants—who were also considered Jacob's wives—had given birth to 11 sons. Joseph was the youngest of these sons. Later, after Jacob met Esau and their relationship was restored, Rachel bore another son, Benjamin. Joseph and Benjamin were Rachel's only children. Joseph's life and the relationships he had with his 11 brothers and other people are the focus of this week's lesson.

Directed Instruction

Read **Genesis 37** to the class. Ask students what the passage gives as the first reason Joseph's brothers hated him. (**Their father loved Joseph the most.**) What did Joseph receive that irritated his brothers? (**a special robe from their father**) What was the second reason given? (**Joseph told them about a dream that meant they would be ruled by him.**) What was his brothers' reaction when Joseph told them and his father about his second dream? (**His brothers felt insulted and envied him more.**) It was unheard of that a younger son would rule over his elder brothers. How did the brothers' hatred and envy grow? (**They wanted to kill Joseph, but ended up selling him into slavery and lying about what they had done.**)

Explain to students that sometimes people treat others in a mean way for no apparent reason, and sometimes people hurt others because they themselves have been hurt. Many times relationships contain strife and envy, and these are the cause for hurtful actions. Convey that **strife** means *a quarrel, a struggle, or a bitter conflict*. **Envy** is defined as *a strong desire for another's possessions or advantages*.

Tell students that Joseph experienced rejection from his family, who at times yielded to God, yet at other times engaged in deception, hatred, lies, strife, and envy. Ask students to give the names of Joseph's great-grandfather, grandfather, and father. (**Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**) The families of these three generations struggled to maintain relationships. Abraham's two wives, Sarah and Hagar, were in such conflict over their sons, Isaac and Ishmael, that Abraham ended up sending Hagar and Ishmael away (Genesis 16). Isaac loved his son Esau more than he loved Esau's twin brother, Jacob (Genesis 25:28). This conflict pitted husband against wife and brother against brother when it came to the family blessing, and Jacob fled from home because he had deceived his brother out of their father's blessing (Genesis 27). Ironically, Jacob was tricked by his uncle Laban into marrying the older daughter (Genesis 29:16–30).

Teach that God's Word provides guidance on how to live well with others and that Joseph and his family would have been spared much heartache had they known and regularly followed God's wisdom. Have students read **Romans 12:17–19** chorally and discuss what it says. Emphasize how marvelous it is, as Joseph's life unfolds, to see his trust in God and his humility increase. This trust and humility eventually led to healed relationships and a blessing to all nations.

Student Page 4.1

Have students complete the page independently.

Review

- Why did Joseph's brothers hate him? (**He was their father's favorite son; their father gave Joseph a special gift; Joseph shared about his dreams.**)
- Why was Joseph his father's favorite son? (**Possible answers: Joseph was born when Jacob was old; Joseph was the older son of Jacob's much-loved wife, Rachel.**)
- How much money did Joseph's brothers sell him for? (**20 pieces of silver**)
- If you are treated unfairly by others, what would be the godly response? (**to trust God to help me, to not take revenge, to try to live peaceably with those who wronged me**)

Time Line

Point out the references to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph between 2100 and 1880 BC.

APPLICATION

- As a child, God communicated to Joseph through dreams. Though it may not have been wise to excitedly share such dreams with disgruntled older brothers, Joseph must have felt God had His hand on his life. How can you know that God has chosen you for something special (1 Peter 2:9)? (**I am a child of the King; the Bible says I am chosen for something special.**)
- Is it right for a parent to love one child more than another? (**No.**) Why? (**It can cause serious family issues, creating envy, strife, and competition.**)

REINFORCEMENT

According to Old Testament custom, Reuben, the oldest of Jacob's sons, held the special first-born position of honor within his family. Being the oldest, Reuben was presumed to be the next head of the family. This meant his behavior should reflect this coming position of honor. If his father's favorite son, Joseph, was injured or disappeared while on a trip to see if his brothers and their flocks were well, Reuben knew that he would carry the majority of the blame. After all, he should have already sent word back to their father that all was well. This is why, as seen in Genesis 37:21–22 and 29, Reuben seems to be fighting for Joseph's life. He desired to rescue his younger brother and send him safely home to their father, and in doing so fulfill his role as future head of the family.

DAY 1

Name _____

Joseph Is Rejected and Accused 4.1

What would it be like to grow up as a younger brother in a large family full of **envy** and **strife**? How would you like to have brothers like Joseph's? Even though they were cruel to him, God had a plan for Joseph and his brothers. Jacob's 12 sons were to have a big part in forming the nation of Israel. Look up the two Glossary words and write their definitions below.

1. envy: **a strong desire for another's possessions or advantages**
2. strife: **a quarrel, a struggle, or a bitter conflict**
3. Sin moves from thoughts to words to actions. Read Genesis 37:3–4, 37:18–20, and 37:23–32 and describe Joseph's brothers' evil thoughts, evil words, and evil actions in the space provided.

Evil thoughts

They hated him. They planned to kill him, throw him into a pit, and say a wild animal had eaten him.

Evil words

They could not speak politely to him. They told their father he was dead.

Evil actions

They took his coat and threw him into a pit. They sold him for 20 pieces of silver.

4. Read Genesis 37:11 and record Joseph's brothers' real problem. **They were envious and jealous of Joseph.**

5. Explain how you felt after making a bad choice of your own.
Answers will vary.



6. In the first box provided below, draw a cartoon of someone making a bad choice. In the second box draw a cartoon of how that person should feel about that bad choice. In the final box, explain what that person could do to help make a better choice the next time.

Bad Choice	Now I feel ...	Next time ...

Drawings and writings will vary.