**THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY**

**CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON**

**DATE:** October 7, 2018

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

**SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 45:1-15; Exodus 2:1-10; Matthew 18:21-35; Psalms 133:1; John 13:34; Ephesians 4:26b-27; 1 John 4:7; 3:15

**AIM:** We must love one another and forgive one another, as God loves us and has forgiven us.

**MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM:** Ephesians 4:32 (And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ also forgave you.); 1 John 4:21 (And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God love his brother also.); Matthew 6:14-15 (For if you forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you also; But if you do not forgive men their offenses, neither will your Father forgive your offenses.)

**SUGGESTED SONGS:** 183 (When God Forgives, He Forgets); 3408 (I Forgive, You Forgive); 9557 *Bible Story Songs - Eight Great Men in Genesis Vol. 1, Song #7* (ABEL - I Love My Brother [*click here to listen to stanza one*](http://www.myfamilysings.com/audio/8GreatMen-audio-samples/07MyBrother.mp3)); 6724 *BSS Matthew Vol. 2 Song 18* (Then Peter Came and Said to Him [*click here to listen to recording*](http://173.68.175.102/Children_song.asp?req_type=Play&req_no=6724)); 5212 (Oh Lord, Care For My Brother); 7605 (We’ll Call Him Moses); 13 (A New Commandment); 6711 *BSS Matthew Vol. 2, Song #20* (The Great Command)

**CRAFT IDEAS:** (1) Using pipe cleaners, form two stick figures who can hold hands. The children can cut out paper or fabric clothing and label them with their or their siblings’ names. *If a child has no siblings, he or she can write the names of cousins or friends.* (2) Make a 3-D scene out of construction paper showing Miriam looking over her baby brother Moses in the reeds.

**BACKGROUND:** In the past couple of lessons about human relationships, we have seen some examples of brothers in the Bible. God gave us our families to love and care for us, but in the families we talked about there were jealousy and hard feelings between the brothers that eventually caused them to do some terrible things. Today we want to talk about an example in the Bible where the siblings cared for one another, in particular an older sibling caring for her younger sibling.

**CONTENT:** Have you heard of Moses? He was the one whom God used to lead the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. But before he became a great leader, there is a record in the Bible (Exodus 2) about Moses and his family when he was only a baby. Moses’ father was Amram and his mother was Jochebed. They had two older children, Miriam and Aaron. Big brother Aaron was three years old when Moses was born, and big sister Miriam was probably just a few years older than Aaron, although the Bible does not tell us exactly how old Miriam was. But this was not purely a happy occasion. Why not? Because when Moses was born, there was a terrible decree in existence from Pharaoh to kill all the Hebrew baby boys by throwing them into the river. Pharaoh did not want the Hebrews to get stronger than the Egyptians and increase in number. But Moses’ parents cared for Moses and refused to obey Pharaoh. Moses’ mother hid him. But it is not easy to hide a baby. Babies cry and make noise and move around, and they can’t stay quiet. So after three months of hiding him, she had to do something else. She took a papyrus basket and plastered it with tar and pitch, which made it waterproof. She then put baby Moses in the basket and put it among the tall, slender reeds that grow in the waters of the Nile River.

This was not an easy thing to do—for a family to send away their beloved baby. Moses’ big sister Miriam was concerned and followed. She stood at a distance to find out what would happen to her baby brother.

Then along came someone from the royal family. Pharaoh’s daughter came down to bathe at the River while her maidens walked alongside the River. She saw the basket in the midst of the reeds and sent her female servant to bring the basket to her. When she opened the basket, she saw that there was a baby boy inside, crying. She realized it was one of the Hebrews’ children, and she had compassion on him. She decided she was going to keep the baby.

At that moment, Miriam was brave. She approached Pharaoh’s daughter and said to her, “Shall I go and call a nurse from the Hebrew women for you that she may nurse the child for you?” (Exo. 2:7) She was offering to get someone to help take care of the baby. Pharaoh’s daughter agreed and told Miriam to go get someone. So Miriam went to call her mother, without telling Pharaoh’s daughter that it was actually the baby’s own mother. Pharaoh’s daughter said she would pay the woman to take care of the child. So through the help of big sister Miriam, baby Moses was able to stay with his own family again for a few more years before being brought to Pharaoh’s daughter. Miriam’s cooperation with God by caring for her little brother helped rescue him.

**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.*

* **The Lord gave us our brothers and sisters.** Before we were even born, God already decided which child would be in which family. He even decided what order we would be born in. We should be thankful for God’s arrangement for us.
* **We should love and care for our brothers and sisters.** God desires for us to love one another (1 John 4:7). Because God so loved each one of us, He gave His beloved Son to die for our sins. If God loves each one of us so much, we should also love one another. God wants us to love one another and live in harmony and peace with our brothers and sisters. Psalm 133:1 says, “…how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity.” God promises to bless such oneness. When we are one with one another, God is happy and so are we. What are some practical ways we can love and care for one another? Perhaps an older sibling can help a younger sibling open a water bottle or tie his shoelaces. A younger sibling can also help an older sibling, such as getting a bandage or calling for adult help when someone falls off a bicycle. We can also include younger siblings when we are playing a game and being patient with them.
* **It is a serious sin to remain angry with our brother or sister.** Because we have a sinful nature, sometimes we get angry at our brothers and sisters, and if we hold a grudge, our love may even turn into hatred. This is very serious. In Matthew 5:22, the Lord Jesus tells us that “every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to the judgment.” The Lord further gives a strong warning not to call our brother stupid or fool. We should pray for the Lord to help us love and forgive our siblings.
* **We should forgive, as God has forgiven us.** One day Peter, one of the Lord’s disciples, asked a question**,** “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”To forgive over and over again, especially for the same offense, is not easy. Peter probably thought seven times seemed like a lot. The Lord answered, “Up to seventy times seven.” (Matt. 18:21-22) Yes, that is 490 times, which is a lot more than seven! But what the Lord was really telling Peter was that we must forgive our brothers and sisters every time they offend us. Because God has forgiven us so much, we must be willing to forgive our brother or sister. In comparison to how much God has forgiven us, their wrongdoing toward us is very small (Matt. 18:23-35).

Adapted from *Bringing Children from Adam to Christ–Human Relationships*, Vol. 3, Lesson 7, and the Church in New York City Children’s Meeting lessons, 10/5/86; 10/5/97; 10/07/01; 10/07/07; 10/13/2013