THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY

**CHILDREN’S MEETING LESSON**

**DATE:** September 30, 2018

**SUBJECT: HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS: Brothers and Sisters (2 of 3)—Loving Our Brothers and Sisters**

**SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 37:1-36; 41:40-46; 42:6-28; 45:1-15; 50:14-21; Mark 12:28-31; 1 John 4:20-21; 1:9

**AIM:** To love our brothers and sisters is very important to God and must be very important to us also. It is related to the second greatest commandment in the Bible.

**MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM:** 1 John 4:7a (Beloved, let us love one another,); 1 John 4:21 (And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God love his brother also.); John 13:34 (A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.); Ephesians 4:32 (And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ also forgave you.)

**SUGGESTED SONGS:** 5 (Grumblers); 183 (When God Forgives He Forgets); 3408 (I Forgive, You Forgive [click here to listen](http://173.68.175.102/Children_song.asp?req_type=Play&req_no=3408)); 9557 *Bible Story Songs Eight Great Men in Genesis, Vol. 1 - Song #7* (I Love My Brother [*click here to listen*](http://www.myfamilysings.com/audio/8GreatMen-audio-samples/07MyBrother.mp3)); 6724 *BSS Matthew, Vol. 2 - Song #18* (Then Peter Came [*click here to listen*](http://173.68.175.102/Children_song.asp?req_type=Play&req_no=6724)); 9585 *BSS Eight Great Men in Genesis, Vol. 2 - Song* #15 *Joseph* (Hear These Dreams [*click here to listen*](http://www.myfamilysings.com/audio/8GMV2/15-HearTheseDreams.mp3)); 9587 *BSS Eight Great Men in Genesis, Vol. 2 - Song* #17 *Joseph* (Oh, How God Blessed Me [*click here to listen*](http://www.myfamilysings.com/audio/8GMV2/17-OhHowGodBlessedMe.mp3))

**APPROACH:** Can the children name siblings from among the children they know? They can be from other districts. How about siblings among the young people or adults in the church?

**CRAFT IDEAS:** (1) Make a family tree out of construction paper. Write the names of family members and siblings on the leaves. The children can add photos at home.

(2) Use a wooden dowel rod, or rolled-up paper as the base for a hanging mobile with the names of family members. Beads and pom-poms can be used for decorating.

**CONTENT:** Joseph, a boy of seventeen, was out in the fields feeding the flock with his brothers when he went to tell his father about the evil things his older brothers were doing. Certainly his brothers did not like that. Joseph was one of twelve sons, and his father Jacob loved him very much because he was the son of his old age. Jacob made him a coat of many colors. Now when his brothers saw that their father loved Joseph more than all his children, they hated Joseph and could not speak kindly to him. And it came to pass that on two separate occasions Joseph told them about two dreams he had dreamed. The first dream revealed that he would have dominion over them, and the second showed that his entire family would bow down to him. After hearing these things his brothers were jealous of him; but his father kept the saying in his heart (Gen. 37:1-11).

One day the father sent his son Joseph to see if all was well with his brothers and the flock they were feeding in Shechem. But when he got there he was told that they had gone to another place, called Dothan. Joseph went to Dothan and found them. When they saw him afar off, even before he came near to them, they conspired to put him to death (Gen. 37:18). They thought of an evil plan. They agreed to cast him into a pit and leave him there in the wilderness to die; they would then say that some evil beast had devoured him (v. 20). But Reuben, the eldest brother, convinced them that they should not kill him since he was their brother, their flesh. Not only so, Reuben planned to save Joseph and secretly return him home to their father (v. 22). When Joseph reached the place where his brothers were gathered, they seized him, stripped off his coat-of-many-colors and cast him into a pit. (The pit was empty and had no water in it.) Afterward, they sat down to eat. When they looked up, they saw a caravan of merchants carrying goods down to Egypt. Then Joseph’s brother Judah spoke out saying they should not leave him in the pit to die, but rather they should sell him to the Ishmaelites. Meanwhile, when Reuben returned to the pit to rescue Joseph he did not find him, and he tore his clothes! Joseph was gone. His brothers had lifted him out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. The Ishmaelites took him to Egypt where they in turn sold him to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officers. Joseph did not know what had become of his family, and surely they did not know what had become of him. His father must have sent servants out to search for him. Joseph had no idea that his brothers had devised a way to make their father think he had been killed by a wild beast. They had killed a young goat, dipped the coat-of-many-colors in the blood and took it to their father Jacob to identify. Jacob was greatly grieved, thinking an animal had killed his son.

Far away from his family, Joseph suffered much in the land of Egypt—he even spent a number of years in prison unjustly. It was the sovereign hand of God that kept him throughout his terrible ordeals. After a time of suffering, when he reached thirty years of age, Joseph was suddenly made ruler over all the land of Egypt by Pharaoh, king of Egypt. He was second-in-command after Pharaoh himself and in charge of the food supply. After so many years, he eventually was reunited with his brothers when they came seeking for food during a famine. At first, they did not recognize Joseph since so many years had passed and he was much older now - he had grown from a boy to a man. Joseph was now very powerful and in charge of the entire region’s food supply. He did not reveal himself right away, and he could have done something bad or taken revenge on his brothers, but he did not. Even though they had treated him so unkindly and unrighteously, Joseph forgave them and took care of all their needs. After weeping loudly at seeing his brothers, and while they were still shocked that it was their brother Joseph standing before them, Joseph told them not to be grieved or angry with themselves for selling him into slavery. (Genesis 45:5-8) Not only did Joseph forgive his brothers fully, but he accepted his circumstances as coming from God.

**SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:** *Please pray and fellowship over which applications to cover. Please do not try to cover all the applications. It is sufficient to cover just* ***one or two applications*** *which are appropriate for the age group of the children you are serving.*

* **Loving one another.** The Lord Jesus quoted two greatest commandments given to man (Mark 12:28-31). The first is to love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength; the second is to love your neighbor as yourself. Our closest “neighbor” is our brother or sister (or other family members). To love our brothers and sisters is related to the second commandment. The Bible teaches that we must love our brothers and sisters (1 John 4:20-21). The Bible tells us that we cannot truly love God if we hate our brother. When we love our brothers, God is so happy and we also are happy.
* **Forgiving one another.** Although we may not get along with our siblings all the time and may sometimes get angry with them, we can pray and ask the Lord to help us to not stay angry. We should not let any bitterness or bad feeling remain in our heart. “Be angry, yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your indignation” (Eph. 4:26). Joseph’s brothers did many evil things to him, yet in the end, he forgave them. Only the Lord can help us forgive in that kind of a way. We should never harbor bad feelings. Just as the Lord forgave us, we also should forgive. (Matt. 18:21-22; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13)
* **Your siblings are your siblings for your whole life.** We have our brothers and sisters for our whole life. Your siblings are still your siblings even when you grow up and no longer live in the same house together. If we take care of any offense or bad feelings we have with our siblings, the love we have for them should grow sweeter and stronger as the years go by. We can learn to care for one another and love one another while we are still young. (Serving ones can tell about their own experiences with their siblings as adults—visits, family vacations and reunions, help and support from each other, etc.)

Adapted from *Bringing Children from Adam to Christ in God’s Economy–Human Relationships*, Vol. 3, Lesson 6, and the Church in New York City Children’s Meeting lessons, 9/28/86; 9/28/97; 9/30/01; 9/30/07; 10/6/2013

Source acknowledgments for craft ideas: (1) Family tree with photos <https://www.canva.com/create/family-trees/> (2) Hanging mobile <https://www.handmadecharlotte.com/make-outer-space-mobile/>