**THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY**

**CHILDREN’S MEETING LESSON**

**DATE:** March 12, 2017

**SUBJECT: GOD’S CALLING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: God Called Joseph (5 of 5)**

**SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 45:16-28; 46-47:26

**AIM:** To see that as God’s called ones: 1) we must believe that His heart is always good toward us, and that His promises never waver and 2) if we cooperate with God, we can become useful to Him even in great and unexpected ways.

**MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM:** Isaiah 55:9 (For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So My ways are higher than your ways, And My thoughts are higher than your thoughts.); Romans 8:28 (And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.); 2 Corinthians 4:18 (Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.)

**SONG SUGGESTIONS:** 1614 (Cooperation); 9410 *BSS* The Bible #10 (I Believe the Promises of God); 82 (Gospel Express); 74 (Boys and Girls for Jesus); 64 (Ev’ry Promise in the Bible Is Mine); 96 (No, Never Alone); 57 (He Cannot Fail); 117 (Jesus Never Fails); 1003 (A Friend Who Never Fails); 32 (Trust in the Lord); 6733 (Trust in the Lord with All Your Heart)

**ACTIVITY IDEA:** Play a game of allocating “grains” with beans or pasta. Select a volunteer to be in charge of a bag of grains. The child is responsible for allocating them based on scenarios read aloud by the serving one, e.g., give each child around the table four “grains”; feed ten families with 20 “grains” available. This can be an exercise in speed and math skills but also accuracy, careful listening and attention (e.g. no grains scattered on the table or floor).

**CRAFT IDEA:** Paste different grains onto cardstock to make mosaic artwork.

**BACKGROUND:** Last week we saw how Joseph was reunited with his brothers after about 22 years of separation. His brothers had come to Egypt to buy food, but did not recognize Joseph at first. This reunion was very emotional for Joseph—he tested his brothers, questioning them about their family; he even overheard his brothers expressing remorse for selling him into slavery many years prior, which made him privately weep. But he did not rush to show off his position and power to his brothers; instead, he showed them love and forgiveness by supplying provisions for their journey and not taking their money. It was not until his brothers came the second time to Egypt to buy food that Joseph eventually made his real identity known. He told them the famine which was already two years, would last yet another five years.

In all this time, God was planning everything carefully. Even though Joseph experienced difficulties in his life, God had deliberately arranged them for Joseph to become the most powerful leader under Pharaoh in Egypt, and God had given him the wisdom to become very useful to Pharaoh, especially one with control over all the food supply. This position allowed Joseph to help all the people of Egypt during this great famine and eventually to take care of his whole family too. Even though it seemed Joseph’s brothers were the ones who caused him to end up in Egypt, actually it was God arranging it to happen: God sent Joseph to Egypt before his family to preserve them and to save their lives by a great deliverance. God did wonderful things to arrange all these events in an amazing way.

Now that Joseph and his brothers were reunited, they decided it would be best if they all moved to Egypt to be near Joseph. Joseph also longed to see his father and to let him know that Joseph was alive.

**CONTENT:** When Pharaoh heard the news about Joseph’s brothers coming to Egypt, he was pleased and told Joseph to tell his brothers to get Jacob and their families and move down to Egypt. He would give them the best of Egypt’s land and they would enjoy the goodness of the land. Joseph provided wagons according to Pharaoh’s command, food and changes of clothing.But to Benjamin, his brother from his mother Rachel, Joseph gave 300 pieces of silver and five changes of clothing. He sent his father donkeys loaded with the best of Egypt as well as grain, bread and provision. He sent his brothers back to Canaan and told them not to quarrel on the way home.

**Telling the good news to their father Jacob.** When the brothers came to Canaan to their father Jacob, they told him, “Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt.” Can you imagine how Jacob reacted to this news? Joseph was his beloved son, whom he thought was forever gone after all these years! When Jacob heard the news, his heart “became numb” because he did not believe what his sons told him (Gen. 45:26). They told Jacob everything Joseph said. When Jacob saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, his spirit was revived. He wanted to see his son Joseph again before he died.

**Jacob travels to Egypt to reunite with his son Joseph.** Jacob took his journey, bringing all the livestock and possessions his family had acquired while living in Canaan, and came to Beer-sheba. There, he offered sacrifices to God, and God spoke to him in dreams at night and told him not to be afraid to go down to Egypt, for He would make him a great nation there. God said, “I will go down with you to Egypt and I will surely bring you up again.” God had always taken care of him and would continue to do so. Then, Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba and his sons carried him and their household in the wagons, and they all arrived in Egypt. It was a big group, totaling 70 people from the house of Jacob.

The family arrived in the land of Goshen where Joseph went to meet his father Jacob. This was a moment Jacob never thought he would have again, because he thought his favorite son Joseph had died many years ago. Can you imagine the flood of emotions he was feeling? Joseph also tremendously missed his family and especially his father, having been separated from him since he was about 17 years old. When Joseph met his father, he fell on his neck and wept for a long time. This reunion was very emotional, full of both tears and joy. Because Jacob was finally reunited with his son who was alive, he felt he could die peacefully now. He said to Joseph, “Let me die since I have seen your face and know that you are still alive” (Gen. 46:30).

**Joseph’s brothers meet Pharaoh.** After everyone was together again, Joseph introduced some of his family members to Pharaoh. Joseph presented five of his brothers, who told Pharaoh that they were shepherds. Pharaoh told Joseph to “settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land of Goshen. And if you know any capable men among them, make them overseers over my livestock.” (Gen. 47:6) Joseph also brought in Jacob his father to meet Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh (Gen. 47:7). Joseph settled his father and brothers and gave them the best land, as Pharaoh had commanded. Joseph was able to provide his father and the entire household with food.

**Joseph is responsible for the food supply in the land and is able to save the people of Egypt.** The famine was great. Joseph gathered all the money found in Egypt and in Canaan for the grain which they bought, and he brought the money into Pharaoh’s house. He had a very important job since he was in charge of all the food supply. All the Egyptians came to Joseph and asked for food, since all their money was spent. Joseph instructed them to bring their livestock in exchange for food for that year (Gen. 47:16).

When the year ended, the people came to Joseph again for help. All their money had been spent and their herds of cattle had already been exchanged for food (Gen. 47:18-19). The people needed Joseph’s aid, so he bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, in order to sell them the food they needed; only the land of the priests he did not buy. Joseph also gave the people seed to sow the land and plant more crops. When harvest came, the people were required to give one-fifth to Pharaoh, and four-fifths would be their own as food (Gen. 47:24). The people were grateful and said to Joseph, “You have saved our lives. May we find favor in the sight of my lord and be Pharaoh’s servants.” (Gen. 47:25)

**SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM**: *Please pray and fellowship over which applications to cover. Please do not feel obligated to cover all the suggested applications.*

* **God’s heart is always good toward us and His promises never waver**. We need to trust that God knows what is best for us and that His heart is always good toward us. Even if we are in difficult situations, we should have the confidence that He will care for us. Our faith in God can be strengthened when we pray to Him, sing to Him, memorize our verses, read His Word, or come to children’s meeting.
* **We should learn to cooperate with God so that we can become useful to Him.** Joseph lived a life of cooperating with God in every way, through smooth times and hard times. Although Joseph had to endure being in prison for several years, eventually God exalted him to be ruler over Egypt, ultimately saving many lives. He was in charge of the entire food supply. Like Joseph, God can use us in unexpected ways. For example, we can help others in practical ways. We can also bring others to know God. We may not be an important person like Joseph, but in our small way, we can cooperate with God to tell those around us (our relatives, neighbors, classmates, friends, etc.) about God. We can also be a good example so that through us, many would want to know God.
* **We should be responsible in the areas entrusted to us.** Joseph was a responsible young man under Potiphar. Joseph was put in charge of the prisoners while he was in prison. Ultimately, Pharaoh gave Joseph a very important job: he oversaw the food supply for all of Egypt. What would have happened if he was careless in his approach, or if he didn’t plan carefully, or if he was greedy and hoarded the food supplies? The people would not have survived the famine, and Joseph would have lost Pharaoh’s trust. If we are responsible for chores at home or tasks at school, we should handle them diligently and always give our best effort. If we are given a responsibility at school (ie. line leader, team leader for a project, captain of the team), we should be fair, just, honest and trustworthy.
* **We should have a peaceful family situation without quarreling.** After Joseph had revealed himself, he instructed his brothers to bring his father Jacob and the rest of the family to Egypt. As the brothers departed, Joseph said to his brothers, “Do not quarrel on the way.” (Genesis 45:24) Why do you think Joseph instructed them not to quarrel? It must be that the brothers argued with one another. Do we ever argue and fight with our siblings and family members? God desires that we get along with others, be at peace with one another, and forgive one another. (Psalms 133:1; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Colossians 3:13-14)
* **Be Generous and Pursue Hospitality.** Hospitality means the friendly and generous care for visitors, guests and strangers. (Romans 12:13 Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality.) Joseph was very generous with his brothers and his father. Both times when he sent them back, he provided grains and restored their silver. When he provided a feast for his brothers, there was an abundance of food and five times the amount for his younger brother Benjamin. When he sent for his father Jacob, he loaded up the donkeys with the best of Egypt and wagons. He also sent his brothers with food and a change of clothing, but for Benjamin, he gave 300 pieces of silver and five changes of clothing! When Jacob and his brothers returned, he provided the best place to live. Jacob took care of his family. Likewise, we should be generous with our family and friends, and pursue hospitality (ie. saints staying overnight or coming for dinner and home meeting).

Adapted from the Church in New York City’s Children’s Meeting lessons: 4/10/94; 3/19/00; 3/19/06; 3/18/12