



DEAR PRIMARY FRIENDS,

You've been in our thoughts as we've been writing these lessons and making the beautiful artwork. Yes, you! We've even been praying for you and your mom and dad—praying that as you explore these amazing, true Bible stories, you'll know how much God loves you. He really does, you know! And He's with you, no matter where you live in the world or what your days are like.

The stories you'll explore this quarter are really great. They're about brothers who fought with each other and

how God helped them to make things right. You'll hear stories about adventures in far-away lands, and how God is still with His people, even when things are hard. The God you meet in these stories is the same God you can know today. He's with you now, and He'll be with you tomorrow and always.

I pray you'll be His friend, because He wants to be yours.

With love,

MRS. NINA

and your General Conference Sabbath School Team

DEAR PARENTS,

The weeks have quickly passed, and it's time for a new quarter of lessons for your child.

In your busy daily routine, we pray you'll make time to invest in your child's spiritual life. You might want to use these daily lessons for your morning or evening family worship. Just 10-15 minutes a day is all you need to read, discuss, do the short activities, sing the Scripture Song, and pray together. Don't underestimate the impact of having daily worship with your child. It's not much to give, and the cumulative impact of these daily encounters will build for eternity.

"You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" (Deuteronomy 6:7).

God will bless your efforts, your persistence, and your gentleness as you teach and lead your child to sit at His feet.

You are always in our prayers,

NINA

and your General Conference Sabbath School Team

P.S. When your child wants to listen to their Sabbath School lesson or weekly Scripture Song, they can do so by scanning this QR code.





Personal Devotions for the **PRIMARY CHILD**

One of the most important life skills you can teach your child is to seek God every day for themselves in personal devotion. Your child is now 7, 8, or 9 years old, and they are learning to read, or are in the process of becoming a confident reader. Teaching them how to study the Bible for themselves is essential for them to be able to grow and become “strong in spirit, filled with wisdom” (Luke 2:40).

How can I teach my Primary child to turn his or her heart to Jesus?

1. **PRAY:** Every day, pray for your child to want to have a close friendship with Jesus, and a love for His truth.
2. **IN THE EVERYDAY MOMENTS:** Look for genuine ways to talk about how much you love Jesus as you go about your daily routines. Reinforce the focus of the weekly lesson as much as possible, and share answers to prayer, as well as praise. Model your own relationship with Jesus every day, not just on Sabbath.
3. **YOUR DEVOTIONAL PLACE:** Choose a chair, windowsill, or regular place where you will daily read your Bible and pray. Talk about this with your child, so they can see that it’s important for you.
4. **TIME WITH JESUS:** Encourage your child to spend a little time reading their Bible each day in a special place, either in their room or in a chair by a window. Never force, coerce, or bribe your child to do this. If your child would like you to help guide them in this time, do so.

Always encourage your child to **pray** before they spend time in their devotions. They can pray a simple prayer, such as *“Dear Jesus, please be close to me as I read Your Bible and Your messages in it. I want to have an open heart for You. Please send Your Holy Spirit to help me to understand the things You want to teach me. Amen.”*

Depending on the reading ability of your child, **ideas of what your child can read** include:

- Simple Bible stories
- Picture Bible
- An easy-to-read Bible
- Daily promises (provided by you)

Ways your child can **respond** might include:

- Copy a verse into a journal and write a short prayer (you may want to help them with this).
- Write down something new they have learned.
- Draw a picture of their learning or a prayer response to God.
- Talk about their ideas with you, a sibling, or a friend.
- Finish by praying to God (praise, thanks, requests, asking forgiveness).

Remember: “A consistent life in Christ is a great miracle” (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 407). You are working with God to help shape this miracle in your child’s life.

THE BIRTHRIGHT STEW

WE CAN HAVE
CONFIDENCE IN GOD
TO LEAD US.



MEMORY VERSE

"In the fear [respect] of the Lord there is strong confidence" (Proverbs 14:26).

WORD OF THE WEEK—CONFIDENCE:

Trust that someone will act in the best possible way or that an outcome will be good. Think about who has confidence in whom in this Bible story.

BABY ISAAC GROWS UP

The promised baby, whom Abraham and Sarah prayed and waited for, for so many years, didn't stay a cuddly baby for long. Isaac grew up to be a kind and gentle boy who loved to worship God with Father Abraham. He was like a warm ray of sunshine to his parents.

Father Abraham shared with Isaac the beautiful story of his miracle birth and how God had a very special purpose for his life. Remember God's promise to Abraham when He showed him the twinkling stars? He told Abraham, "Look at the sky. There are so many stars you cannot count them. And your descendants will be too many to count" (Genesis 15:5, ICB). God had promised Abraham again and again that he would be the "father of many nations" (Genesis 17:4). From this family God planned to bless the world with Jesus! God had fulfilled His promise and given him Isaac. Now the promise would be for Isaac and his family to come.

Isaac must have thought about this wonderful promise many times as he grew into a teenager and then a young man. Abraham also taught Isaac that he could be close friends with God, just as Abraham was. He could have confidence in God to help him make choices and to lead him.

What does God say children will have when they are taught about Him?
READ ISAIAH 54:13. God wants to teach you, just as Father Abraham taught Isaac. He promises to give you peace as you learn to trust Him.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- How well do you trust God as a friend who will always be with you? Why can you trust Him?

PRAY: Thank God that He is a friend you can have confidence in.



□ MONDAY

ISAAC'S BEAUTIFUL BRIDE

As Isaac grew into a young man, Father Abraham grew very, very old. Abraham had trusted God, and He had "blessed Abraham in all things" (Genesis 24:1). Now Abraham wanted Isaac to start his own family. Old and frail, Father Abraham called his faithful servant Eliezer to him. What did Abraham ask him to do? *READ GENESIS 24:4-9.*

This may have seemed like a strange request, but Abraham trusted God to find the right woman. Isaac trusted his father's wisdom. And they all had confidence that God would lead. So Eliezer loaded 10 camels with expensive gifts and supplies and set out on the long journey.

Bouncing along on a plodding camel, Eliezer prayed. Stopping by the village well, he prayed again. This time he prayed for a sign—that the woman God had chosen to be Isaac's wife would kindly give him and his camels a drink.

And that is exactly what happened! Before he had even finished praying a beautiful woman called Rebekah came to the well. She took the time to draw water for him, and all his camels too! He showered her with rich gifts and thanked her for her kindness. His smile grew bigger when he found out Rebekah was the daughter of Abraham's nephew and a believer in the God of heaven.

What did Eliezer do next? *READ GENESIS 24:26, 27.*

Grateful Eliezer went to meet Rebekah's family. He explained the mission Abraham had sent him on, and how Rebekah was the answer to his prayer.

Rebekah's father and brother said, "This is clearly from the Lord. We cannot change what must happen. Rebekah is yours. Take her and go. Let her marry your master's son as the Lord has commanded" (Genesis 24:50, 51, ICB). Rebekah also trusted God's leading. So when she was asked, "Will you go with this man?" she gladly answered, "I will go" (Genesis 24:58).

At the end of the long journey home, Isaac and Rebekah met, had a beautiful wedding, and loved each other. God is the best leader. We can have confidence that He will lead in our lives, just as he did in Isaac's.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- What might have happened if Eliezer hadn't had confidence in God?
- What will you do when you have to make an important decision?
- How important was it that Rebekah be asked if she was willing to go?

PARENT FAITH TALK:

Share a time you had confidence in God's leading in your life.

PRAY: Thank God for showing you how He led in Isaac's life. Pray for confidence to let Him lead in your life too.

TUESDAY

TWIN BABY BOYS

Isaac and Rebekah were very happy, aside from one thing: 20 years had passed, and *still* they had no children. They trusted God to keep His promise and give them a child. But Rebekah sometimes found it hard to wait for a baby. "So Isaac prayed to the Lord for her. The Lord heard Isaac's prayer, and Rebekah became pregnant" (Genesis 25:21, ICB).

When the time came for Rebekah to give birth, great excitement filled the camp. The cries of not one but *two* babies rang out. Rebekah had just given birth to *twin* baby boys!

The surprising news spread quickly. *Twins! Twins!*

This double blessing was no surprise to the happy parents.

Rebekah had felt something very strange while she was pregnant. Her tummy had wiggled and wobbled all the time. The Bible says, "the children struggled together within her" (Genesis 25:22). *What was going on?* She

had asked God, and He had told Rebekah that "two nations are in your womb" (Genesis 25:23).

Two babies would grow up to lead two separate nations! God then explained that the "older shall serve the younger" (Genesis 25:23).

The boys were quite different, right from the start. What was the firstborn like? *READ GENESIS 25:25, 26.*

Isaac and Rebekah loved them both. They were so grateful to God! He had done what He said He would do. His promise to Abraham, "You shall be a father of many nations" (Genesis 17:4) had continued to be fulfilled through them.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Read your memory verse. What helped Isaac and Rebekah have "strong confidence" in God in today's story?
- What helps you have confidence in God?

DO: If you know someone who has just had a baby, consider planning and preparing to visit them on Sabbath with some cooking, flowers, or a small gift.

FAST FACT: An average of 250 babies are born in the world every minute. Eight of these babies are twins; that's four sets of twins born every minute.

PRAY: Join hands with your family and each pray a prayer of thanks for answers to prayer.

A HUNTER AND A SHEPHERD

Covered in thick, red hair, baby Esau grew up to be a loud and active boy. He enjoyed his freedom out in the wild, becoming “a skillful hunter, a man of the field” (Genesis 25:27). Father Isaac admired Esau’s daring and fearless nature. He loved hearing about Esau’s exciting adventures out in the mountains and deserts. Esau no doubt came home from hunting trips with birds and animals to share with the family.

Unlike his older twin, Jacob was quiet and gentle. He loved to stay close to home, working in the vegetable patch and caring for the flocks of sheep and goats. Mother Rebekah appreciated his soft, peace-loving heart. Gentle Jacob spread his love, like a warm ray of sunshine.

Jacob and Esau were different because God created them unique and special. Imagine: what would the world be like if God created everyone identical?

The Bible tells us, “God has shown you his grace in giving you different gifts” (1 Peter 4:10, ICB). Our loving God made us unique so that we can share our different gifts. Esau had a gift for fearless hunting and sharing what he caught. Jacob had the gift of gentle kindness. As long as they remained good friends with God and let Him guide their choices, their lives would be a blessing to others.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Read **1 Corinthians 12:4, 5**. What different gifts has God given members of your family? Thank God for giving them these gifts.
- What gifts has God given you?

Our wise God created us different and special so that we can bless others in different ways.

DO: Brainstorm the different gifts you and your family have and how you could share these with others.

FOR YOU, PARENTS:
“Talents, mingled with love, are all precious endowments” (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 84). God has blessed your child with unique and precious gifts. Take a moment to ponder and praise God for them.

WALK: Plan a Sabbath walk, either to an environment Esau loved or to a place where Jacob would have felt at home.

PRAY: Thank God for making us all different and special.



BIRTHRIGHT BLESSINGS

Esau dashed out the tent door on another hunting adventure. The older he got, the more he chose to do just as he pleased, without much thought for the future. Jacob chose to help the shepherds with the sheep and his mom with the chores. His choices made him kind and thoughtful. The boys were different by birth; now they were even more different because of the choices they made.

They grew to think about God differently too. Faithful Father Isaac had always told his boys wonderful stories about God and their relatives from long ago. He also taught them about God's special blessing for the eldest son, called a birthright. It meant inheriting a double portion of the father's wealth, leading the family in worshipping God, being the family's decision-maker or judge, and teaching them to love and obey God as their friend.

Esau wasn't the slightest bit interested in such things. Sure, he'd like the riches but not the things of God. He just wanted to keep on having fun. The birthright was very important to Jacob; he loved God and treasured the stories about His promises. He wished that he was the eldest son so he could have the birthright!

One day Rebekah told Jacob what God had said before the boys were born. What had God told her? *READ GENESIS 25:23.*

Rebekah was confident that God's words meant the birthright was for Jacob. Now he was confident too. And it filled his heart with joy. *The birthright would be his! He would get to talk with God the way Grandfather Abraham did! He would offer sacrifices for his family! And best of all the promised Savior would come from his family.*

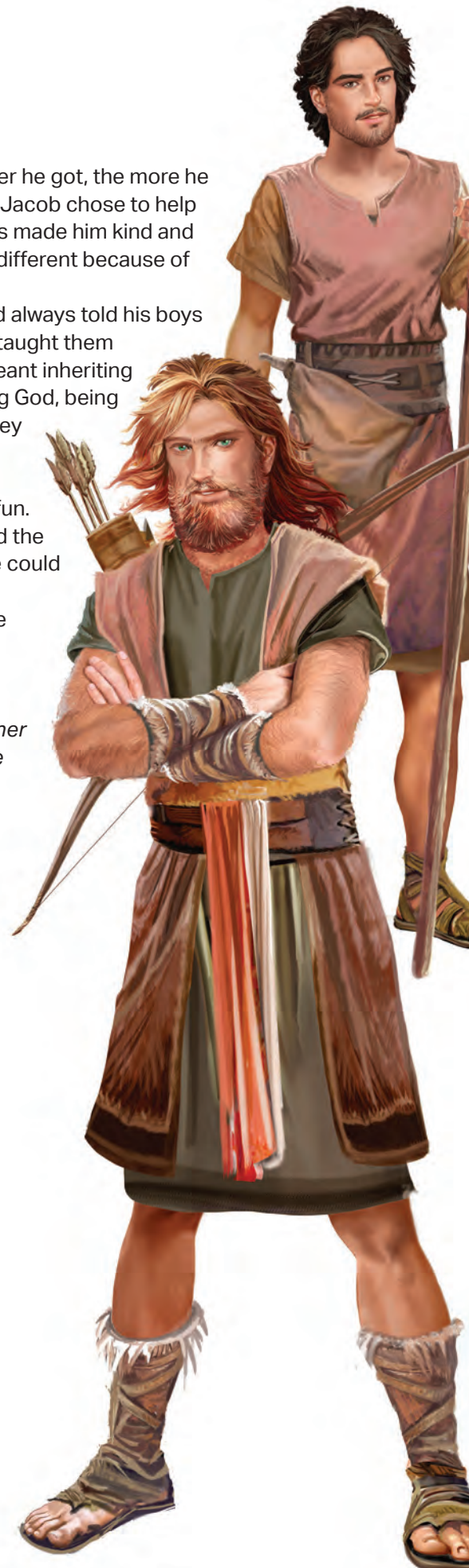
THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Why do you think God planned to give Jacob the birthright?

Our awesome God loves everyone, but different people respond differently to His love.

PRAY: Ask God to put a strong love for Him in your heart.

DO: Write down three words to describe Jacob; three words to describe Esau. Which characteristics would you like to have?





FRIDAY

BIRTHRIGHT BARGAIN

Jacob's brain constantly buzzed with dreams and schemes about how to get the birthright blessing from Esau. He didn't trust God to give it to him when the time was right. He just had to get it from Esau himself—and soon!

Then one day it happened. While Jacob was boiling a pot of stew, Esau trudged into camp, tired and hungry. Smelling Jacob's cooking, he asked, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary" (Genesis 25:30). How did Jacob reply? *READ GENESIS 25:31.*

Then Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" (Genesis 25:32).

Wanting to be sure Esau wouldn't change his mind, Jacob said, "First, promise me that you will give it to me" (Genesis 25:33, ICB). And as easily as that, Esau did! Treating the precious birthright as something worthless, he carelessly traded God's special gift for a bowl of stew. He ate and drank then went on his way, thinking nothing more about it.

But Jacob thought about it. What he desperately wanted was finally his, and he was very happy. He had made things happen himself, instead of trusting that God would work things out His way, in His time. He had forgotten, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man" (Psalm 118:8).

Maybe one day he would learn this important lesson. In the meantime God would always love him and bless him, for Jacob was His precious child.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Why was the birthright blessing so important to Jacob?

FRIDAY NIGHT

SHARE AND PRAISE

- Invite family members to share when they have had "strong confidence" in the Lord.
- As a family, sing "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 469), then say or sing your memory verse.

FAMILY JOURNAL

- What lessons does this story teach about confidence?
- Think of a good title for this story.

PRAY

Thank God that He is always with you, and that you can have confidence in His leading.

A DELAY FROM HEAVEN

Lila wheeled the suitcase slowly to the car, while her brother Arlo, trailed behind. Every few steps they stopped to breathe, then wobbled forward. Their parents walked slowly too. The whole family was sick; terribly sick.

Just a few hours earlier, the doctors had left the family's hotel room in Thailand. All their medicines and IV drips were packed away. The family was due to fly home to Australia in the morning, but they had decided to stay until they were better. They could hardly move, let alone travel!

Mom had called the airlines, but there were no flights home together for 10 days. They would just have to somehow pack and make the long journey home—with three different flights.

Piling into the rental car, everyone took a deep breath. Dad adjusted the air conditioning to full blast. He had been the sickest with a tummy bug. Could he now drive the winding, crowded road for an hour up the island to the airport? Mom was worried. She checked her phone. Oh, no! They were running very late. They would miss their first flight!

She took a big, deep breath. The trip seemed impossible on their own. But not with God!

With their faith and confidence growing, the family all closed their eyes and began to pray. "Dear Jesus. Please help us! We're so very sick. Please help Dad to drive safely and help us catch all our flights. Amen."

Then . . . "Bing," went Mom's phone. She opened her eyes and looked down. "Wow! Our plane has been delayed by 45 minutes!"

"Thank You, God!" cried Lila and Arlo. It was a miracle delay from Heaven!

Dad calmly and safely sped to the airport, and they all made it to their first flight. They knew God cared so much for their family. He helped each one of them to get through each flight without being sick.

The family arrived in Singapore—their last stop. Here, God had another caring surprise. Singapore is a very big airport. On the way to Thailand, the family had walked a long way and taken a little train to get from one airplane to another. But not this time! As they stumbled slowly off one plane, hardly able to walk, they discovered that their next plane was right next door. "Thank You, God!"

**"In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence"
(Proverbs 14:26).**



JACOB TRICKS ISAAC

GOD DELIGHTS IN US WHEN
OUR WORDS AND ACTIONS
ARE TRUTHFUL.



MEMORY VERSE

“Lying lips are an abomination [disgrace] to the Lord, but those who deal truthfully are His delight” (Proverbs 12:22).

WORD OF THE WEEK—TRUTHFUL:

Telling the truth and being honest in the way we speak and act. When we're truthful, we don't lie or do things to trick others.

This week's lesson is based on the story of Rebekah and Jacob's deceit to get the birthright as found in Genesis 27:1-41; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 179-181; and *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 88, 89. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story*, vol. 2, pp. 13-18.



☐ SUNDAY

GOD'S WAY

Isaac frowned as he looked down at the wells. *Where was all the water?* In the place where fresh water had once pooled, there was just hard dirt. This was no accident; it was the work of his jealous neighbors, the Philistines! Up to no good, they had filled the family's wells with dirt.

What were Isaac and his family to do now with no water for the flocks, the farms, or their family? God knew. He had saved Isaac's family from a terrible famine in the land. With God's blessings Isaac had become a very rich, successful farmer. Now with trouble all around them, God would once again keep them safe. They could always depend on God.

As God led them on a journey to find a new peaceful home, He continued to remind Isaac that He *always* keeps His promises. He told Isaac, "I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants" (Genesis 26:24).

Isaac's descendants, his sons Jacob and Esau, were now all grown up. Jacob's mind still swirled with dreams about the birthright blessing, and Rebekah still believed he must one day have it. She tried to persuade Isaac to give it to Jacob, but he wouldn't listen. Even though careless Esau had swapped the birthright with Jacob for a bowl of stew, the birthright was only Isaac's to give away.

Isaac knew God had given Rebekah an important message: "The older shall serve the younger" (Genesis 25:23). Jacob, not Esau, was to be the family's leader. But it was the custom in those days for the older son to always be the family leader. Isaac was determined to follow the custom and give the birthright to Esau, even though God said it wouldn't happen. Had Isaac forgotten to have confidence in God?

God gives us important messages to help us make good choices, because He knows we don't always think like Him. What does the Bible say about this? **READ ISAIAH 55:8, 9.**

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- What advice would you have given Isaac about the birthright?

PRAY: Ask God to help you listen to important messages He may give you.

FATHER'S INSTRUCTIONS AND MOTHER'S PLAN

Father Isaac took a deep breath. *It was time.* He was now old and blind. It was time to give the birthright blessing. Secretly he called for Esau to come to him.

Isaac smiled as he felt Esau's hairy hand in his and smelled the fields on his clothes. In a quiet voice he asked Esau to hunt down an animal, then cook it as a tasty meal for his old father. "Then I will bless you before I die," (Genesis 27:4, ICB).

The birthright blessing would be for Esau. Never mind that Esau didn't care about God. Never mind that he had two wives who worshipped idols. And never mind that God intended the blessing to be for Jacob. Isaac trusted his own thinking instead of waiting for God's wise plan.

While Esau rushed out the tent door, Rebekah hurried off to find Jacob. She had been secretly listening. She had heard everything! Impatient and determined to "help" God give the blessing to Jacob, she quickly took control and hatched a plan. What was Rebekah's plan? **READ GENESIS 27:6-10.**

Did God need Rebekah's "help"? What should she have done?

The Bible tells us, "Wait for the Lord's help. Be strong and brave and wait for the Lord's help" (Psalm 27:14, ICB). Sadly, Rebekah just couldn't wait. She decided to do things *her way*.

Sometimes we want the right thing so badly that we do the wrong thing to get it. We can remember, instead, to wait on God and let Him lead. He always does what He says He will do.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Did Rebekah want the right thing for Jacob?
- What was wrong with her plan?
- Have you ever wanted the right thing but thought up a wrong way to get it?

PRAY: You may like to:

- Thank God that you can always trust Him.
- Ask Him to help you remember the good things He has done for you.

DO: Write down some examples of good things God has done for you. Whenever you're tempted to do things your way, instead of waiting on God, make a list like this. His way is always best!

FOR YOU, PARENTS:

As a busy parent you too can gain encouragement from remembering what God has done for you. "Morning, noon, and night, let gratitude as a sweet perfume ascend to heaven" (Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 253). Why not spend a few moments right now letting your gratitude ascend? It will make you a pleasant person who is like a sweet perfume to those around you.



A SNEAKY PLAN

Jacob shook his head as his mother whispered her instructions. He wasn't too sure about her plan at all! He really didn't like the idea of tricking his father into believing a lie. And it worried him that he might get found out.

He said to Rebekah, "My brother Esau is a hairy man. I am smooth! If my father touches me, he will know I am not Esau. Then he will not bless me" (Genesis 27:11, 12, ICB).

Jacob also believed that deceiving his father would be a sin—it would be lying. Then he would be cursed instead of blessed. He sure didn't want to be harmed by a curse! He wanted to be truthful. But Rebekah's plan was for him to lie. Be truthful, or listen to his mom . . . What should he do? If you could have whispered in Jacob's ear, what would you have said?

Rebekah tried to convince him to follow her plan. "If your father puts a curse on you, I will accept the blame," she said. "Just do what I said" (Genesis 27:13, ICB).

Jacob nodded. He would do as she said. Now they just had to make it happen, and quickly. There was no time to waste. What did they do? **READ GENESIS 27:14-16.**

Busily working together, they did their very best to make sure the dishonest plan would work. How sad to be doing something they knew was wrong. If only they had chosen to be truthful and waited to see how God would give Jacob the birthright.

God is delighted when His children are truthful, especially when they choose not to listen to others who want them to lie or be dishonest.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- *Rebekah said she would take the blame for Jacob. How much blame do you think someone else can take for a bad choice you make?*
- *Say your memory verse. How much delight (pleasure and enjoyment) might God be feeling about what's happening in this story?*

PARENT FAITH TALK:

Share a time you were tempted to be dishonest to get what you wanted. Emphasize how glad you were not to have made that choice.

MISSION CHALLENGE:

It's wonderful to invite our friends to Sabbath School! What's something you like about Sabbath School that you'd like a friend to enjoy with you? Is it a specific song, activity, the way your teacher tells the Bible story, the crafts, or something from nature you've collected at home? Prepare to show or tell your class about this on Sabbath.

PRAY: Ask God to help you to be truthful.



A HAIRY LIE

It felt strange and awkward to have his arms and neck covered in hairy goatskin and to be wearing his brother's clothes. But Jacob did his best to act the lie. Carrying a steaming bowl of stew, he entered blind Father Isaac's tent. He tried his best to sound like Esau as he greeted him gruffly with the word "Father."

Isaac replied, "Yes, my son. Who are you?" (Genesis 27:18, ICB). Just the word "father" was enough to make him suspicious . . . Which son had *really* entered the tent? Jacob fumbled for an answer. He replied, "I am Esau, your first son. I have done what you told me. Now sit up and eat some meat of the animal I hunted for you. Then bless me" (Genesis 27:19, ICB).

He hadn't planned to tell a lie; only act one. But he thought he had gone too far to suddenly be honest now! What happened next? *READ GENESIS 27:20-24.*

One lie led to another and then another. Jacob lied with his words, his food, the feel of his skin, and even his smell! Isaac's doubt was wiped away, and he was finally tricked. He sat back and ate the tasty stew, all the while believing it had been caught and cooked by his daring son Esau. When the bowl was empty, Isaac called Jacob closer and spoke God's beautiful birthright blessing over him. "May God give you plenty . . . May nations serve you . . . May everyone who blesses you be blessed" (Genesis 27:28, 29, ICB).

Jacob left the tent happy that those words of blessing had made his dream come true. But God's dream for Jacob had not come true that day. Our loving God cannot lie. He will never lie and will never delight in lies.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- What three things did Jacob do that God had warned against? Read **Leviticus 19:11**.
- Have you ever told a lie to cover up something you did wrong? How did you feel?
- What would help you to tell the truth or correct a lie you have told?

PRAY: Thank God for warning you in His Word that it is never a good idea to lie.

DO: Plan to help your mom cook a tasty stew for dinner one night this week. Share this week's story while you eat it together.
Lentil Stew Recipe: Sauté one chopped onion. Add one grated carrot, zucchini, and celery stick. Once sautéed, add five cups of water and bring to a boil. Add two cups of green lentils, three potatoes (peeled and cut in small cubes), and one can of condensed tomato soup. Simmer for 40 minutes or until lentils are soft. Yum!





THURSDAY

AN ANGRY BROTHER

Clutching a bowl of his father's favorite stew, Esau walked quickly toward his father's tent. He was determined to have his double share of Isaac's wealth and get rich quick. He entered the tent soon after Jacob had left. "Father," he said, "rise and eat the food that your son killed for you. Then bless me" (Genesis 27:31, ICB).

Isaac replied, "Who are you?"

Esau said, "I am your son—your firstborn son—Esau" (Genesis 27:32, ICB).

Isaac's hands shook, and his body trembled. *No!* His own son Jacob had deceived him! Then God flashed the truth into Isaac's sad heart: he had made a mistake by stubbornly wanting to give the birthright blessing to Esau when God had always planned for Jacob to have it. What did sad Father Isaac have to say to Esau? **READ GENESIS 27:33.**

Esau cried out as if someone had hit him. The terrible news about his cheating younger brother was just too much. He cried and pleaded for the blessing three times. But Father Isaac *could not* and *would not* give the blessing twice—it now belonged to Jacob. Old Father Isaac was determined to be truthful.

The Bible tells us, "A person must do these things to enjoy life and have many, happy days. He must not say evil things. He must not tell lies" (1 Peter 3:10, ICB). Being truthful is God's way, so it brings us "happy days," while lies hurt others badly.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Whom do you feel most sorry for in the story so far?
- Has anyone lied to you or tricked you? How did you feel? How did you respond?
- Have you hurt someone by lying to them? What could you do to make it right?

SING: As a family, listen to, sing, or play on a musical instrument "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing." Talk about the words or phrases in this hymn that might be hard to understand, and what this hymn is about.

PRAY: Ask God for the courage to be truthful so that you won't hurt others.

FRIDAY

GOD'S BIG LOVE

God's little family didn't feel like a happy family anymore. Isaac was disappointed. Jacob was weighed down with guilt. Rebekah was bitterly sorry. And Esau cried and raged in anger. They had all been reminded why God says it is never a good idea to lie.

If only Isaac had listened to God, if only Rebekah had waited for God, and if only Jacob had trusted God, things would surely have turned out differently. But God didn't want them to stay angry and hurt and discouraged by "If only . . ." They couldn't change the mistakes they had made, but they could remember how huge and wonderful God's love is.

What else could they remember about God's love?

READ PSALM 118:1.

This message of love is so important that God says it again in Lamentations 3:22, 23: "The Lord's love never ends. His mercies never stop. They are new every morning. Lord, Your loyalty is great" (ICB).

God's big heart of love can forgive us. We can remember how much He loves us and learn to trust Him more and more.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- What did Jacob need most from God's loving heart at this part in the story? Read **Jeremiah 31:34, last part.**

FRIDAY NIGHT

SHARE AND PRAISE

Sing "Jesus Loves Me" together. As you sing, remember _____:

- Jesus will always love you.
- He is strong enough to help you do the right thing.
- He will forgive you when you don't, when you ask Him to.

DRAW

Draw a big red heart. Inside it, write the things you have learned about God's love this week.

FAMILY JOURNAL

- What mistakes were made in this week's story?
- What have you learned this week about being truthful?

FOR YOU, PARENTS

Consider starting a family tradition to bless your child (children) every Friday evening. Affirm the uniqueness of each child and the good things you have noticed during the week about him/her.

PRAY

Hold hands in a family circle and pray a popcorn prayer (pray one sentence each, here and there) of praises to God.



A TANGLED WEB

More than 200 years ago a Scottish author named Sir Walter Scott wrote a poem about a man called Lord Marmion. A greedy man, Lord Marmion decided he must marry a rich and beautiful woman, Clara de Clare, who was already engaged to a nobleman. Marmion told and acted out a string of lies about the nobleman. It caused Clara to break off her engagement to the man she truly loved. But his lies and deceit didn't get him what he wanted. Clara didn't want to marry Lord Marmion!

Two lines from the poem have become very famous because they express a truth so well.

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive!"

Once we tell one lie, we often have to tell or act another and another, until in the end it is hard to tell what the truth is. People get very hurt as a result. It is just like a spider weaving a web of many strands to catch its dinner. A fly caught in a sticky spider's web will find it hard to escape. In the same way people rarely escape the sad consequences of lies. How much better it is to be truthful!

FAST FACTS:

- There are more than 45,000 different types of spiders in the world.
- Tangle-web spiders make messy-looking webs in bushes or on buildings. Their webs are sometimes known as cobwebs.
- Tangle-web spiders like to hang upside down in the middle of their webs as they wait to catch crickets and ants that get tangled up.



THE LADDER FROM HEAVEN

GOD FORGIVES ME
AND IS ALWAYS
WITH ME.

MEMORY VERSE

"To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness" (Daniel 9:9).

WORD OF THE WEEK—FORGIVENESS:

Giving up the right to punish someone when they have done wrong or hurt us; letting go of hurtful feelings like anger or hatred toward a person who has hurt us or others. If we repent, God forgives us. He offers to wipe away our sin completely, like dirty clothes being washed clean.

This week's lesson is based on Genesis 27:41-46; Genesis 28; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 183-188; and *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 379-383. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story*, vol. 2, pp. 20-24.

THE FAMILY FIGHT

MISSION CHALLENGE:
Pray each day for God to show you who to invite to Sabbath School.

DO: Use Isaiah 40:31 to encourage someone who may be down. Write or draw the promise on a card and give it to them.

Growing up in the fields had been so much fun. There were little lambs to chase, gardens to make, and land to explore. At night there was always a fire to build, stories to swap, and stars to count together. Jacob and Esau grew up in a happy, loving home. But everything had changed. Jacob and Rebekah's lies had hurt everyone.

Jacob dragged his feet as he walked to the fields to check on the sheep. He had cheated his brother of the birthright. He had lied to his father and to God! It made him feel terrible inside.

Esau frowned as he cleaned his hunting knife. He was furious! His anger grew more each day. *How could his brother do this to him?*

It feels terrible when families fight. It's hard to know what to do when we are hurting like this. But God knows and He is always there to help us. The Bible tells us, "Lord, you are kind and forgiving. You have great love for those who call to you" (Psalm 86:5, ICB).

What can we do when we have trouble with our family or friends? **READ PSALM 86:6,7.**

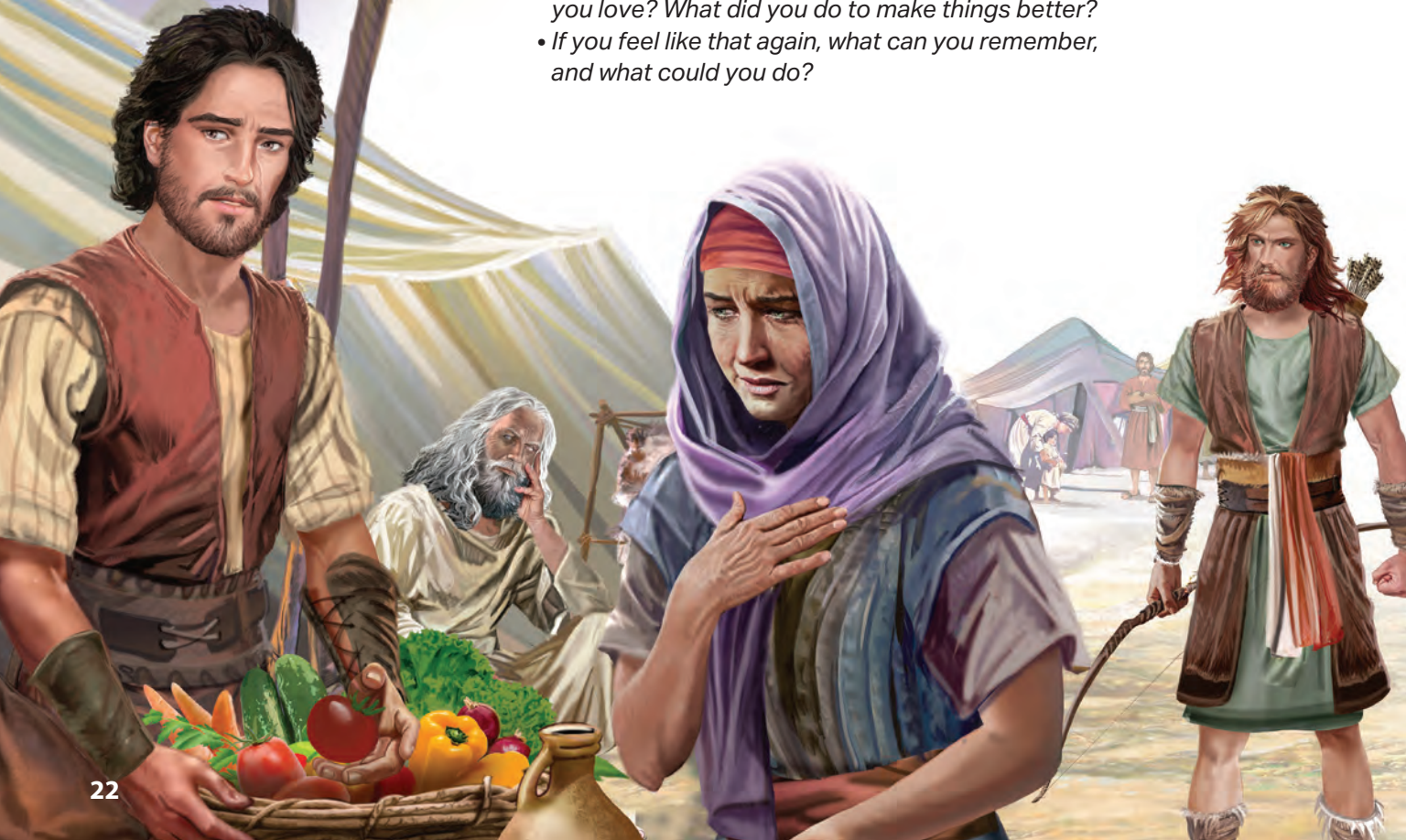
We can also talk to older people we trust—at church, school, or in our bigger families—to help us stay safe and have peace in our homes.

God could heal the hurt between Jacob and Esau. He could bring forgiveness and peace to their family. He longed to give them joy. Would they let Him?

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Have you ever had a bad argument with someone you love? What did you do to make things better?
- If you feel like that again, what can you remember, and what could you do?

PRAY: Thank God for His love and forgiveness.





MONDAY

A FATHER'S FORGIVENESS AND BLESSING

“I will kill my brother Jacob” (Genesis 27:41), declared Esau.

What terrible words! Esau spoke them only to his friends, but the shocking words were passed on. When they reached Rebekah's ears, they made her gasp with fright! Esau's hatred was so deep and ugly that it filled her with worry. She must keep Jacob safe! Quickly she called for him. What did she say he must do? *READ GENESIS 27:43, 44.*

Rebekah then hurried off to Isaac's tent. She didn't want to worry frail Isaac by telling him of Esau's cruel plan to kill his brother. Instead she told Isaac she was worried Jacob would marry a local Hittite woman.

Isaac *really* didn't want Jacob to marry someone who didn't love God, as Esau had done. He wanted the very best for his son. Old Isaac called Jacob to his side. He would miss him very much, but Jacob was to go and find a wife from his mother's family in Haran. Then Isaac blessed Jacob with the beautiful promises God had given to Grandfather Abraham: "May God All-Powerful bless you and give you many children. May you become the father of many peoples. May the Lord give you and your descendants the blessing of Abraham" (Genesis 28:3, 4, ICB).

Although Jacob had chosen to lie and trick his old father, and hadn't said he was sorry afterward, Isaac still loved him. Isaac loved him so much that he blessed him before he left home. What a kind, gracious father Isaac was! There are many times in our lives when we do the wrong thing (sometimes even on purpose, as Jacob did), but God offers us grace. He is the kindest, fairest, most-loving of all Fathers.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

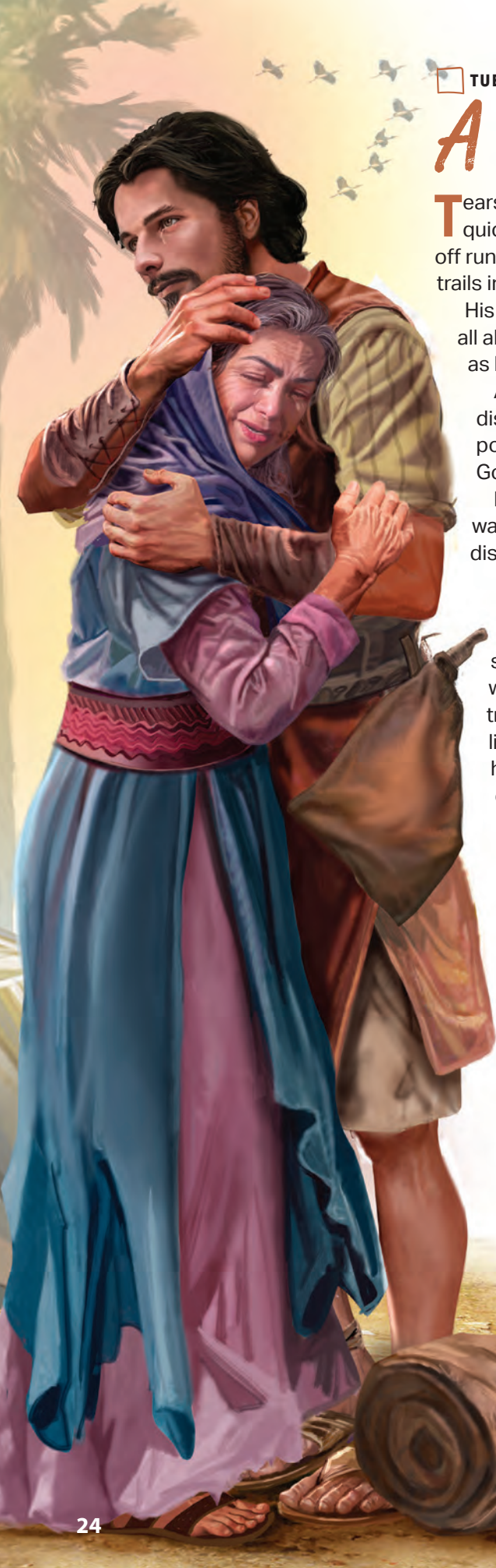
- How might Jacob have felt:
 - When he found out his very own brother wanted to kill him?
 - When his father blessed him?
- Think of a time someone forgave you for doing something wrong. How did you feel when they forgave you?

BRAINSTORM: How many other Bible characters can you think of who forgave someone?

PARENT FAITH TALK:

Share a time someone gave you the gift of forgiveness.

PRAY: Thank God for helping others to forgive you.



TUESDAY

A LONELY PATH

Tears welled up as Rebekah hugged her son goodbye and sent him quickly on his way. Terrified that Esau might chase him, Jacob took off running. He avoided people and towns as he hurried along the lonely trails in the blackness of night.

His heart pounded with fear. His body ached. But worse still Jacob felt all alone. He had lost his family. He even believed that he had lost God as his friend, because of his bad, bad choice.

After two long, weary days Jacob stopped. Lonely and disappointed with himself, he cried out to God. He sobbed and poured out his heart, telling God how very sorry he was. He asked God to forgive him. And God did—right away!

But Jacob didn't *feel* any better—he still didn't *feel* as though God was with him. He begged God to somehow show him that he was not disowned as a friend or ignored.

What does Jacob need to *know* right now?

READ ISAIAH 41:10 AND 1 JOHN 1:9.

Sometimes our negative feelings of guilt and helplessness are so strong that we forget what we *know* to be true. Our emotions—what we *feel*—take control of our minds, and it is hard to believe the truth. This is exactly how Satan wants us to feel! “He goes around like a roaring lion looking for someone to eat” (1 Peter 5:8, ICB). When he is trying to “eat us up” with guilt, shame, and loneliness, we can confidently claim Bible promises. We can trust our forgiving God to always be with us, even when we don't feel as if He is.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Why did Jacob cry and pour out his heart to God?
- Next time you feel as if God hasn't forgiven you, recite your memory verse. Can you say it now?

PRAY: Is there anything you would like to ask God to forgive you for? Ask Him to forgive you. Then thank Him that He has.

DO: What feelings are these emojis showing? Choose which of the following sentences you could insert each feeling into:



- “When I feel ____, I will remember that God is always with me.”
- “When I feel ____, I will remember that God has forgiven me.”

A BEAUTIFUL DREAM

Step by step, by weary step . . . Jacob's tired feet had taken him far from home. Lonely and exhausted, he slumped down on the hard ground and laid his head on a stone. There were no soft mattresses or pillows on this journey! Even so he fell fast asleep.

God's big heart understood exactly how Jacob felt. He understands how awful it is to feel lonely, guilty, and unforgiven (Psalm 139:3). So God did something special for Jacob; He gave him a beautiful dream.

What did Jacob see in the dream? *READ GENESIS 28:12.*

Imagine having a dream like that! Bright and shining, the ladder stretched all the way from the earth up, up, up to heaven. Shimmering angels moved up and down the ladder. The Lord stood at the top, surrounded by dazzling glory. What did God say to Jacob in the dream?

READ GENESIS 28:13, 14.

Then God said something more. He had saved the best till last: "I am with you, and will protect you wherever you go . . . I will not leave you" (Genesis 28:15, ICB).

God encouraged Jacob with the wonderful truth that he was still loved and protected. The shining ladder and the beautiful angels gave Jacob absolute proof that it didn't matter what he had done or how he felt; he was forgiven and connected with the God of heaven. God wants us to both *know* and *feel* that we are loved and protected by Him too (Matthew 28:20). The ladder represented Jesus, who would come to this earth to save us from our sins and reconnect us to God.

Sometimes He reminds us of this in personal and special ways, as in dreams.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Why did God give Jacob the dream?
- Do you know anyone else, in the Bible or personally, who God also encouraged with a dream?

FAST FACT: God spoke to Bible characters 21 times in dreams. They are recorded in Genesis, Matthew, Daniel, Judges, and 1 Kings. You may like to find out more about these dreams.

DO: Make Jacob's ladder. You could draw or paint it, make it from modeling clay, or with sticks tied together. Write God's promise on a cloud shape and attach it to the top: "I am with you" (Genesis 28:15). You will add to this tomorrow.

PRAY: Thank God for caring about you, even when you are discouraged because of something you have done wrong. Also thank God for your comfortable bed!



JESUS AND HIS ANGEL HELPERS

The dazzling angels on the ladder would always remind Jacob that God loved him. God had forgiven him and would always be with him. But there was even more to learn from this amazing dream.

The shining ladder in Jacob's dream represented Jesus. He is the only way that sinful people on earth can be connected with their loving God in heaven. The Bible says, "There is only one way people can reach God. That way is through Jesus Christ" (1 Timothy 2:5, ICB).

The shining angels going up and down the ladder showed Jacob that angels work hard to connect people with their Father God in heaven too. Thousands of angels are always busy helping God with His work of loving people and helping them stay close to God. "Angels are constantly ascending and descending [going up and down] this ladder of shining brightness, bearing the prayers of the needy and distressed to the Father above, and bringing blessing and hope, courage and help to the children of men" (Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 153).

What else do the angels do? Read the following verses and finish the sentences.

PSALM 34:7. Angels ...

LUKE 22:43. Angels ...

LUKE 1:11-13. Angels ...

Jacob felt very, very, very far from God. No wonder God gave him a beautiful dream filled with angels on a bright shining ladder.

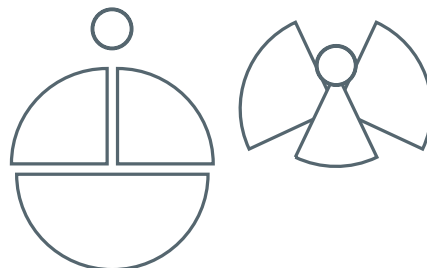
THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- How close do you think Jacob felt to God when he woke up from his dream?
- The ladder reminds us of how Jesus and the angels connect us with God. What could you do to help connect someone with God?

FOR YOU, PARENTS:

"It is the work of the angels to come close to the tried, the suffering, the tempted. They labor untiringly in behalf of those for whom Christ died" (Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 153, 154).

DO: Make some angels to go on the ladder you made yesterday. You may like to make them from paper circles as shown to the right.



PRAY: Thank God that Jesus is like the ladder connecting us to God. Thank Him for His shining angel helpers too.

PRAISE AND A PROMISE

Jacob woke up in the stillness of the night. Oh what a dream! He had seen the shining light of God's angels. The God of heaven and earth was with him!

He jumped to his feet, his loneliness and guilt all gone. In the early-morning light, Jacob thanked and praised God. "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it," he said. "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" (Genesis 28:16, 17).

How did Jacob worship God? *READ GENESIS 28:18.*

This is how people in Bible times remembered important events and special places. Jacob never ever wanted to forget the amazing dream God had given him. Overcome with God's great love, he called the place Bethel, which means "house of God."

Then Jacob showed that he accepted God's beautiful promises. He said, "I want God to be with me and protect me on this journey. I want God to give me food to eat and clothes to wear. Then I will be able to return in peace to my father's house. . . . And I will give God one-tenth of all he gives me" (Genesis 28:20, 21, ICB). Jacob felt forgiven and close to God again. What a wonderful blessing!

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- After Jacob felt forgiven and close to God again, he said he would give one tenth of all he was given to God, because he was so thankful. Have you ever given tithe to God? What could you give as a thank offering? What could you give besides money?

God still asks us to give back to Him one tenth of all the money we receive. What you give back to God is used to help pay your pastor's wages. God gives to us, we give back to Him, and He keeps giving. It's a big, continuous giving cycle!

FRIDAY NIGHT SHARE AND PRAISE

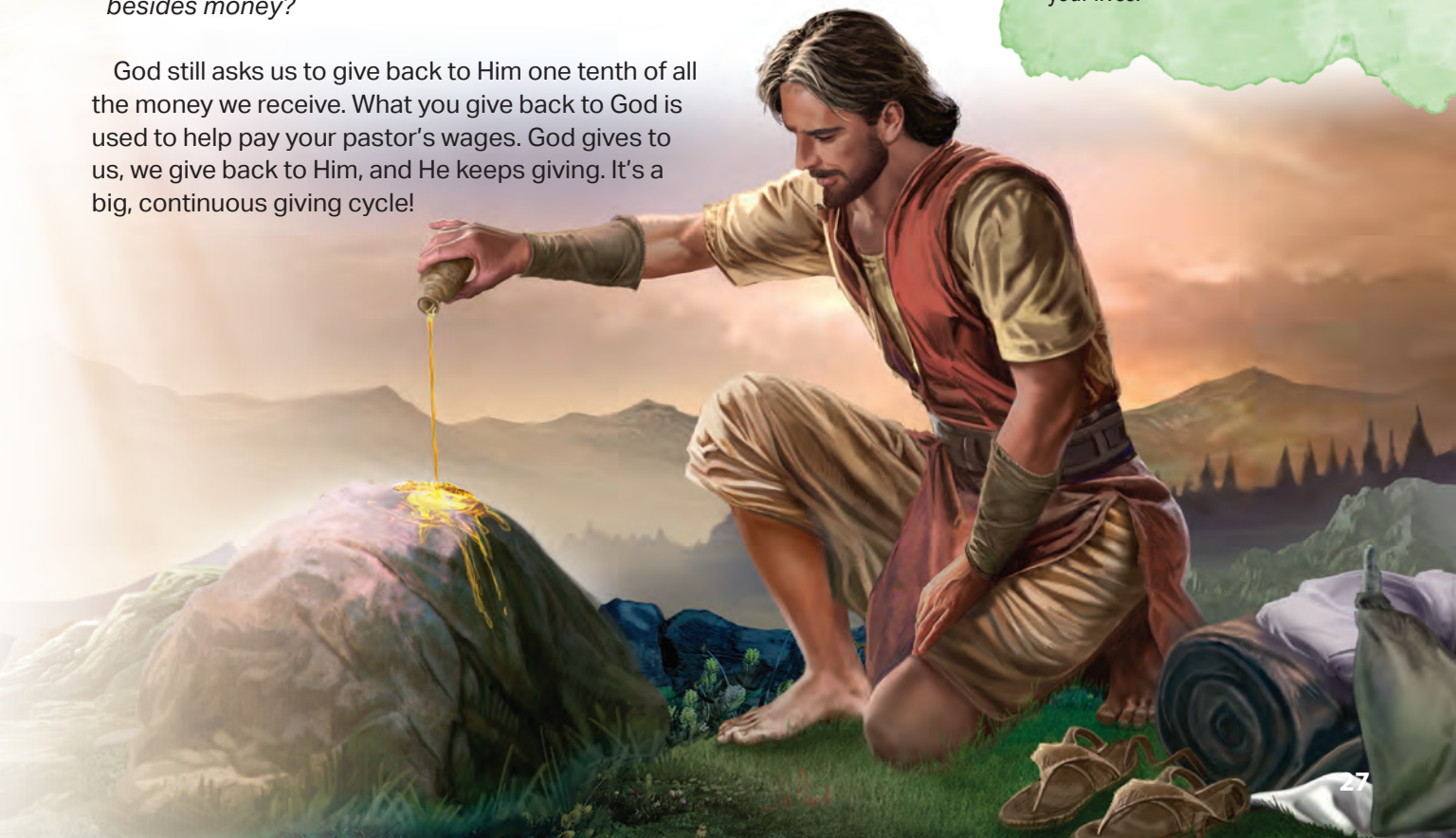
- Use your ladder to tell the story to your family. Who else could you share the story with?
- Before you say or sing your memory verse, sing "Nearer My God to Thee" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 499). Invite family members to share a time they have known and felt God's mercy or forgiveness.

FAMILY JOURNAL

- What have you learned about forgiveness from this week's story?
- Respond: "One thing I'd like to do because of what I've learned is . . ."

PRAY

Psalms 105:5 says, "Remember the wonderful things He has done" (ICB). With your family, thank God for the wonderful things He has done in your lives.



THE DREAM OF HOPE

Struggling with the feeling that God was calling her to a great ministry, the young teenager had no peace. Ellen Harmon thought she was the least likely person God would choose. She'd endured a lonely, painful childhood and had many health problems. She'd also been taught that God was punishing and terrifying. How could someone as weak as her serve this kind of God?

God had big plans for Ellen. One day she would help start the Seventh-day Adventist Church (as Ellen G. White) and write many books to bring others to Christ! God gave Ellen a dream to show her His love and forgiveness and encourage her, just as He did for Jacob.

In her dream young Ellen saw the following:

"I seemed to be sitting in despair, with my face in my hands, reflecting like this: If Jesus were upon earth, I would throw myself at His feet, and tell Him all my sufferings.

"Just then the door opened, and a beautiful person entered. He said: 'Do you wish to see Jesus? You can see Him if you like. Take everything you possess and follow me.'

"I heard this with unspeakable joy, and gladly gathered up my possessions and followed my guide. He led me to a steep, frail stairway. He cautioned me to keep looking upwards, so I wouldn't grow dizzy and fall.

"Finally we reached the top, and stood before a door. My guide directed me to leave all my things. I cheerfully laid them down. He then opened the door and I stood before Jesus!

"There was no mistaking that beautiful face; that expression of kindness and majesty could belong to no other. As His gaze rested upon me, I knew at once that He understood every circumstance of my life and all my thoughts and feelings.

"I tried to shield myself from His searching eyes; but He smiled, placed His hand upon my head, and said, 'Fear not.'

"His sweet voice thrilled my heart with a happiness it had never before experienced. Overcome with emotion, I sank down helpless at His feet. While scenes of beauty and glory passed before me, I seemed to have reached the safety and peace of heaven.

"Soon my strength returned, and I arose. The loving eyes of Jesus were still upon me, filling my soul with gladness."

Just like Jacob, Ellen woke with joy and purpose. She wrote, "This dream gave me hope."

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JACOB WORKS FOR UNCLE LABAN

BECAUSE GOD FORGIVES
ME, I CAN LEARN TO
FORGIVE OTHERS.

MEMORY VERSE

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

WORD OF THE WEEK—STEADFAST:

Constant; able to be relied upon; dependable. Unchanging; unwavering. Who would you describe as steadfast? How steadfast are you?

JOURNEY'S END

With God's heavenly angels as his guardians, Jacob hiked toward Haran with his chin up and peace deep down in his heart. He was forgiven!

He had lied and cheated, but God had forgiven him! His feelings of guilt and hopelessness had gone. The Bible tells us, "Happy is the person whose sins are forgiven" (Psalm 32:1, ICB).

About three weeks after leaving Bethel, Jacob was nearing the end of his long and dangerous 500-mile (804-kilometer) journey. With only the clothes on his back and a shepherd's staff in his hand, he arrived at a well surrounded by shepherds and their flocks of resting sheep. Jacob asked, "My brothers, where are you from?"

They replied, "We are from Haran" (Genesis 29:4, ICB).

What wonderful news! He had made it! Jacob then asked about his uncle, Laban—did the shepherds know him? Yes! The shepherds pointed to a young woman on her way to the well. "Look, his daughter Rachel is coming now with his sheep" they said (Genesis 29:6, ICB).

Jacob rushed to the well and moved the heavy stone from on top. With new energy he fetched water for all of Laban's sheep. Then he turned his attention to his cousin. Greeting her for the very first time, what did he do? *READ GENESIS 29:9-12.*

Imagine Jacob's happiness and relief to be with family, after such a long, lonely journey. With a smile he wiped away his happy tears. He was safe. He was forgiven. God had led him to his family.

DO: Using a map or online tool, have an adult help you plot a 500-mile (804-kilometer) journey from your home. How would you feel to finish such a big trek?

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- How different might Jacob's arrival have been if he had not experienced God's forgiveness?

PRAY: Thank God that His forgiveness changes us and makes us happy.

MISSION CHALLENGE: Make time to listen and talk with your friends this week—and maybe make new ones!



A STEADFAST NEPHEW

Rachel raced home to Father Laban, her heart pounding. Quickly she told the surprising news. Aunt Rebekah's son was at the well! Laban leaped to his feet and sprinted off to find Jacob. He "embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house" (Genesis 29:13). Poor and alone, Jacob was welcomed as family and urged to stay. It had been 97 years since Rebekah had left this very place to marry Isaac. Imagine all the news they had to share!

Jacob started helping Laban right away. Laban soon noticed that his nephew was a skillful and hard worker. After a month together, Laban asked him to become one of his paid workers. "What would you like me to pay you?" he asked Jacob (Genesis 29:15, ICB).

Jacob knew exactly what he wanted! He had fallen in love with beautiful Rachel and dreamed of one day marrying her. But he didn't have any money, cattle, or land to pay the bride-price for her, as the custom required in those days. Instead, he came up with another way to show he could provide for a wife and family. What was his plan? *READ GENESIS 29:18.*

Laban accepted this great idea, so the seven years began. God blessed Jacob with the ability to be a steadfast worker, and his uncle came to rely upon him more and more. Jacob cared for Laban's sheep and lambs in the searing daytime sun and during the frosty nights.

Despite the long hours of constant hard work, the seven years seemed like only a few days to Jacob, for he was steadfast in his deep love for Rachel. One day soon she would be his beautiful bride!

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- What advice does the Bible give about work? Read **Ecclesiastes 9:10** and **1 Corinthians 15:58**.
- How well have you taken this advice when doing chores at home or school?

PRAY: Ask God to help you do your very best when you work.

DO: Ask several adults to imagine they are looking for someone to work for them. What qualities would they want their worker to have? Why? Record responses and use them to create a poster entitled "Worker Wanted." Display it as a reminder to be that kind of worker.



□ TUESDAY

WEDDING TRICKERY

PARENT FAITH TALK: If appropriate, share your wedding story and photos or those of a couple your child knows (for example, grandparents).

The seven years were finally over! Guests were invited to Jacob's wedding feast, and the celebrations began. Late in the evening Laban brought the heavily veiled bride to Jacob, for it was custom that a groom shouldn't see his bride's face. A happy Jacob led her through the darkness to his tent.

In the morning Jacob gasped in surprise. It wasn't Rachel lying beside him; it was her older sister, Leah! Jacob realized he had been cruelly tricked into marrying the wrong woman. He stormed from the tent to find Laban. "I worked for you so that I could marry Rachel! Why did you trick me?" he demanded (Genesis 29:25, ICB).

How did Laban answer? **READ GENESIS 29:26.**

What a cruel trick! If this was a local custom, Laban should have told Jacob about it long ago. But no—selfish Laban liked having a hard worker he didn't have to pay. Laban now laid out a new mean plan to Jacob: Jacob should complete the weeklong marriage celebrations with Leah, after which he could have Rachel too—if he would agree to work for another seven years. It wasn't fair at all, but Jacob "did this and completed the week with Leah" (Genesis 29:28, ICB). He then married Rachel.

Laban had tricked Jacob, just as Jacob had used lies and trickery to get what he wanted from his father and his brother, Esau. He now knew what it felt like . . . and it felt dreadful.

God is with us when we are unfairly treated and when we are sorry that we have treated others badly. He blesses us with peace, a future, and a hope. Read your memory verse and think about the comfort and hope it brings.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- What could you do when you see someone being tricked cruelly?
- Read **1 Corinthians 4:12**. Talk about how this verse applies to Jacob. How could it apply to you?

PRAY: Thank God that He will give you "a future and a hope," even when things don't seem to be going well.

FAST FACT: There are approximately 115,000 weddings in the world each day.

www.storyamour.com

HARD WORK

Jacob picked up the wobbly lamb and carried it carefully to its mother. It was a new day, with many new jobs for him to do. Even though he had been lied to and tricked, Jacob began working hard for Laban for another seven years.

He could have angrily stamped his feet and refused to do anything for his mean and selfish uncle. He could have run away in the dead of night with Rachel. But he didn't. He understood that God had forgiven him for deceiving his family, and God was teaching him to forgive others in the same way.

Is there a lesson here for you too? *READ EPHESIANS 4:32.*

God never asked Jacob to be the judge of his selfish uncle. God asked Jacob to trust Him and be like Him. Jacob chose to be honest, forgiving, and a steadfast worker. He could even work happily with God's help, for "God wants everyone . . . to be happy in his work" (Ecclesiastes 3:13, ICB).

Sadly Jacob's life at home wasn't as happy. His two wives, Rachel and Leah, jealously fought for his love. In the Garden of Eden, God had given Adam only one wife, and He never intended for men to ever have more than one. Nevertheless God worked with the custom of the times and still blessed Jacob with 12 children. God was faithfully fulfilling His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: "I will give you many descendants" (Genesis 26:4, ICB). God *always* keeps His promises, even when His children make sad choices.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- How do you think you might have responded if Laban had tricked you?
- How happy would you have been about working for another seven years?

When we have been hurt and unfairly treated, God can help us to forgive as we have been forgiven. Sometimes it isn't wise to trust those who have hurt us. But God can help us let go of the anger and hurt.

DO: On a whiteboard, chalkboard, or in the dirt outside, write some things you have done wrong. Then wipe or wash them away while you think about how God has forgiven you. Then write ways others have hurt you. As you erase them thank God that He helps you forgive others.

PRAY: Read [Ephesians 4:32](#) again. Ask God to put this kind of forgiveness toward others in your heart. Is there someone in particular you need to forgive?



MORE TRICKERY

Jacob looked at the hills in the distance and sighed. He was homesick. He had worked steadfastly for 14 years to pay for his wives. He didn't want to work for his sneaky uncle anymore. He wanted to go home.

There was no way Laban wanted his best worker to leave! He had become very rich thanks to Jacob and God's blessings. "Name me your wages, and I will give it," he told Jacob (Genesis 30:28). What did Jacob ask for? *READ GENESIS 30:31-33.*

Laban smiled and agreed. Then he snuck off and took most of the speckled and spotted animals from his flock and hid them. He changed the rules of their agreement 10 times during the next six years!

But while Laban was busy cheating, God was busy blessing Jacob with strong speckled goats and sheep. Pretty soon, Jacob had become a rich man with large flocks and lots of servants. Jacob's steadfast faith helped him remain hardworking and honest when Laban was so unfair.

After a while Laban and his sons became very jealous of Jacob's success. They began to whisper about him and treat him unkindly. "Then the Lord said to Jacob, 'Go back to the land where your ancestors lived. I will be with you' " (Genesis 31:3, ICB).

How wonderful to have God speak to him so clearly again! It had been 20 years since he had received God's forgiveness and promises at Bethel. Even through hard times, God had blessed him. Now he would trust God to keep leading him. He was finally going home! Our loving God steadfastly keeps His promises.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Read **Galatians 6:9**. Talk about how this verse applies to Jacob.
- How well does it apply to you?

PRAY: In a quiet place outside pray a silent prayer from your heart to God's.

DO: Hunt for Bible clues. Who does each verse remind you of in today's story:

Psalm 31:19?

1 Corinthians 4:12?

Leviticus 19:11?



Jo David



FRIDAY

A QUICK ESCAPE

There was no time to waste; flocks and herds were gathered, tents packed, donkeys loaded, and wives and children climbed on camels. Then Jacob and his family quickly left for Canaan while Laban was away shearing his sheep.

Three days later Laban found out, and he was furious! He, his sons, and a band of fighting men went on the chase to force them to return. "But God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, 'Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad'" (Genesis 31:24).

When Laban caught up with Jacob, he kept his red-hot anger from bubbling over. He told him about the dream from God. Once again God was keeping His promise to protect Jacob. And Jacob told Laban so. ". . . He saw the trouble I had and the hard work I did. And last night God corrected you" (Genesis 31:42, ICB).

Laban began to cool down. Then he proposed that they make a peace agreement. Jacob set up a stone pillar, and they ate around it together. What did they promise, and how did they say goodbye? *READ GENESIS 31:51-55.*

Jacob had come to Haran a lonely and poor runaway. Now he was leaving Haran a rich and successful man. God had indeed blessed Jacob with "a future and a hope."

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- What has Jacob learned in this story? What has Laban had an opportunity to learn?

FRIDAY NIGHT

SHARE AND PRAISE

- Sing or say your memory verse. Reflect on how God fulfilled His plans for Jacob. As a family discuss God's plans for your future.
- If possible, go outside and look up at the stars and be reminded that God fulfills His promises. How meaningful do you think God's promise about descendants was to Jacob now?

FAMILY JOURNAL

- Flick back through this week's lesson and recall the Bible verses you have read. Which is your favorite? Why?
- Respond: "Remembering this story will help when I . . ."

PRAY

Pray a thankful prayer that God's promises never change. Ask Him to continue to work in your heart so you can be steadfast.

FOR YOU, PARENTS

"If the future looks somewhat clouded, hope on, believe on. The clouds will disappear, and light again shine. Praise God, my heart says, praise God for what He has done for you" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 663).

DINDIM THE PENGUIN

In 2012, retired 71-year-old Joao Pereira de Souza, who lived near the coast south of Rio de Janeiro, found a Patagonian penguin on the shore. The poor little penguin was covered in oil, and he was very, very hungry. Joao was a kind man, so he carefully took the penguin home, cleaned him up, gave him some sardines, and nursed him back to health. Over these few weeks the man and the penguin became good friends, forming a special bond. Joao named the feisty bird Dindim.

One day, when the man and the penguin were back at the beach, the little penguin swam off into the sunset. Joao told his neighbors that his little friend had gone back to the ocean, and they all said he would probably never see his penguin friend again.

A few months later, a happy Dindim waddled back to Joao's home, honking with delight and wagging its tail like a dog! Biologists say that such penguins are known for traveling thousands of miles each year, feeding and breeding between colonies as they migrate. They had never heard of a Patagonian penguin bonding with a human!

Joao said, "I love the penguin as though it were my own child, and I believe the penguin loves me."

For many years, the penguin came back to visit the man who saved his life. Every year Dindim arrived in June and left again in February to migrate with the other penguins. What a steadfast little friend Dindim was, all prompted by the kind act of Joao, who hoped to give a future to the little penguin.

God tells us, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).

JACOB AND THE MIDNIGHT WRESTLE

GOD GIVES ME PEACE
AND HELPS ME TO MAKE
PEACE WITH OTHERS.

MEMORY VERSE

**"Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called Sons of
God" (Matthew 5:9).**

WORD OF THE WEEK—PEACE:

The feeling of quiet, calm, safety, and contentment in our hearts. God's love, protection, and care can give us peace no matter what trouble we face. Peace is also a time without fighting. God can help us make peace with others we may have quarreled with or hurt.

This week's lesson is based on Genesis 32; 33; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 195-203; *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 94-99; and *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 405-411. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story*, vol. 2, pp. 32-39.



SUNDAY

SPECIAL PROTECTION

DO: Walk around your home/neighborhood and enjoy the memories you have of particular places. You might like to take some photos or draw special spots. Alternatively look at family photos.

MISSION CHALLENGE: Invite a friend to help you be a secret helper this week. What undercover acts of kindness can you share together?

Jacob and his big family journeyed away from Mizpah with a sense of peace. Uncle Laban, who had tricked Jacob so many times, had agreed to never make trouble with his family again. Jacob must have smiled to himself many times as he remembered Laban's final blessing.

But now, as Jacob neared his family home in Canaan, his peace slipped away. He thought of how he had lied and tricked his brother and father long ago. He remembered Esau's scary last words: "I will kill my brother" (Genesis 27:41). Jacob's stomach must have knotted with fear. *Would Esau still want to hurt him?*

God understood Jacob's fear, as God always does. He sent a special reminder that He was always with Jacob. He would give Jacob protection and peace.

Suddenly Jacob looked up from the dusty road to see an army of angels! He must have blinked and rubbed his eyes with surprise. Shining angels hovered in front of him. He spun around, and there were more angels behind his big family. Every adult, every child, and even the tiniest lambs were protected by angel guardians.

God promises to send angels to protect you too, just as he did Jacob.

READ PSALM 91:11. When we are fearful, or have sad and painful memories, we can remember that our loving God and His angels are with us, even though we can't see them.

Jacob remembered God's ladder of angels that had given him hope when he had run away from Canaan. And now 20 years later, God's protecting angels were guiding him safely home. "This is God's camp," said Jacob, in awe (Genesis 32:2). He praised God and named the place Mahanaim, which means "two hosts" or "two camps": Jacob's on the ground and God's above. He would always remember how God had given him peace instead of fear in this special place.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Angels are always with us. Why did God let Jacob see them?
- How can you creatively make Psalm 91:11 a special text to remember and share?

PRAY: Close your eyes and imagine God's protecting angels around you. Praise God for them.

KIND WORDS

God's peace settled over Jacob like a warm blanket. But he still worried as he walked. Could he make peace with his brother? Jacob had let God forgive and change him; he was a different man than when he'd left home. What would it take to show Esau he was truly sorry?

He had an idea! He would send several servants to find Esau and give him a kind message. What did his message say? *READ GENESIS 32:4, 5.*

God's Word says, "Let your speech always be with grace" (Colossians 4:6). Jacob had been freely forgiven by God. He didn't earn God's forgiveness and blessings, that was God's gift of grace. Now Jacob would show grace to his brother with kind, respectful, peaceful words. He had said, "My lord Esau" and "Your servant Jacob" to show that he wanted Esau to be more respected than him. His words told Esau that he would not claim or expect any of the family inheritance. He simply longed for forgiveness from his brother.

Jacob waited nervously for Esau's reply. Would it be friendly too? His servants huffed and puffed as they returned. Then they sadly shook their heads. There was no message for Jacob. But there was news to share—frightening news! Esau had already heard of Jacob's return and was approaching with 400 strong men!

Terror filled the camp, and Jacob's heart pounded with fear. He had tried to be a peacemaker; now he had to prepare for the worst. He quickly divided his unarmed and helpless tribe into two camps. That way, if one was attacked, the other may have time to escape. He had now done all he could.

When God's forgiveness fills our hearts, He helps us to want to make it right with those we have hurt or quarreled with. Our words will be respectful and gracious as we try to make peace.

PRAY: With your Bible open, place your hand on Colossians 4:6 and thank God for helping you to speak with grace.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- How would you have felt at this point in the story if you were Jacob?
- How easy or hard do you find it to make things right with your siblings/friends after you have hurt or quarreled with them?
- Read **Ecclesiastes 10:12**. What gracious and respectful words could you use when you are seeking forgiveness?

DO: With permission, pour some salt onto a table. Read **Colossians 4:6**. Use the salt to shape the word "grace." Leave it there through the family mealtime to remind you and your family to speak respectfully.





TUESDAY

PRAYER AND PRESENTS

As Esau and his band of fighting men marched closer, Jacob gave his fear to God. He prayed and prayed, for he fully believed promise to bless him.

What did Jacob pray for? *READ GENESIS 32:9-12.*

Jacob's humble prayer showed how close he had grown to God during his long, hard years with Uncle Laban. It also showed how much he trusted God and how grateful he was for God's blessings. God is helping you to grow closer to Him too.

After his prayer Jacob wanted even more desperately to have peace with his brother. So he focused on what else he could do to soften Esau's hatred. He chose five gifts. What were they? *READ GENESIS 32:13-15.*

The gifts trotted down the road with his servants. Each group of male and female animals was a very valuable gift that would keep on giving as the animals had babies. Jacob's gifts would help Esau become a much richer man. Once again Jacob sent his servants to pass on a kind, gracious message as well. Oh how he hoped the gifts would be accepted . . . and that he could soon be friends with his brother again.

Our gracious God loves to hear us pray and claim His promises, especially when we are in deep trouble like Jacob. God promises us in His word: "God is our protection and our strength. He always helps in times of trouble" (Psalm 46:1, ICB).

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- *Romans 14:19 says, "Let us pursue the things which make for peace." How well does this verse apply to Jacob?*
- *How could you put this verse into action for someone in your family? Could you do something kind for someone you have hurt? Could you give them a gift?*

PRAY: You may like to include some of the ideas from the "DO" activity in your prayer.

God's

FOR YOU, PARENTS:

"Jesus assures His disciples of God's sympathy for them in their needs and weaknesses. Not a sigh is breathed, not a pain felt, not a grief pierces the soul, but the throb vibrates in the Father's heart" (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 356).

DO: Read Jacob's prayer in **Genesis 32:9-12** again. In a journal, write the words from his prayer that match the ideas below:

1. Claiming God's promises
2. Being humble before God
3. Thanking God for His blessings
4. A request

A NIGHTTIME STRUGGLE

No kind words came back from Esau. There was nothing but silence. Jacob sent his whole camp across the Jabbok River while he stayed alone to pray. Night fell. Still he prayed alone in the dark. He felt scared and guilty. He knew it was his sin that had put his innocent family in danger.

Strong hands suddenly seized Jacob in the midnight blackness. Terrified, he wrestled with the stranger for hours, trying to get free. At the same time, a battle raged inside him. Guilt for his past sins fought to crowd out God's promises and peace.

Sometimes the battle rages in our hearts too. Past sins weigh us down with guilt, and we feel as if we've been too naughty for God to love. But this is a big fat lie! For Romans 8:38 says, "I am sure that nothing can separate us from the love God has for us" (ICB).

At daybreak the wrestling stranger touched Jacob's hip. Instantly it popped out of its joint and the muscle shrank. What power! Suddenly Jacob realized that this was no ordinary man! He knew it was God's Son, Christ, sometimes called "the Angel of the covenant." Jacob clung to the Angel, Christ, pleading for a blessing: "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" (Genesis 32:26). God had clung to Jacob as they wrestled; now Jacob clung to God. The long nighttime wrestle didn't look like a battle anymore. Instead it was a beautiful picture of our loving God holding on to helpless Jacob, and Jacob desperately clinging to his faithful God.

What did God do next? *READ GENESIS 32:27-29.*

What a wonderful way for the battle to end! Jacob's new name suited him perfectly because he had clung to God and not let go. The blessings of forgiveness and peace were now fully his.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

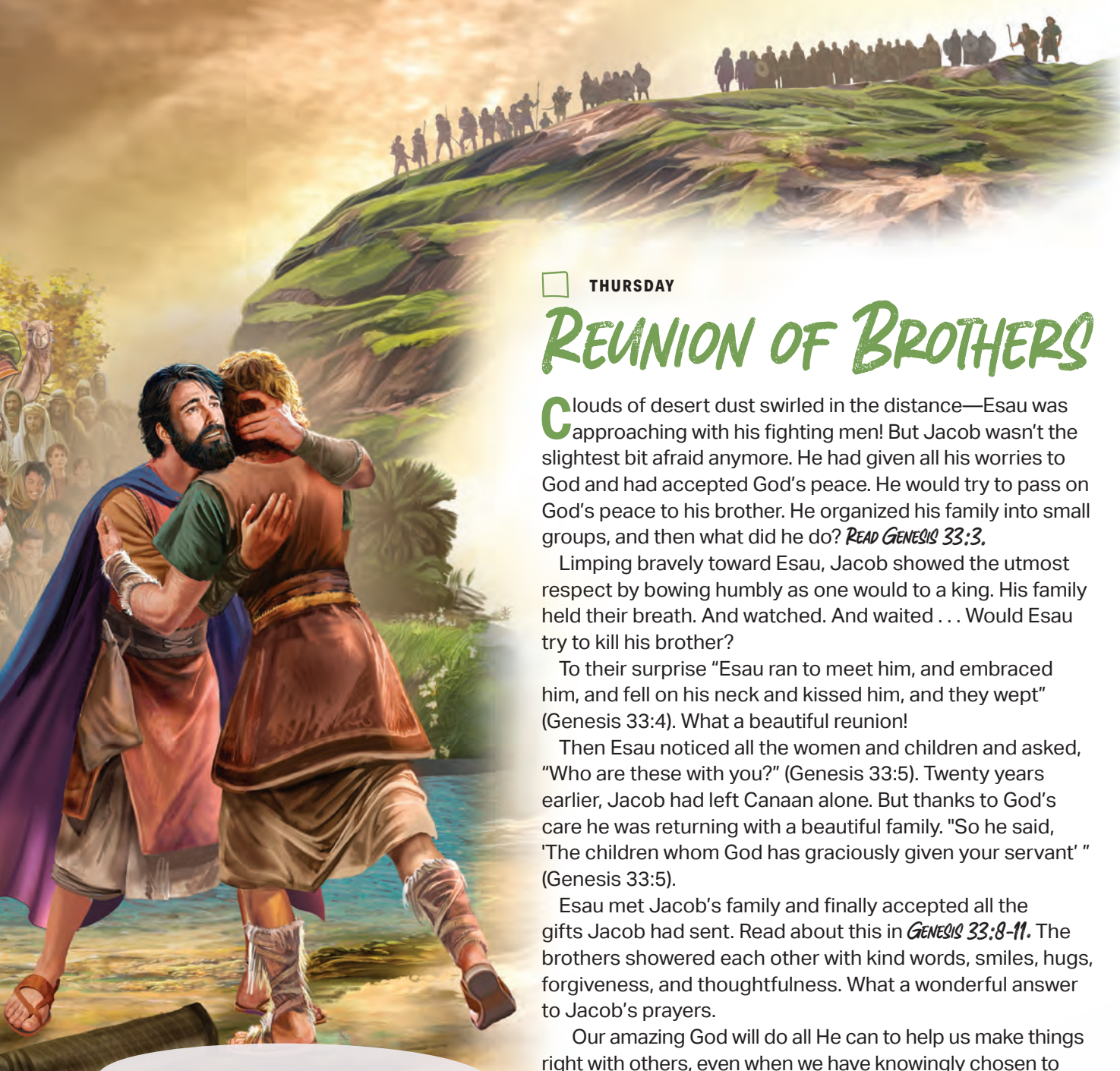
- What might it look like for you to cling to God each day?
- Why did God change Jacob's name to Israel?

Our powerful God will always cling to us, and He loves us to cling to Him too. Choosing God, wanting to be close to Him, spending time with Him, and trusting His promises are ways we can cling to God.

PRAY: Clasp your hands together tightly and thank God for clinging to you.

DO: Arm wrestle with a family member. Imagine the strength and determination Jacob needed to wrestle for hours.





☐ THURSDAY

REUNION OF BROTHERS

Clouds of desert dust swirled in the distance—Esau was approaching with his fighting men! But Jacob wasn't the slightest bit afraid anymore. He had given all his worries to God and had accepted God's peace. He would try to pass on God's peace to his brother. He organized his family into small groups, and then what did he do? *READ GENESIS 33:3.*

Limping bravely toward Esau, Jacob showed the utmost respect by bowing humbly as one would to a king. His family held their breath. And watched. And waited . . . Would Esau try to kill his brother?

To their surprise "Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept" (Genesis 33:4). What a beautiful reunion!

Then Esau noticed all the women and children and asked, "Who are these with you?" (Genesis 33:5). Twenty years earlier, Jacob had left Canaan alone. But thanks to God's care he was returning with a beautiful family. "So he said, 'The children whom God has graciously given your servant'" (Genesis 33:5).

Esau met Jacob's family and finally accepted all the gifts Jacob had sent. Read about this in *GENESIS 33:8-11*. The brothers showered each other with kind words, smiles, hugs, forgiveness, and thoughtfulness. What a wonderful answer to Jacob's prayers.

Our amazing God will do all He can to help us make things right with others, even when we have knowingly chosen to do something hurtful. He knows how much better we will feel when forgiveness is given and friendships are mended.

PARENT FAITH TALK: Share about a time that God helped you to be a peacemaker.

DO: Look back through the lesson and make a list or talk about each of the following:

- The things *God* did to help Jacob and Esau make peace
- The things *Jacob* did to try to make things right with Esau
- The things *Esau* said to show that he had forgiven Jacob (Read *Genesis 33:8-15*.)

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- *Why was Jacob able to meet his brother peacefully?*
- *Read or sing your memory verse. Why do you think Jesus said we will be called "Sons of God" when we make peace with others?*

PRAY: Ask God to help make your family and friendships peaceful.

HOME AT LAST

The happy brothers hugged goodbye with nothing but peace between them. Then Jacob and his tribe slowly made their way across the Jordan River and into the land of Canaan. He was back in his homeland at last!

Jacob bought a large piece of land and settled in the lush valley of Shechem, where Grandfather Abraham had camped when he arrived in Canaan 180 years before. And just as his faithful ancestor had done (Genesis 12:7), Jacob worshipped God with a grateful heart. How did he worship? *READ GENESIS 33:20.*

Jacob had so many reasons to worship God! He had left with nothing and returned with much. His sins had been forgiven, guilt had turned into peace, fear was replaced by trust, troubles had turned into blessings. And best of all, God had changed the brothers' hearts so they could have peace.

Jacob called the place "El Elohe Israel," for it means "The mighty God is the God of Israel." It would always be a special reminder of how our mighty God had been with the runaway Jacob for 20 years and brought him home at last.

Worshipping our mighty God is a natural thing to do when our hearts are filled with gratitude for all He has done for us. Like Jacob, we can call Him "The mighty God."

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Have you ever made up with a friend or family member after a quarrel? What happened and how did you feel?
- Did you remember to thank God for helping you make peace? You can always do so now.

FRIDAY NIGHT

SHARE AND PRAISE

What praise songs come to mind when you think of the themes in this week's lesson? Sing several together, including "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 499).

FAMILY JOURNAL

- What have you learned about peace and forgiveness in this story?
- Finish the sentence: Remembering this story will help me when I . . .

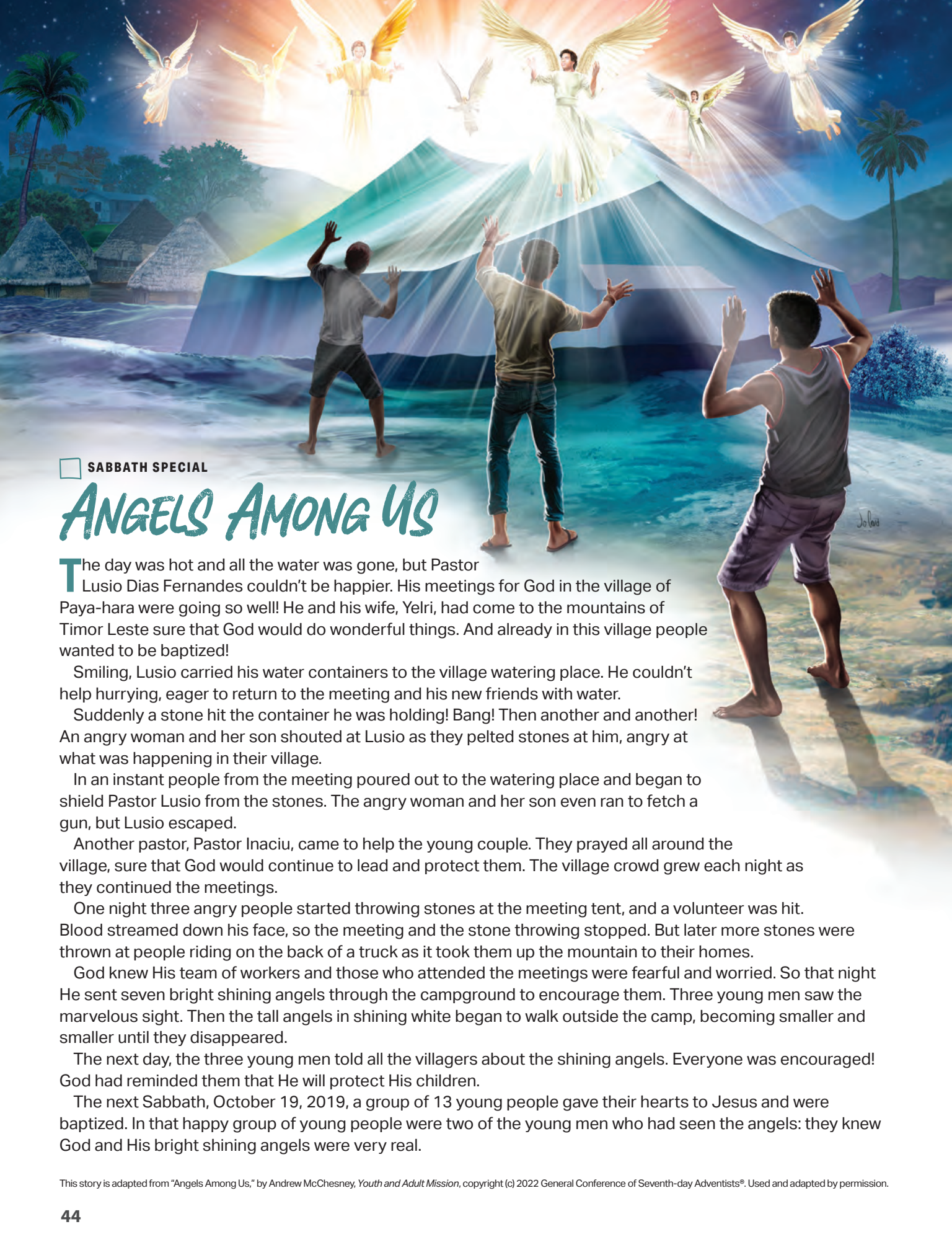
DO

Draw a stone altar. Invite family members to write blessings they have received this week on the stones.

PRAY

Make a family circle around your altar and pray. Thank God for what has encouraged you in this week's story. Thank God that He is with you in good times and bad, just as He was with Jacob.





□ SABBATH SPECIAL

ANGELS AMONG US

The day was hot and all the water was gone, but Pastor Lusio Dias Fernandes couldn't be happier. His meetings for God in the village of Paya-hara were going so well! He and his wife, Yelri, had come to the mountains of Timor Leste sure that God would do wonderful things. And already in this village people wanted to be baptized!

Smiling, Lusio carried his water containers to the village watering place. He couldn't help hurrying, eager to return to the meeting and his new friends with water.

Suddenly a stone hit the container he was holding! Bang! Then another and another! An angry woman and her son shouted at Lusio as they pelted stones at him, angry at what was happening in their village.

In an instant people from the meeting poured out to the watering place and began to shield Pastor Lusio from the stones. The angry woman and her son even ran to fetch a gun, but Lusio escaped.

Another pastor, Pastor Inaciu, came to help the young couple. They prayed all around the village, sure that God would continue to lead and protect them. The village crowd grew each night as they continued the meetings.

One night three angry people started throwing stones at the meeting tent, and a volunteer was hit. Blood streamed down his face, so the meeting and the stone throwing stopped. But later more stones were thrown at people riding on the back of a truck as it took them up the mountain to their homes.

God knew His team of workers and those who attended the meetings were fearful and worried. So that night He sent seven bright shining angels through the campground to encourage them. Three young men saw the marvelous sight. Then the tall angels in shining white began to walk outside the camp, becoming smaller and smaller until they disappeared.

The next day, the three young men told all the villagers about the shining angels. Everyone was encouraged! God had reminded them that He will protect His children.

The next Sabbath, October 19, 2019, a group of 13 young people gave their hearts to Jesus and were baptized. In that happy group of young people were two of the young men who had seen the angels: they knew God and His bright shining angels were very real.

JOSEPH'S COAT AND DREAMS

GOD CARES
FOR ME.

MEMORY VERSE

"How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" (Psalm 139:17).

WORD OF THE WEEK—PRECIOUS:

Of great worth or value; expensive or important; loved or dear to someone. You might say a special toy or your mom or dad is precious to you. We are precious to God.

This week's lesson is based on Genesis 35:16-20; 37:1-10; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 208-210; *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 100, 101; and *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 428, 429. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story*, vol. 2, pp. 40-43.

HOME AGAIN!

The rock made a soft thud as Jacob gently placed it on the top of the other stones. His altar to God was finished. Here, in this place called Bethel, he would worship His loving God. Jacob had so much to thank Him for! God had brought him safely back to his homeland in Canaan.

Jacob wanted his whole family to worship God too. He told them, "He has helped me during my time of trouble. He has helped me everywhere I have gone" (Genesis 35:3, ICB).

God would also help him here. He appeared to Jacob and spoke to His friend. What did God say? *READ GENESIS 35:11, 12.*

With God's promises fresh in his mind, Jacob traveled on. Not long after, something very sad happened—Mother Rachel died after giving birth to a son. With tears in his eyes Father Jacob named him Benjamin. What a precious treasure he would be to old Jacob.

Jacob shared his sorrow with his son Joseph, who, like little brother Benjamin, now had no mother. They would always be close. God was close to them too as they sadly buried Rachel.

God can also comfort our sad and hurting hearts when we lose someone we love. The Bible says, "The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart" (Psalm 34:18). Jesus promises, "Blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4).

After this time of sadness came a very happy day. Jacob made it home to Hebron and saw his dear father again! Imagine the happy tears as he hugged old Father Isaac once more.

Happiness and sadness had made their way in and out of Jacob's life—as they do for everyone. But through it all, Jacob learned how much God cared for him. Would his 12 sons learn this too?

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- God didn't just speak to Jacob, He appeared to him. Why do you think He did this? Why did God do it then?
- God's promises can encourage us in hard times too. What promise might you share with someone who is sad?

PRAY: Thank God for caring for you through happy and hard times.

DO: Make a card to encourage someone who is sad. You may like to also write your memory verse in it.



THE TRUTHFUL BROTHER

A gentle breeze blew across the fields and through Jacob's cluster of tents. Joseph hurried to dress for the day. His brothers would be waiting with their flocks in the fields. There was always work to be done on their big farm in Hebron. Joseph grabbed his staff and ran to meet them.

Joseph was a teenager now. He had grown up listening to Father Jacob's stories of God's love and care. He had also chosen to be God's friend and to obey Him. This made him happy and honest.

His 10 older brothers didn't much care for the ways of God. They were often rough, rude, and careless. Their lies had caused lots of trouble with their neighbors.

Out in the fields, Joseph noticed the bad things his brothers said and did. He felt sad to see them sinning against God. What did Joseph do about it? *READ GENESIS 37:2.*

It must have been hard to stand before his father and say those words. He knew his father would be so disappointed. And his brothers would be very angry with him. But Joseph courageously told the truth.

God can give us the courage to be honest and have integrity too. Integrity means doing what's right, even when no one is looking. God cares about the choices we make and wants to see us grow to be like Him. The Bible says, "Doing what is right brings freedom to honest people" (Proverbs 11:6, ICB). Joseph learned this lesson early. It would help him all through his life.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Have you ever had to make a hard choice like Joseph and tell a teacher or parent about something that was wrong? Share about it with your family.
- What do you think helped Joseph? What can help you?

PRAY: Ask God to give you the courage and wisdom you need to do the right thing.

DO: God has so many precious thoughts toward you. Share your thoughts with God by writing Him a letter. Add a picture, thought bubbles, or anything that you'd share with your best friend.



A BEAUTIFUL COAT

Father Jacob smiled with pride as he carefully carried his gift to Joseph's tent. The bright colors of the beautifully woven coat shone brilliantly in the sunshine. What a precious present this would be for his son!

Most shepherd boys wore a plain, short-sleeved shirt and a simple leather belt. But Jacob wanted to give his son something that showed his love. Jacob chose brightly colored yarn. Then he wove the thread carefully together to make a vibrant, long-sleeved robe, like rich and important people wore.

Joseph was so excited to receive his father's gift. He hugged the coat to his chest. It was stunning! Carefully, he put it on and showed his beaming father.

Joseph must have smiled from morning to night as he walked around the fields and tents of home, wearing his gift of love.

His brothers couldn't help noticing, and they were far from happy. *They* didn't have beautiful robes like that! The Bible says, that Jacob "loved Joseph more than his other sons" (Genesis 37:3, ICB). Now, the older sons had proof of his favoritism. How did they react? *READ GENESIS 37:4.*

The brothers no longer smiled at Joseph as they passed his tent. Out in the fields, with only the animals to hear, their mean words must have hit Joseph like stinging arrows.

God noticed and loved poor Joseph, and his jealous brothers. God doesn't play favorites. He offers the same super-generous gift of forgiveness and forever love to every person! God could help this family to heal and love. But they would need to trust Him.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

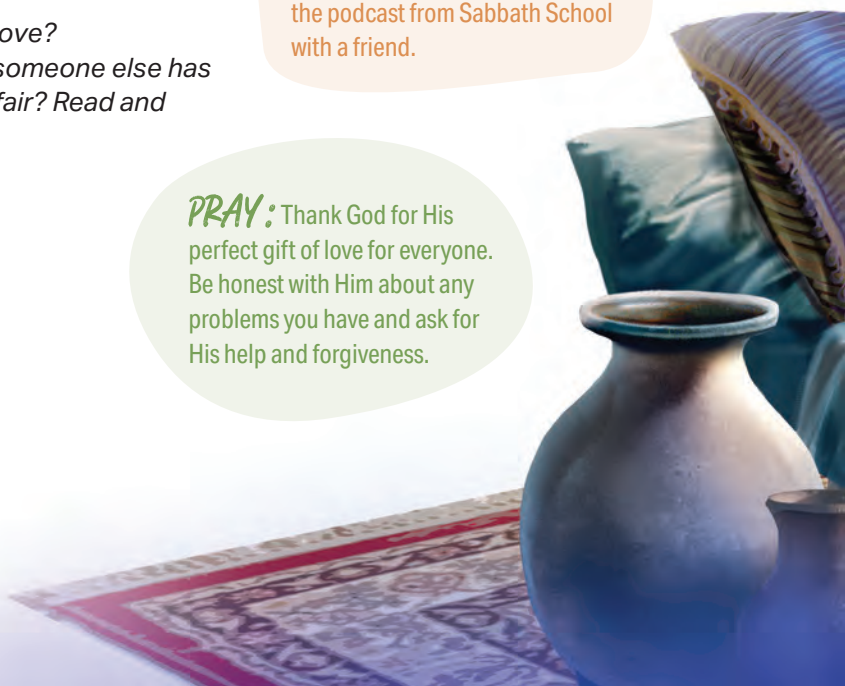
- What's something special your family may have done or given you to show they love you.
- How is God's love for us different from Jacob's love?
- What can you do when you feel jealous of what someone else has or if you feel upset by something that seems unfair? Read and discuss **Philippians 4:11, 12.**



DO: Read **Proverbs 14:30** and draw something that represents the two messages in this verse.

MISSION CHALLENGE: Share some Alive in Jesus music or the podcast from Sabbath School with a friend.

PRAY: Thank God for His perfect gift of love for everyone. Be honest with Him about any problems you have and ask for His help and forgiveness.



A SURPRISING DREAM

Joseph lay his weary head down on his bed. All was quiet and still. No older brothers spoke cutting words to him or shot angry glares his way. He could talk to His loving God in peace, and he could rest. Soon he was fast asleep. In the night God sent Joseph a vivid dream. What happened in his dream? *READ GENESIS 37:7.*

Joseph and his brothers sometimes worked together in the fields of Canaan, so even though the dream was strange, the setting was familiar. When God gives messages in dreams, He always uses a setting the dreamer can understand.

Joseph woke up and rubbed his eyes. What a surprising dream! He couldn't stop thinking about it. Scratching his head in wonder, he innocently went and told his brothers all about it: his sheaf of wheat standing tall, while all his brothers' sheaves bowed down to his sheaf.

His brothers stared back at their little brother and clenched their fists. Their cheeks flushed pink with anger. They were furious! They hotly replied, "Do you really think you will be king over us? Do you truly think you will rule over us?" (Genesis 37:8, ICB).

The brothers had been jealous. But now they were angry—*really* angry!

What the brothers didn't understand was that God had shared this special dream with Joseph. God cared about Joseph and had a very special plan for him. He was giving him a glimpse of the future. The Bible says, "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" (Psalm 139:17).

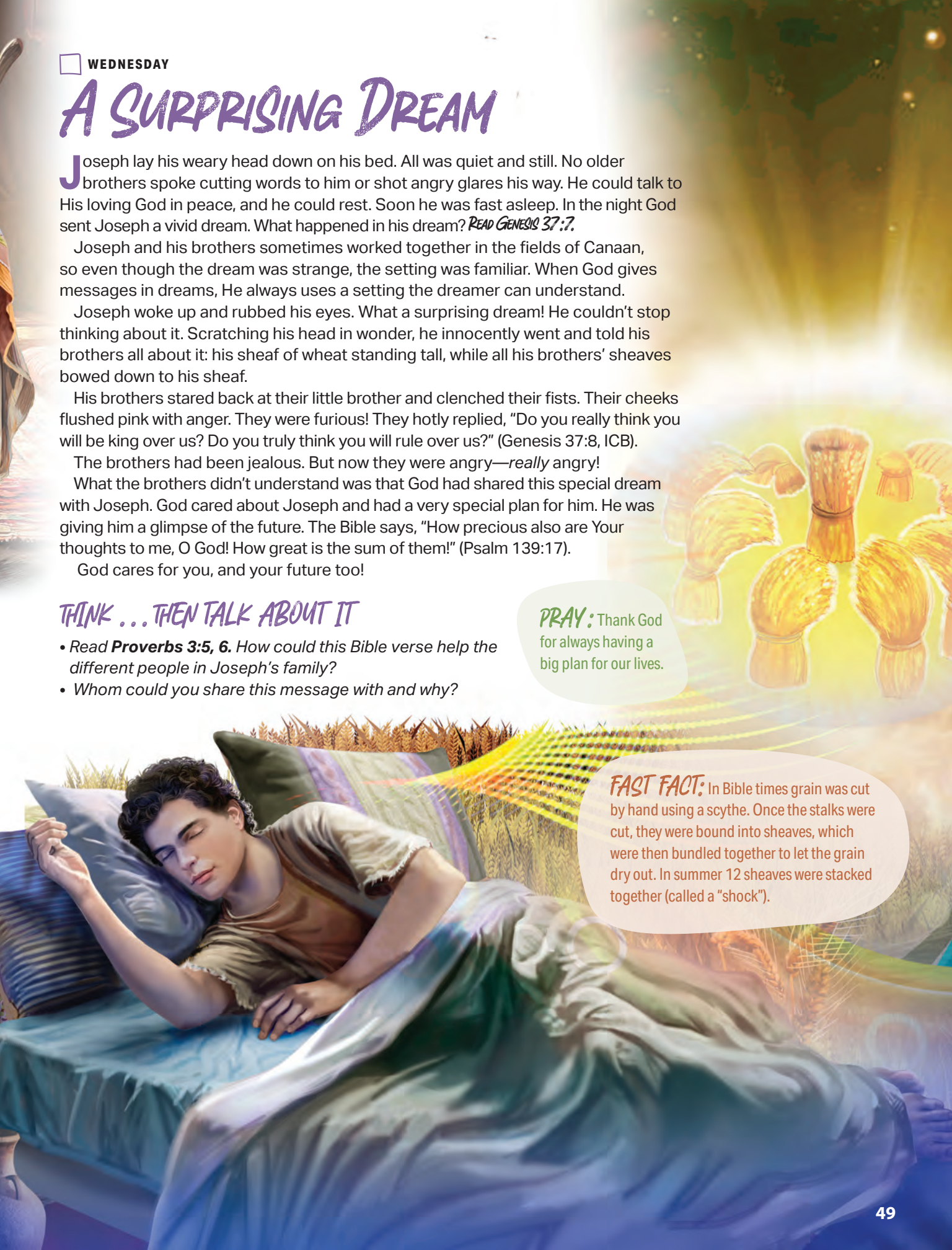
God cares for you, and your future too!

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT

- Read **Proverbs 3:5, 6**. How could this Bible verse help the different people in Joseph's family?
- Whom could you share this message with and why?

PRAY: Thank God for always having a big plan for our lives.

FAST FACT: In Bible times grain was cut by hand using a scythe. Once the stalks were cut, they were bound into sheaves, which were then bundled together to let the grain dry out. In summer 12 sheaves were stacked together (called a "shock").





☐ THURSDAY

DREAM NUMBER TWO

The stars twinkled above his tent as Joseph slept soundly below. Once again God sent him an amazing dream. Joseph awoke. The dream was still clear and real in his mind. It was amazing! Against a jet-black sky, 11 stars, the bright silver moon, and the fiery sun all bowed down to him.

The dream felt too big to keep to himself, so once again he shared it with his family.

How did his father respond? *READ GENESIS 37:10, 11.*

The meaning of the dream was clear to Jacob. It pointed to Joseph ruling over his whole family. Jacob believed God was showing Joseph something that would happen in the future. But Jacob spoke sharply to Joseph, for he knew the dream would upset Joseph's older brothers.

Jacob was right. "Joseph's brothers were jealous of him" (Genesis 37:11, ICB). The older brothers didn't trust in God's plans or wisdom. They let their jealous feelings grow into anger and rule over them.

Joseph quietly treasured the precious dreams in his heart, wondering what they could mean. He remembered the wonderful dream Father Jacob had been given about an angel ladder. He might not know today what the dreams meant, but he knew he would understand one day, for he trusted God; his caring and faithful Friend.

There may be times when you don't understand why things happen as they do. But you can trust God's messages to you in the Bible, and the way He leads in your life. You can pray, "Show me what I should do because my prayers go up to you" (Psalm 143:8, ICB).

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Read about the awake dream God gave Jacob's grandfather Abraham in **Genesis 1:5**. Discuss what's similar and different.
- How might remembering Abraham's dream help Jacob's family at this point in the story?

PARENT FAITH TALK:

Share a situation in which things worked out well because you trusted God.

DO:

With adult help, find out the names of 11 stars and try to find them in your night sky (or online/with a stargazing app).

PRAY:

Thank God for His amazing messages to us. Ask Him to help you trust Him, even when things seem uncertain.

GOD'S PRECIOUS LOVE

Up in space, on the International Space Station, a group of astronauts wait for a ride on a spaceship back to Earth. Back on our planet, adventurers reach the peak of their mountain climb. A diver glides past sharks. A child stares up at a sparkling city skyscraper. A musician plays a beautiful concert. A soldier runs for cover. An athlete sprints to the finish line.

And then there's you.

Whatever you're doing, wherever you are, God knows you by name and He cares. You are always on His mind. Can you say or sing your memory verse? *READ PSALM 139:17.*

When Jacob returned home to Canaan, God thought about him so much, He showed up to see him! And when Joseph's brothers began to hurt him with their cruel words and jealousy, God saw and cared. He encouraged Joseph with not one, but two dreams about his future.

The Bible reminds us, "Give all your worries to Him, because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7, ICB). When things seem unfair or hurtful in our families, we can talk to God about it and ask for His help. When we get jealous of others, God understands. He can help us trust Him, instead of our feelings.

The Bible tells us, "With God's power working in us, God can do much, much more than anything we can ask or think of" (Ephesians 3:20, ICB).

Talk to God about everything that's on your mind today. He's listening. He cares.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- How many things can you think of in nature that remain the same (for example: the sun rising)? Praise God for reminding you of His unchanging love.

FRIDAY NIGHT

SHARE AND PRAISE

- Sing a favorite worship song about God's care or His love for you.
- Draw an outline of Joseph's coat. Pass it around the family with colored pencils or markers. Invite each family member to share a story or example of how God has cared for them. After sharing they can color a part of the coat while another family member shares.
- Make a prayer circle around the coat and thank God for caring for your family in the past, present, and future.

FAMILY JOURNAL

- What does this week's story teach me about God?
- The most important thing I need to remember from this story is . . .

PRAY

Pray a simple prayer, thanking God for caring for you.

FOR YOU, PARENTS

"You cannot control your impulses, your emotions, as you may desire, but you can control the will, and you can make an entire change in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, your life will be hid with Christ in God, and allied to the power which is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from God that will hold you fast to his strength" (Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People*, p. 152).



Jofan

Joseph's colorful coat was a reminder of his father's great love. This Sabbath you can choose from two fun activities to remind you of God's perfect love and care for us. "How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" (Psalm 139:17). He can help us with our feelings and choices and give us a bright future with Him.

1. GOD'S POWER: FUN WITH MAGNETS

Try this simple, fun experiment with magnets to discover how God's power can affect you and others.

You Will Need:

- Several magnets, some that repel if possible, but whatever you have handy
- Small metal objects, such as paper clips, push pins, staples, a teaspoon
- Other small objects, such as marbles, a pencil, a rubber band, a button

Experiment with the magnets and objects to see which are attracted to each other, which repel each other, and which are indifferent (aren't affected).

What did you discover?

Just like the magnets, our feelings, words, and actions sometimes draw us closer to others, and sometimes they drive us apart. God's power in our hearts can make us like a magnet to draw us closer to others. God is the biggest magnet of all; He wants to draw us all to Himself with His big, loving heart.

2. GOD'S LOVE: MAKE A FAMILY CHAIN



Create:

- Fold a rectangular piece of paper into thirds, then in half again.
- Draw half a person on the front strip, making sure you draw the head against the fold with no paper edges.
- Cut on the lines you have drawn. You will end up with three people as shown.
- Draw a face on each person; write Jacob on one, Joseph on another, and brothers on the third.
- You may like to draw clothing on each person, being careful to leave their names exposed. Dress Joseph and his brothers as depicted in the story.
- On the bottom strip, write your favorite Bible text from this week's lesson.

Tell: Use your family chain to share the story of Joseph with someone. Use it also as a reminder that God cares for your family and can always bring us close together, even when there are hard times or hurts.



JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

I CAN ALWAYS TRUST
GOD TO BE WITH ME.

MEMORY VERSE

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

WORD OF THE WEEK—TRUSTWORTHY:

Reliable and honest; able to be trusted. Whom do you know that is trustworthy?

This week's lesson is based on Genesis 37:12-25; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 210-214; *The Story of Redemption*, p. 101; *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 130, 131; and *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 429-432, 1096. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story*, vol. 2, pp. 43-50.

HIDDEN HATRED

Joseph's brothers had been gone a long time. They had taken the sheep out of their valley home, far away to the grassy fields of Shechem. It must have been quiet at home for Joseph and Benjamin as they helped around the camp and looked after the animals left behind.

More time passed, and still the brothers didn't return. Father Jacob was getting worried. Were they well? Were they safe? Something must be done! Jacob called for Joseph and told him what was bothering him.

"Here I am," replied Joseph (Genesis 37:13), eager to help his beloved father. Then Jacob said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me" (Genesis 37:14).

Jacob trusted Joseph to find his brothers and return with news from them. If he had known the hatred in his sons' hearts, he would not have sent Joseph alone. He would have known his older sons were like slithering snakes who couldn't be trusted. They had hidden their hatred well.

Joseph looked everywhere in Shechem, but his brothers weren't to be found. What would he tell his worried father who had trusted him to find them? He kept looking until someone came to help. What news did he bring? *READ GENESIS 37:15-17.*

After finally spotting the shepherds' camp 75 miles away near Dothan, Joseph hurried excitedly to meet his brothers. He had found them: they were alive and well! Despite his brothers' unkindness to Joseph, he still loved and trusted them.

But the bitter brothers were not happy to see Joseph running toward them in his colorful coat. The sight of him stirred up their hatred. What could such hatred do?

Jacob and Joseph lived by God's words: "Most importantly, love each other deeply" (1 Peter 4:8, ICB). How sad that the older brothers didn't choose to live by those words. God could have helped them to enjoy loving and trusting family relationships, free from hatred. With God's help we can choose to live by God's words and enjoy loving, trusting relationships within our families too.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Why do you think Joseph was a loving and trustworthy son?
- What important jobs have your parents asked you to do? How well can you be trusted to do them?

MISSION CHALLENGE:

Use your craft from Sabbath School yesterday to share the story you learned with a friend.

PRAY: Hold hands with someone you trust and love. Thank God for the special bond you share.

A WICKED PLAN

As he approached his brothers, Joseph didn't know he'd been spotted or that an evil plan had been plotted. He didn't hear the angry words that sliced through the air. "Here comes that dreamer. Let's kill him. . . . Then we will see what will become of his dreams!" (Genesis 37:19, 20 ICB).

Such murderous words made big brother Reuben feel uneasy. As the eldest son he was responsible for Joseph, and he didn't want him to die. But neither did he want to go totally against his brothers. So he came up with a halfway kind of plan. What was his idea?

READ GENESIS 37:21, 22.

Of course Reuben didn't tell his brothers that he planned to secretly rescue Joseph later and return him to his father.

After persuading his brothers to accept the idea, Reuben quietly slipped away. He was worried he might not be able to control how he felt. He didn't want those rough brothers to see his true feelings for Joseph; feelings that made him want to protect and care for him.

We want to be trustworthy, but we find it hard to go against the crowd. God can help us to be brave, just as He helped Reuben.



Our loving God has a beautiful promise we can claim when we feel trapped by others who want us to do wrong. "Yes, God is working in you to help you want to do what pleases him. Then he gives you the power to do it" (Philippians 2:13, ICB).

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- What was good about Reuben's plan? What was not so good?
- How easy is it for you to do what you know to be right when those around you aren't?

PRAY: Thank God for the beautiful promises in His Word that remind you He is always there to help you be trustworthy and do the right thing.

DO: Think of some real-life situations in which you could feel pressured into not being trustworthy or not doing the right thing. Read **Philippians 2:13** after discussing each situation.



□ TUESDAY

DOWN IN A DEEP, DARK PIT

Joseph trotted happily toward his brothers. But his smile quickly faded when he noticed their angry glares. What was happening? These were the brothers he loved and trusted!

They teased him and made deadly threats. Then they grabbed him roughly, tore his coat, and stripped it from him. Confused and terrified, Joseph begged them to stop and tried to resist. But it was no use. Strong arms gripped him and hurled him into the depths of a deep, dark pit. Then those hard-hearted brothers wandered off and sat down to eat. Joseph's terrified calls likely reached their ears, but they ignored him.

Poor Joseph! How heartbreaking to learn that the brothers he loved didn't care for him at all. They couldn't be trusted. Alone, hungry, and frightened, Joseph sat huddled in the bottom of the deep hole he couldn't get himself out of. His trust in his brothers was broken, but he could still trust His faithful God. Joseph's brothers didn't listen when he called, but God always would. *READ PSALM 145:18.*

Sometimes people may misunderstand us or be mean to us for no good reason. It can make us feel sad, lonely, and upset to be rejected by those we trust. It may feel like we are in a dark pit, just as Joseph was. Our trustworthy God understands how we feel. He will always be with us when people prove untrustworthy and when frightening things happen to us. His Word says, "I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock" (Psalm 40:1, 2). We may struggle to understand some things that happen, but we can always call on God and trust Him to be with us and help us.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Do you think Joseph had ever told Jacob when his brothers were mean to him? What makes you think that?

DO: Read Psalm 40:1, 2 several times. Write, sketch, or draw symbols to record what speaks to your heart in these verses.

PRAY: Thank God for being a trustworthy friend who is always with you.

SOLD TO ISHMAELITE TRADERS

No mom, no dad, no brothers—no one but God was with Joseph down in the depths of that lonely pit. But God was enough. What might Joseph have asked God while down in the pit? *READ PSALM 38:22.*

God had already used Reuben to stop his murderous brothers from killing Joseph. And God was about to work again, in an unexpected way. “Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt” (Genesis 37:25). Judah had an idea! What was it?

READ GENESIS 37:26, 27.

Like Judah, some of the brother’s didn’t feel good about what they had done to Joseph, so this new plan to sell him to traders was quickly agreed upon. It meant they wouldn’t be guilty of his death, they would make some money, and they would never have to worry about Joseph being around to rule over them, as those annoying dreams had suggested he would. What a fail-proof plan! Or so they thought.

The brothers quickly hauled Joseph from the pit and sold him to the traders. Joseph pleaded and begged not to be sold, but they ignored the terror in his eyes and the fear in his voice. They felt proud of themselves for getting rid of their annoying brother in such a clever way.

Joseph was stunned by the cruelty of his brothers. He didn’t know what his future as a slave would look like, but for now he was alive. He could learn to trust God in this difficult situation, for God can always be trusted. That was all that mattered.

Even when bad things happen, our wonderful God has not forgotten us. He is working for us in ways we may not see or understand. We can trust Him.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- In what ways were Joseph’s brothers like Cain?
- How has God worked for Joseph’s good in the story so far?

FAST FACT: A person can survive for an average of only three days without water.

PARENT FAITH TALK: Share a time you felt all alone and needed to trust God completely.

PRAY: Pray for opportunities to encourage others to trust God in hard times.



THE RIPPED COAT

When Reuben returned to the pit and found Joseph gone, he was frantic and tore his clothes. Panicked, he questioned his brothers, saying, "The boy is not there! What will I do?" (Genesis 37:30, ICB). As the eldest, Reuben was supposed to be responsible to look after his younger shepherd brothers. He had failed. How would he face his father, and what would he tell him?

It was impossible to get Joseph back, so Reuben felt he had no choice but to join with his brothers in a cruel plan to hide their guilt. They had been the opposite of trustworthy but they still wanted to make their father think they would tell the truth. What did they do? *READ GENESIS 37:31-33.*

One sin often leads to another and another, and then lots of pain. The brothers' anger and jealousy had ended in lies and hurt for everyone. Jacob's pain was raw and deep. He tore his clothes and wept for many days, mourning the death of his much-loved son, Joseph. Hard as they tried, no one could comfort him.

The 10 brothers felt guilty for what they had done, as we always do when we betray the trust others have in us. They were also afraid of their father's anger, so they kept the crime hidden deep within their hearts. They felt certain that Father Jacob would never know what had happened to his favorite son, but it didn't make them feel any better. If only they had known that "if you hide your sins, you will not succeed. If you confess and reject them, you will receive mercy" (Proverbs 28:13, ICB).

Our faithful God is always trustworthy, but sometimes we are not. Sometimes we might think that a lie is the easiest way out, but it only creates bigger problems afterward. When we choose to lie to cover up our wrong choices, our untrustworthy choice can hurt others deeply.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Say or sing your memory verse. Who in the story could have been encouraged by this verse?
- How could Jacob's grief have been avoided?
- How could the brothers' guilt have been avoided?

PRAY: Pray for those who are hurting, particularly anyone you may have hurt.

DO: Plan to go on a prayer walk with an older family member. Choose a place where there are lots of people. For example: near shops or a busy park. Watch for people who look sad, worried, or in need of comfort. Pray silently for them as they pass by, and ask God for other ways you could bring joy to their lives.





□ FRIDAY

A LONG AND LONELY JOURNEY

Fear and loneliness tugged at Joseph's heart as the traders traveled on, away from the hills where his father's tents were nestled, away from his father, Jacob, and his little brother, Benjamin. He wept bitterly at the thought of his loving father waiting for him to come home. *Will I ever see my father again?* he wondered. *And what will the future look like for me, alone and friendless in a strange land?* Such thoughts filled him with fear and sadness.

Then Joseph's heart turned to God. He remembered, "The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart" (Psalm 34:18). Right there among the camels, "he gave himself fully to the Lord" (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 214). He prayed that God would be with him in the strange new land he was headed to. God encourages us to trust our future to Him too. **READ PSALM 37:5.**

Joseph's journey had taken him much farther than he ever expected. What began as a trip to see his brothers became a trip to the faraway land of Egypt. He had begun the journey trusting his father and brothers, but now he trusted God fully. He had learned that people are not always trustworthy, but God always is.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Joseph didn't understand it at the time, but God knew Joseph would do great things for Him in the future. How well do you think God knows your future?

FRIDAY NIGHT

SHARE AND PRAISE

- **Examine** the roots of a plant. Think about Joseph being the plant and God being the soil. How deep had Joseph's roots grown when he was young? How much did those roots help him in this story? How deep are your roots? What could you do to grow them deeper?
- **Say or sing** your memory verse for your family. Discuss the times this verse would have helped Joseph trust God. Then sing "Tis' So Sweet to Trust in Jesus" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 524).

FAMILY JOURNAL

- This Bible story has helped me think about . . .
- My favorite Bible promise from this week's lesson is . . . , because . . .

PRAY

Join hands in a family prayer circle. Thank God that He is always trustworthy, and ask Him to help you trust Him, even when bad things happen.

FOR YOU, PARENTS

Sometimes parenting brings heartache; but be encouraged: "We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8, 9).

CONSCIENCE ALLEY: PLAY A GAME OF CHOICE

We make thousands of choices every day, and every one of them counts; some more than others. With God's help, we can choose to do the right thing, even when the temptation to do wrong things is very strong. Play the following game to explore the choice to be trustworthy or untrustworthy in real-life situations.

Instructions:

1. Divide your family and/or friends into two groups and have them stand in a line facing each other, with an "alley" in between.
2. Explain that for each of the scenarios below, one group is to do their best to convince a player to do the *right* thing in that situation. The other group is to try to convince them to do the *wrong* thing.
3. Read aloud the first scenario below.
4. As the first player, walk slowly down the alley between the groups while they try to convince you to do the right thing or the wrong thing as you walk by.
5. At the end share the choice you made and what you heard that convinced you to do so.

Scenarios:

- Mom asks you to tidy your room, but your friends are waiting for you to play soccer. (The right thing: Tell your friends you will be out as soon as you've tidied your room. The wrong thing: Disobey your mom and sneak out.)
- You find \$10 on the sidewalk. (The right thing: Hand the money to an adult; try to find who dropped it. The wrong thing: Secretly pocket the money.)
- You borrowed a friend's ball and lost it.
- On a visit to the store, you see your friend put something in his pocket without paying for it.
- An online game states you need to be 16 years old to play. No one will know you are 8.
- Dad has asked you to rake up the leaves, but you can't find the rake.
- The cashier charges you for two granola bars when you really bought three.
- No one is in the kitchen, so you won't be seen taking a cookie from the tin.
- You said you would help your brother with his homework after school, but your friend has invited you over to play.
- You are supposed to meet your friend at the park in five minutes. You are running late but don't feel like hurrying, because it's a hot day.



JOSEPH: A SLAVE IN EGYPT

OTHERS MAY SEE
THAT MY GOD IS WITH
ME WHEN I LIVE TO
HONOR HIM.

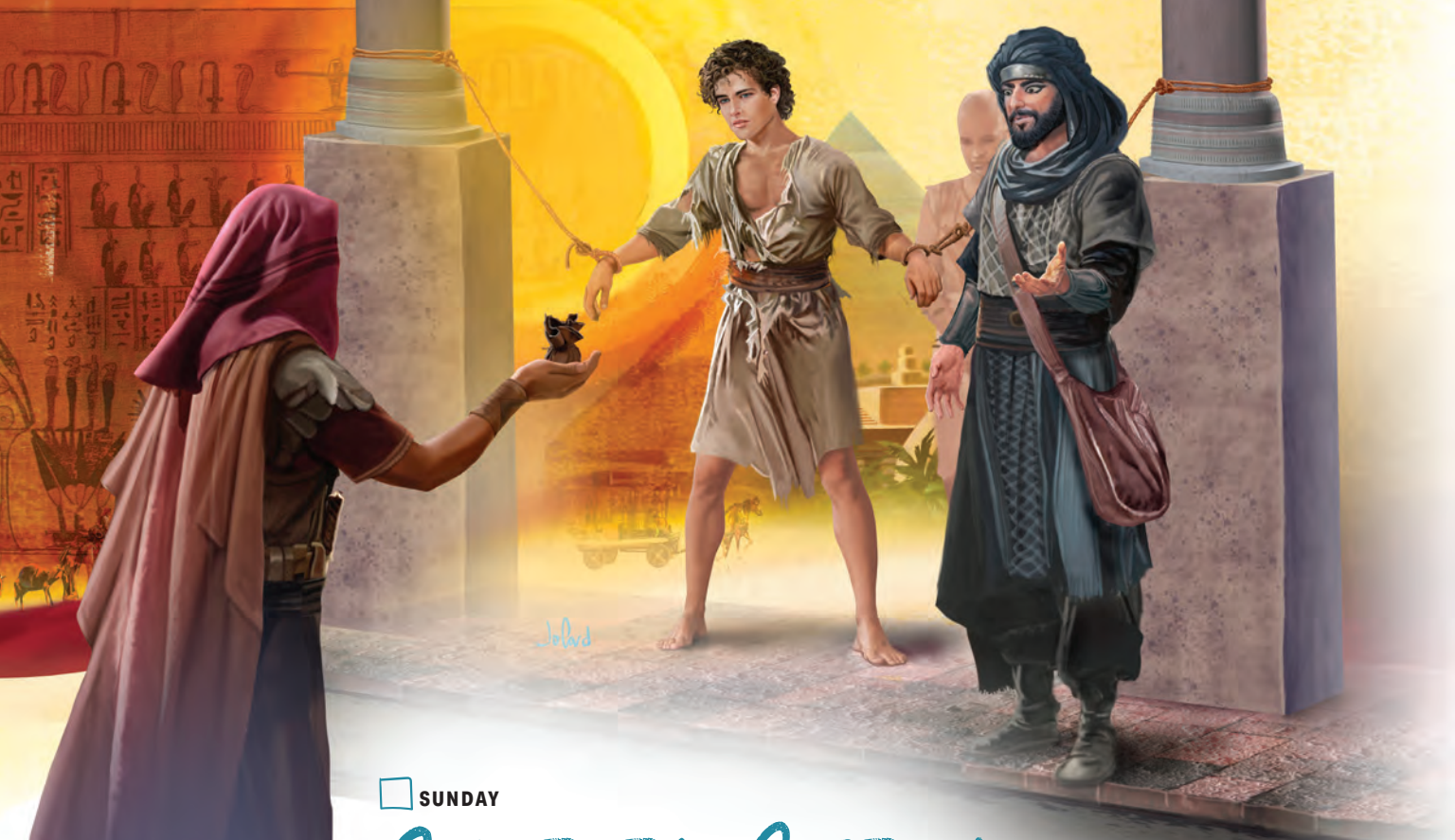
MEMORY VERSE

"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power" (Revelation 4:11).

WORD OF THE WEEK—HONOR:

To show great respect for someone; to treat them as special and important. The Bible tells us to "honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12).

This week's lesson is based on Genesis 39:1-21; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 214-218; *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 101-103; *Education*, pp. 51, 52; *Youth's Instructor*, March 11, 1897; and *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 437-443. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story*, vol. 2, pp. 51-53.



 SUNDAY

SOLD TO THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

Joseph's journey to the foreign country of Egypt was terrifying and lonely. He was no longer the free, respected son of a wealthy leader—he was a slave with his arms bound in rope! Surrounded by strangers, whose language he did not know and whose culture was foreign to him, he must have wondered about all that lay before him and cried for all that he had lost.

The long journey also gave him time to think about his caring God. Joseph had peace in his heart, for he had chosen to honor God by still loving and trusting Him instead of blaming Him for all the terrible things that had happened.

As the camels plodded along, Joseph may even have claimed the promise given to his father, Jacob: "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go" (Genesis 28:15). He needed God's beautiful promises, and they gave him courage when he found himself for sale in the bustling and noisy slave market in Egypt.

A wealthy Egyptian named Potiphar bought Joseph as a slave for his household. What was Potiphar's job? **READ GENESIS 39:1.**

Working in Potiphar's important household was part of God's plan. Although Joseph didn't know it, angels had been sent before him to place him there.

Sometimes things happen to us that are beyond our control. Like Joseph, we can choose to love and trust our caring God, without understanding *how* He will help us. When we do so, we are honoring Him.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Have you honored God today by making the choice to love and trust Him?

MISSION CHALLENGE:

You can honor God by sharing your love for Him with your friends. Invite a friend to Sabbath School in two weeks (week 9)!

PRAY: You may like to pray this verse as part of your prayer: "To God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen" (1 Timothy 1:17).

FAITHFUL IN A STRANGE LAND

Magnificent stone temples and carved columns lined the paved streets, glistening in the afternoon sun. The streets bustled with traders and their camels, army officers in fancy chariots, merchants, slaves, and wealthy women draped in fine fabrics and adorned with gold and jewels.

Their words were as strange to Joseph as the grand pyramids that zigzagged across the desert horizon beyond the great city. This was his new home. Joseph's eyes boggled at the different sights and sounds of Egypt, the strongest nation in the world.

Potiphar's beautiful mansion, the place where Joseph now lived and worked, was nothing like his childhood tent home in the wide-open spaces of Canaan. Joseph felt out of place, and he missed the simple country life he'd enjoyed with his father, who loved God.

Joseph still felt a special closeness with God in this land where everything was so different. While everyone around him worshipped false Egyptian gods and idols in their grand temples, Joseph worshipped God in his heart.

You can also choose to honor God, no matter what others around you might choose. You can pray, "The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me—a prayer to the God of my life" (Psalm 42:8).

God was working powerfully to heal Joseph's sorrow and to give him a cheerfulness that others could see. Joseph never tried to hide his love for God. What did Potiphar notice about Joseph?

READ GENESIS 39:2, 3.

Because Joseph loved and honored God, he had a real love in his heart for others. He honored them by being kind, cheerful, trustworthy, and hardworking. Even though Joseph was just a humble, foreign slave, he was respected and treated well—all because God was with him.

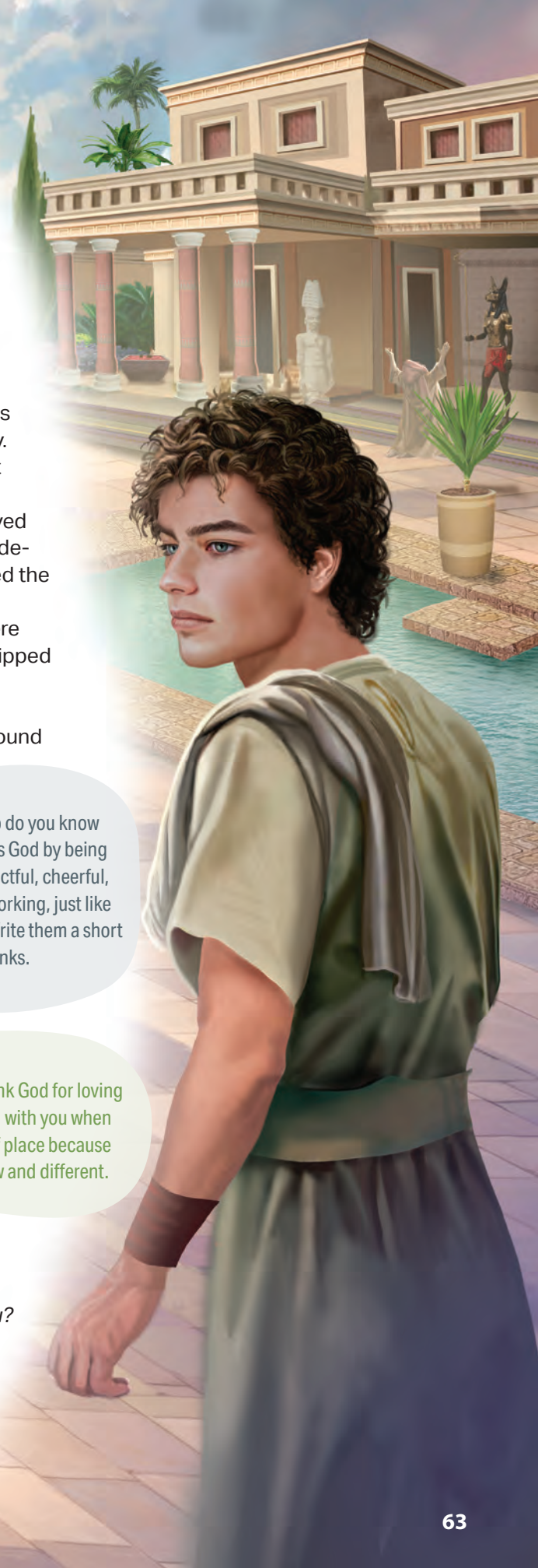
DO: Who do you know that honors God by being kind, respectful, cheerful, and hardworking, just like Joseph? Write them a short note of thanks.

PRAY: Thank God for loving you and being with you when you feel out of place because things are new and different.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Do you sometimes feel lonely or out of place when things in your life change?
- What have you learned from Joseph's life that could help you?

God is very close to us when we feel lonely or out of place. He will help us live to honor Him so that others who don't know God will see that He is with us and that He cares for us.



 TUESDAY

THE TOP JOB

At first Joseph was the least-important slave in Potiphar's house. He was likely given the hardest and messiest jobs. But whether he was sweeping the floor or scrubbing the pots, he always did his work well. Potiphar was watching the young slave closely. He noticed that "the Lord made Joseph successful in everything he did" (Genesis 39:3, ICB). It was God who blessed Joseph's careful, hard work. And Joseph wasn't afraid to tell Potiphar so!

Joseph did so well in his work that after a while he was given a very important new job. What did he do for Potiphar instead? *READ GENESIS 39:4-6.*

It is amazing to think that a stranger in a foreign land—one who couldn't even speak the language at first—was given such responsibility. How did that happen? God's Word tells us, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

Joseph was able to do so much in God's strength, and it made him such a blessing in Egypt. Potiphar had bought Joseph for a few silver coins, but now he was worth so much more! Potiphar had bought a slave, but now Joseph was like a son. Potiphar the master and Joseph the slave now truly honored each other.

When we realize how much God loves us, we want to honor Him by doing our best work. We want to honor others by treating them well, and by being responsible when we work for them. Little by little, as we practice and learn, our best work gets better and better. And the good news is that we don't have to grit our teeth and try really, really hard to learn and practice all by ourselves. God gives us the strength (Philippians 4:13).

PRAY: Thank God for giving you the strength to honor others well.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- How did Joseph show that he honored Potiphar?
- How did Potiphar show that he honored Joseph?
- Whom does God remind you to honor? Read **Exodus 20:12.**

DO: Psalm 66:2 says, "Sing out the honor of His name; make His praise glorious." Sing your memory verse song to God.

TEMPTATION

Joseph was not just hardworking and cheerful; he was also a good-looking guy. Potiphar's wife noticed how handsome he was, and this began to cause a big problem. When Potiphar was away from home, the "master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, 'Lie with me' " (Genesis 39:7). She wanted Joseph to be close to her in a way that only her husband should. How did Joseph respond? *READ GENESIS 39:8, 9.*

Joseph couldn't bring himself to dishonor his God or his master; no matter how important his master's wife was. But like a dripping tap, Potiphar's wife kept asking, and asking, and asking . . . and Joseph refused, day after day. He could easily have given in to her constant temptations, but Joseph loved God too much to hurt Him by doing something that was clearly very wrong. God had helped Joseph refuse the nagging many times. Would Potiphar's wife ever stop?

Sometimes friends or siblings may nag us to do something we know is wrong. They may put pressure on us to take something that doesn't belong to us, or not let someone join a game at school, or sneak off to play when we should be doing our chores. Whenever you're in this position, remember these words from the Bible: "But you can trust God. He will not let you be tempted more than you can stand. But when you are tempted, God will also give you a way to escape that temptation. Then you will be able to stand it" (1 Corinthians 10:13, ICB).

When we are being pressured, our powerful God can give us the strength to choose what is right and continue to honor Him. Like Joseph, we can say, "How then can I do this . . . and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9).

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Can you think of some examples from school or friend groups in which kids are pressured to do/say/watch/act in a way that's not right or the best choice?
- How might you respond if someone puts that kind of pressure on you?

DO: Turn on a faucet so that it barely drips. Watch it for a while. This reminds us of nagging temptations. Turn the tap off tight and praise God that He can give you the strength to turn the "temptation tap" off tight by asking for His help and saying no.

PRAY: Thank God for loving you and showing you how to resist temptations when they keep coming at you.



A TRAP AND A LIE

Potiphar's wife was getting tired of trying to persuade Joseph to do wrong. One day, when no one else was around, she did more than just ask. She grabbed his coat as he walked by, trying to force him to do what she wanted. At that very moment, Joseph knew his whole future depended on how he responded. If he gave in, he would be in big trouble. If he didn't give in, he could be in a different kind of trouble.

In a split second, he calmly turned his eyes to heaven for help, then made his choice. "He had left his garment in her hand and fled and ran outside" (Genesis 39:13).

Joseph would not be pressured or pushed into doing the wrong thing. Potiphar's wife was furious! How dare a Hebrew slave reject a powerful woman like her? What did she do? **READ GENESIS 39:13-15.**

Her lies turned everything upside down: she told the men of her house that Joseph had grabbed her! Because she hadn't gotten her own way, this mean woman wanted revenge. It didn't matter that Joseph was a good man or that he honored his master.

Trouble would surely follow. But Joseph knew that whatever happened, he had done the right thing. The Bible says, "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Psalm 118:6). What a precious Bible truth this is to know and trust—always.

Even when we faithfully honor God and those around us, others may not honor us. Instead, they may try to force us to do something wrong. Like Joseph, we can calmly look to heaven for help. The situation may not change, but God will *always* be right there with us, helping us to be strong.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Why do you think Joseph's immediate response was to calmly turn his eyes to heaven for help when he was in trouble?

DO: To make 1 Corinthians 10:13 special to you, read it below and copy into your own journal—with a change. Every time the word "you" is used, replace it with your name. You can claim this promise in the very moment you are tempted.

"But you can trust God. He will not let you be tempted more than you can stand. But when you are tempted, God will also give you a way to escape that temptation. Then you will be able to stand it"

(1 Corinthians 10:13, ICB).

PARENT FAITH TALK:

Share a time you have made an "in-the-moment" choice to honor God.

PRAY: Ask God to give you the courage to do what's right.





□ FRIDAY

THROWN INTO JAIL

When Potiphar arrived home, his wife was still furious with Joseph and still seeking revenge. What did she do? *READ GENESIS 39:16-18.*

Potiphar felt angry! What a terrible story to come home to. But deep down he doubted his wife's story. This important man, Pharaoh's captain of the guard, had watched Joseph work as a slave at the bottom and at the top; Joseph had always been trustworthy. So instead of having him put to death, as the custom was for such crimes, Potiphar had Joseph thrown into prison.

Locked in that gloomy prison cell, Joseph may have felt discouraged by the unfairness of it all. But he didn't let discouragement sit with him for long. Once again he chose to trust God. He knew that even in prison he could say, "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power" (Revelation 4:11).

Joseph suffered for honoring God in Egypt, but the story doesn't end there. God had a very important work for Joseph to do in the future.

Sometimes bad things happen to good people. Yet when something bad happens, we can choose to honor the God who loves us and is always close to us. Our trust in Him will give us peace and show others what He is like.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- What might Joseph's prayer have been that first night in prison?

FRIDAY NIGHT

SHARE AND PRAISE

- "Love each other like brothers and sisters. Give your brothers and sisters more honor than you want for yourselves" (Romans 12:10, ICB). Discuss ways your family could honor one another.
- Sing together "Anywhere with Jesus" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 508).

FAMILY JOURNAL

- What parts of Joseph's story have shown you more of God's love?
- How would you describe what it means to honor someone?
- Who will you show honor to this week and how?

PRAY

As a family, join hands and pray for God's strength to always stand up for what's right.

FOR YOU, PARENTS

"The seed sown in infancy by the careful, God-fearing mother will become trees of righteousness, which will blossom and bear fruit; and the lessons given by a God-fearing father by precept and example will, as in the case of Joseph, yield an abundant harvest by and by" (Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 116).

VENGEFUL BEASTS

Who am I?

- I can be found on every continent except Antarctica.
- I am often nocturnal, hiding in the day and coming out at night to eat.
- If I eat a big meal, I can survive for six to 12 months without needing to eat again.
- I have eight legs, one tail, and two claws.
- I shed my exoskeleton up to seven times until I reach my full size.



Yes—I'm a scorpion!

You probably don't want to hear it, but the world has about 1,700 species of scorpions. Scorpions, like spiders, have eight legs and belong to the arachnid family. They feed on insects, other arachnids, small rodents, and lizards, catching prey with their two lobster-like claws and killing them with a venomous stinger attached to the end of their abdominal tail. In most species the sting is merely painful to humans; although, the sting of one species, the Arizona bark scorpion, has proved fatal to toddlers and elderly people.

Scorpions have been known to kill and devour their own species and even demonstrate vengeful behavior. One experimenter placed 100 scorpions in a large glass container. After a few days only 14 remained—the rest had been killed and eaten by the others. The experimenter then put a pregnant female in a glass jar and observed her eating her young as fast as they were born. However, one of them managed to escape, taking refuge on its mother's back and then vengefully killing her in return!

Who was vengeful in this week's story? What helped Joseph stay strong through this hard time?

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JOSEPH: FROM PRISON TO PALACE

GOD IS REAL, AND HE
WORKS IN MY LIFE.

MEMORY VERSE

"The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth" (Exodus 34:6).

WORD OF THE WEEK—CHARACTER:

All the qualities that make a person who they are. A person's character will be shown by how they act, think, and feel. A person with a good character will act, think, and feel in good ways, such as being honest, respectful, responsible, caring, and fair. Think about what God's character is like.



☐ SUNDAY

IN PRISON

The prison door slammed with a loud clang. In the dim light Joseph looked at the solid walls surrounding him. He had lost his freedom yet again.

Years had passed since Joseph's older brothers had sold him as a slave. During this time God had helped the slave become supervisor of Potiphar's house. Joseph was so trusted that Potiphar had "left all that he had in Joseph's hand" (Genesis 39:6). What freedom for a slave! But now these prison walls held him truly captive.

It was unfair—he was innocent! How could he prove Potiphar's wife had lied to hurt him? He was just a poor Hebrew slave with no money or powerful friends to help him. Except for One. "But the Lord was with Joseph" (Genesis 39:21).

Joseph knew that the same God who had helped him as a slave was still looking after him as a prisoner. The situation was unfair, lonely, and hard. But he knew God's beautiful character, so He chose to keep trusting Him. What is God's character like? *READ EXODUS 34:6*, your memory verse.

Who wouldn't trust a friend like that? So right there in prison, Joseph chose to trust the God who had fulfilled His promises to care for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and who had always cared for Joseph.

Like Joseph, we can trust God's words. The Bible promises, "The Lord Himself . . . will be with you. He will not leave you or forget you. Don't be afraid. Don't worry" (Deuteronomy 31:8, ICB).

Joseph didn't know it yet, but this prison would be his home for the next three years. "But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy" (Genesis 39:21). What a beautiful Friend!

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Joseph had already learned that God is trustworthy. What else does Joseph's story thus far tell you about God's character? He is . . . ?

First John 4:8 says, "God is love." He is a real friend we can trust no matter what.

DO: Ask God to help you to be a trustworthy friend. Make a list of friends at school, church, or in your neighborhood. Beside each name, write ideas of things you can say or do to be a friend others can trust.

PRAY: Thank God for His beautiful character.

MISSION CHALLENGE:

Pray with your family for the friend you invited to Sabbath School in week 9.



PARENT FAITH TALK: What character quality has God developed in your life, or in the life of a good friend? Share this to encourage your child.

DO: On a piece of paper, write the character quality you would most like God's help with. Put it beside your bed to remind you to pray and ask God to work on this characteristic.

MONDAY

A LEADER IN PRISON

Joseph didn't sit grumbling in a dark corner of the prison cell. No! Instead he looked for ways to be a blessing to others. He had been put into a prison with the king's prisoners. He befriended them, and little by little, they began to trust him. They saw that he was kind, calm, and cheerful. They saw that he wasn't rude or disrespectful to the prison guards. His beautiful character shone like a light in the darkness of the dungeon.

The prison keeper also noticed, and he was impressed. What did he do? *READ GENESIS 39:21-23.*

Just as he had been trusted in Potiphar's house, Joseph was now trusted in prison. He was made a leader and put in charge of the other prisoners. The prison keeper did this because "the Lord was with Joseph" (Genesis 39:21). Again, in verse 23, the Bible says, "The Lord was with him." God really, really wants us to know that He is with us too, so He repeated this important message.

Do you think the prison keeper would have put a mean, lying, bad-mouthed prisoner in charge? No way! God was working in Joseph's life, making his character beautiful so he could be a wise and caring leader. "And whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper" (Genesis 39:23).

Joseph may not have said much about his God in the prison at first, but the prison keeper and all the prisoners could see that Joseph was different. He showed them, through his actions, that God is kind and good.

Our powerful God can work in our lives to make us friendly, kind, calm, and cheerful too. We may not realize it, but others are watching, and they will see that our loving God is real.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- God is working in your life, just like Joseph's. What character quality would you most like Him to work on and why? For example: patient, forgiving, unselfish, gentle, generous.

PRAY: Praise God that your character can shine for Him. Tell Him how much you love Him.

☐ TUESDAY

DREAMS, DREAMS

One morning Joseph noticed that two of the prisoners he cared for in the king's prison were looking particularly sad. The pair had held important roles in the royal household—one was Pharaoh's chief butler and the other his baker—until the day Pharaoh had become angry with them and thrown them into prison. "Why do you look so sad today?" Joseph asked (Genesis 40:7).

They replied, "We both had dreams last night. But no one can explain the meaning of them to us" (Genesis 40:8, ICB).

Joseph smiled. God could do this! He said, "God is the only one who can explain the meaning of dreams. So tell me your dreams" (Genesis 40:8, ICB). They did, and with God's help, Joseph told them what the dreams meant. Read about it in *GENESIS 40:9-22*. What does Joseph ask of the butler in verse 14?

The news for the butler was wonderful: he would return to his job in three days! But sadly, the baker would die in three days. Sure enough, that's exactly what happened!

God gave the butler and the baker the dreams. He showed Joseph what they meant, so that God's plans and power could be seen by others. When God shows people the future, it is called a *prophecy*. God shared many prophecies with His people in the Bible, and most of them have already come true. The rest will come true in the future. Fulfilled prophecies show us that God is real and that He can always be trusted.

Sometimes prophecies are shared in dreams, as they were for the butler and the baker. As you grow older, you will learn about some of God's big and important prophecies that were shared in dreams. They will help you to love and trust God more, just as Joseph did.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Why do you think Joseph offered to interpret the dreams?
- You may not be able to interpret dreams, but how can you help others to know that God is real?

Our wonderful God gives and fulfills prophecies so that people will have the opportunity to love and trust Him because they know that He is real.

FAST FACT: A butler was responsible for tasting the king's wine in case someone tried to poison him.

PRAY: Thank God for His prophecies that help you to know that He is real.

PHARAOH'S DREAMS

Pharaoh paced the palace floor, deeply troubled by his two weird dreams. The images swirled through his mind. *READ GENESIS 41:2-7* to find out what Pharaoh dreamed.

What could it mean? Puzzled and anxious, he knew those dreams were important and had something to do with the future. But he just couldn't figure them out. As the sun came up he called for his magicians and wise men. Surely *they* were clever enough to figure out the meaning of his dreams.

Those important royal advisers were considered the wisest men in all of Egypt. They tried to tell the future using the stars and magic. But of course that didn't work. When the God of heaven gives dreams, all the magic in the world will never unlock their meaning. How sad that those men had never heard of God and didn't know of His power.

In the end the wise men and magicians could only tremble and shake their heads. They were no help at all! Pharaoh got really angry, and fear spread throughout the palace. The chief butler heard about the dreams, and he remembered Joseph. What did he say to the king? *READ GENESIS 41:9-13.*

The Bible declares, "Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord; nor are there any works like Your works" (Psalm 86:8). Those magicians and wise men had no idea of the truth of those words, but they were about to find out.

The one true God of heaven is the only God that is real and powerful. Some people have never heard of God, so He gives them the opportunity to see that their false gods are not real and cannot help them.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Why couldn't the magicians and wise men interpret the dreams?
- What do you think Pharaoh will do next?

PRAY: Thank God that you know He is powerful and real. Pray for those who don't know He is.

FAST FACTS:

- In the Hindu religion cows are considered sacred. They are sometimes decorated and worshipped in festivals in India.
- In Vietnam some people place bowls of fresh fruit beside statues of their gods, so things may go well for them.
- In 2017 an estimated 430,000 full-time Christian missionaries were sharing Jesus in a foreign country.



JOSEPH'S GOD TO THE RESCUE

The palace runner panted out his request: the king needed to see Joseph—*now!* After a quick shave and a clean set of clothes, Joseph stood before the king of Egypt with his head bowed and a prayer in his heart.

Pharaoh asked Joseph to tell him the meaning of his troubling dream. Joseph knew he couldn't interpret dreams, so he quickly replied, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace" (Genesis 41:16).

And that is exactly what happened. God explained the dreams to Joseph, and Joseph explained them to Pharaoh. He shared how the fat cows and the plump ears of corn meant that for seven years there would be plenty of food in Egypt because the crops would grow very well. The seven skinny cows and the seven tiny ears of corn meant that there would then be seven long, hard years of famine (hunger) because of a terrible drought (time of no rain).

Imagine how awful that news sounded to the king of Egypt! While he trembled and stared helplessly into the future, Joseph calmly continued. "Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt" (Genesis 41:33). He then gave more wise advice. *READ GENESIS 41:34-36.*

Joseph stepped back and waited. He, a slave, had done a daring thing to give advice to a king. But the king's face relaxed as he sat in awe of this foreign prisoner who had outlined such wise plans to save his country. Things might not be so bad after all.

God had done it again through Joseph. Because Joseph had committed his life to God, he had been able to show how real and wonderful the God of heaven is. God can give us wisdom as we tell others about Him too.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- How wise are you? What could you do when you don't feel wise? Read **James 1:5**.
- How good are you at giving God credit for giving you wisdom? Look for opportunities to do so.

PRAY: Place your hand on James 1:5 in your Bible as you ask God to give you wisdom to know when to boldly tell others about Him.

DO: Make up a tune for James 1:5. Practice it and sing it to your family.





□ FRIDAY

GOVERNOR IN CHARGE

Pharaoh knew Joseph was right: he would need a wise man to help Egypt through this crisis. But where would he find a man like this? He sat pondering, and then the answer came to him. Of course! Joseph was just the man his kingdom needed! He said to his servants, "Can we find a better man than Joseph to take this job? God's Spirit is truly in him" (Genesis 41:38, ICB). Then what did he say to Joseph? *READ GENESIS 41:39-41.*

Joseph's beautiful character, his wise words, and his God-given ability to interpret dreams had convinced the king that Joseph's powerful God was real and that He was working in Joseph's life. Potiphar believed this, the prison guard and prisoners had seen this, the king of Egypt knew this, and one day soon the whole of Egypt would know of Joseph's God too.

Joseph's dreadful prison days had finally come to an end. To his surprise, governor's clothes and the king's ring were quickly given to him. He was crowned second-in-command over all the land of Egypt. Truly, "the Lord was with Joseph" (Genesis 39:2).

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Read **Matthew 25:23** and discuss how this relates to Joseph's life. What might it look like in your life?

FRIDAY NIGHT

SHARE AND PRAISE

- Say or sing your memory verse and teach it to your family. Have them choose their favorite word from this verse and share why.
- Give each family member a piece of play-dough or salt dough, or a pencil and paper. Create or draw something from part of the story. Share, then sequence them in order of the story.

FAMILY JOURNAL

- How has this week's lesson helped you to know how real God really is?
- What six words would you use to describe Joseph's character in this week's lesson?
- What has Joseph's story taught you about God's character? Add to your list from Sunday. He is . . .

PRAY

Gather the family together. Thank God for who He is, each naming one of His amazing character traits.

FOR YOU, PARENTS

God will be active in the lives of your children, just as He was in Joseph's. Only God knows the beautiful witness your child's character will be one day. "Joseph's religion kept his temper sweet and his sympathy with humanity warm and strong, notwithstanding all his trials . . . He is cheerful, for he is a Christian gentleman. God was preparing him . . . for a situation of great responsibility, honor and usefulness, and he was willing to learn." (Ellen G. White, *Letter 3*, 1879).

DIGGING FOR TREASURES

When archaeologists search and dig carefully for objects from ancient cities, they sometimes find interesting things that help us understand how people lived at certain times in history.

Archaeologists in Egypt have found treasures that tell us about what it was like for Joseph when he lived there thousands of years ago.

Archaeology confirms what the Bible tells us about Joseph becoming second in command to the pharaoh of Egypt. Joseph was given symbols of power such as the king's signet ring, fine linen clothing, a gold chain to wear around his neck, and the Pharaoh's second chariot. Each of these items was important in Egyptian culture.

A blob of hot wax was used to seal an important letter or paper. Before the wax cooled, Joseph would have pressed the king's signet ring into it, leaving an imprint in the wax, such as a symbol, art, name, or initials. This seal showed that the message inside was very important, and that it had the king's authority. The seal had the same importance that a signature has today.

The gold chain was given to honor a person for either being a war hero or for showing wisdom about how to lead a country. Joseph's God-given wisdom about how to get Egypt through the years of famine earned him the gold chain.

It was also an honor for Joseph to be given the Pharaoh's second chariot. It would have been the same as a king or ruler today giving someone his very expensive second car.

Each of these gifts showed the importance of the position Joseph had been given in Egypt. God used him in that position to save Egypt and his family.

Sourced and adapted from: Susanne Binder, "Joseph's Rewarding and Investiture (Genesis 41:41-43) and the Gold of Honour in New Kingdom Egypt," in *Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History Imperialism, Ideology and Literature. Proceedings of a Conference at the University of Haifa, 3-7 May 2009*, ed. S. Bar, D. Kahn, and J.J. Shirley (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 44-64.



Johard

JOSEPH: GOVERNOR OF EGYPT

GOD LOVES EVERYONE,
AND HE WANTS ALL PEOPLE
TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY
TO KNOW HIM.

MEMORY VERSE

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3, 4).

WORD OF THE WEEK—OPPORTUNITY:

An experience or a time that makes it possible to learn, know, or do something new. For example: Ethan had the opportunity to learn about Jesus when he stayed with his Christian friend.

This week's lesson is based on the story of Joseph, the governor of Egypt as found in Genesis 41:46-57 and 42. Some insights have also been drawn from *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 224-227 and *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, pp. 449-453 to enhance this lesson. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story*, vol. 2, pp. 61-65.

A VERY BUSY GOVERNOR

People cleared the streets, whispering with excitement as the sound of galloping hooves and whirling wheels approached. It was Pharaoh's own chariot! Officials raced before it and cried out, "Bow the knee!" The people dropped respectfully while trying to catch a glimpse of the second most important man in Egypt, Pharaoh's governor.

Dressed in fine linen with a beautiful gold chain shining in the light, Joseph may have waved or smiled as he sped past. He had much to do to help these people! How much power had Pharaoh given him to do his work? *READ GENESIS 41:44.*

As he raced throughout all the land of Egypt on his mission, Governor Joseph may have wondered about the twists and turns his life had taken. His powerful God had freed him from a deep pit, freed him from slavery, and freed him from prison. Now at the age of 30 he was the governor of Egypt, with only the king above him!

He looked like an Egyptian, spoke like an Egyptian, had an Egyptian name, and an Egyptian wife. But in his heart he was still Joseph, God's trusting child.

Joseph had clung to his God during difficult times, and those around him had seen that God is real. Now he needed God's help to do the massive job ahead of him. Only then could he continue to show the people of Egypt that God loved everyone, not just him.

He knew that a terrible famine was coming, "so he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt" (Genesis 41:48). These were busy years of planning, organizing, building barns, and storing grain. Seven years later the people were full, the cattle were fat and full, and Joseph's huge barns were full. All because God loved the Egyptians enough to show Pharaoh the future.

All was well . . . for now.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Psalm 67:4 (ICB) says of God, "You guide all the nations on earth." How did God show that He was guiding Egypt?

Do: Imagine you are an Egyptian news reporter. Pretend you are sharing Joseph's busy activities on the evening news.

MISSION CHALLENGE: Share what you learned from last week (along with your craft from Sabbath School yesterday) with someone much older than you.

PRAY: Thank God for loving you and everyone else in the world.





MONDAY

FAMINE STRIKES

Suddenly the seven good years ended, just as God had told Joseph they would. Crops withered, garden plants shriveled in the scorching sun, and the ground grew cracked and hard. It wasn't long before the hungry, worried Egyptians took their troubles to Pharaoh, for they had eaten all the food in their homes. Without a moment's hesitation the king told them exactly what to do. What did he tell them? *READ GENESIS 41:55.*

The hungry people were happy to follow the king's instructions, for they had learned to trust Joseph little by little during the past seven years. They had seen how wise and kind he was. So when Joseph swung the barn doors wide open and sold the grain to the starving people, they were very grateful to Joseph and his God.

Pharaoh and his helpers had come to know about Joseph's caring God. And now *all* the people had the opportunity to see the wisdom and goodness of Joseph's God close-up. With Joseph's help, God was keeping them alive in a terrible famine. Surely He must love them too.

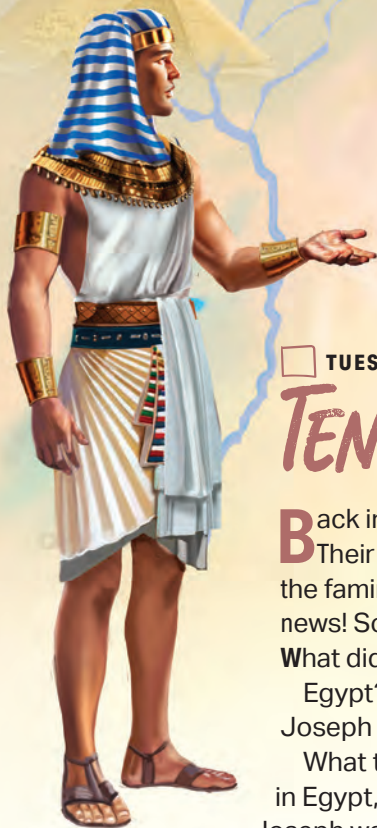
Our awesome God wants all people to know how much He loves them. The words of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 describe God's love: "Love is patient and kind. . . . Love is not rude, is not selfish, and does not become angry easily. . . . Love . . . always continues strong" (ICB). When we know how much God loves us and we love Him back as Joseph did, we will also love others. We will want to give them the opportunity to know God too.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Read **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**. How much do you feel drawn to those who show this kind of love?
- Imagine you are shopping at the corner store and that the man serving you doesn't know God. How well could you show him God's love?

Do: God used His friend Joseph to help Egypt survive a terrible drought. What disasters or climate events are happening near you? Fires, floods, drought, or people fleeing war? With your family, visit the ADRA website in your region to learn about ways you can help.

PRAY: Pray 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 back to God, thanking Him for loving everyone that much.



□ TUESDAY

TEN HUNGRY BROTHERS

Back in the land of Canaan, Joseph's family was tired and worried. Their tummies rumbled with hunger and their cows grew thin, for the famine had reached them too. Then Jacob heard some amazing news! Somehow God got word to him that there was grain for sale in Egypt.

What did Jacob do? *READ GENESIS 42:2.*

Egypt? Go to *Egypt*? The brothers may have shuddered as they remembered selling Joseph to the traders headed for that land. *Would he still be there?* they may have wondered.

What the brothers didn't know was that God had been working in an amazing way down in Egypt, providing the nation with food. They didn't know about Pharaoh's dreams or that Joseph was the governor and grain manager there. They knew only that there was grain to be had, and their families would die without it.

So the 10 hungry brothers saddled up their donkeys and headed south to Egypt, leaving their youngest brother Benjamin at home with old Father Jacob. They traveled over the hills and through the dusty desert, all the way to Egypt.

Romans 11:34 says, "For who has known the mind of the Lord?" Joseph's brothers didn't know what God was doing, and we don't always know either. But we can always trust that *He* knows what He is doing. God could have just sent rain to Egypt as usual, or He could have given the dreams to one of His faithful people in Canaan. But God chose to work through Joseph in a godless country so that many, *many* people could learn about the true God and how much He loves everyone.

Because our loving God wants everyone to have the opportunity to know Him, He sometimes does things we may not understand. But we can always trust that He has a good reason for everything He does.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- "God's wisdom and knowledge have no end!" (Romans 11:33, ICB). How do you feel, knowing that God is so wise and that He always has a very good reason for what He does?
- Do you think Joseph's brothers have learned this yet? Why or why not?

Do: On the map above, trace with your finger the 250-mile (400-kilometer) journey the brothers would have made from Hebron in Canaan to Egypt.

PRAY: Using your fingers, think of five people you know who don't yet know Jesus. Fold down a finger as you pray for each one.

MEETING THE GOVERNOR OF EGYPT

Joseph glanced up from his work to see yet another group of foreign shepherds coming toward him to seek permission to buy grain. The famine had hit many places hard. God had been so good to prepare Egypt to not only meet their own needs but help out their neighbors too.

The shepherds came closer still. *Could it be?* Imagine Joseph's shocked surprise when he recognized them as his 10 older brothers! Of course they never recognized him, for he dressed and spoke like a true Egyptian. But before he knew it, they were bowing down while he stood tall in front of them. And that's when it hit Joseph: his dreams of long ago were coming true!

Joseph quickly counted them and noticed that Benjamin was missing. Had he also been a victim of his brothers' cruelty? That's when Joseph decided not to tell them who he was; not yet. He wanted to be sure they weren't the same mean brothers who had sold him some 20 years before.

Joseph would test them. "You are spies!" he said sternly (Genesis 42:9).

In fact he accused them of being spies three times. And each time their reply told him a little more. What did Joseph learn about his family? **READ GENESIS 42:13.**

What a relief! But that news wasn't enough to convince Joseph their characters had changed. Joseph wasn't sure if he could trust his brothers yet, but he was sure of one thing: God loved his brothers. God loved them enough to keep them alive in a famine, give them another opportunity to choose Him, and to say they were sorry for being so cruel to their brother. Joseph prayed they would.

Because God loves people so much, He gives them opportunities to say they are sorry for things they have done wrong. Sometimes it may look like there will never be an opportunity, but God can make it happen.

Do: Fold a piece of paper in half. On the outside, draw Joseph's dream about the wheat sheaves. Inside the flap, draw Joseph's brothers bowing down to him.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- When has God given you an opportunity to say you're sorry to someone you have hurt?
- Second Peter 3:9 says that God is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." How do you feel, knowing that God wants everyone to feel sorry for their sins and be saved?

PRAY: Thank God for loving you and giving you opportunities to say you're sorry to those you have hurt.



BROTHERS TESTED

Joseph continued to test his brothers. He wanted to see if they were being honest about Benjamin and if they cared about Father Jacob. Joseph told them that he would put them in prison while one of the brothers went to fetch their youngest brother.

They were thrown into prison for three frightening days. Oh, no! They needed to get home to their anxious father, and the grain needed to get home to their hungry families.

In prison, bitter guilt settled on the miserable brothers as they thought about how terribly they had treated Joseph. They were sure that was why they were in this terrible mess in Egypt.

Then Joseph came up with a different plan. One brother was to stay in prison while the other brothers would go home, take grain to their father, and return with their youngest brother.

The brothers agreed to this plan and talked things over. They didn't know that Joseph could understand every word, because he had spoken only Egyptian to them through an interpreter. What he heard touched his heart, and he rushed from the room to hide his tears. What did he hear? *READ GENESIS 42:21, 22.*

Oh how those brother's needed God's love! They wore their guilt like a heavy cloak. They had kept their terrible secret for many years, and whenever things went wrong, they felt as if God was punishing them. Joseph knew this was wrong thinking. He also knew that whenever we feel guilty, God is giving us the opportunity to say we are sorry. Then He can forgive us and shower us with His love. This is a truth God wants everyone to know—because He loves them!

THINK... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- How could the brothers have gotten rid of their terrible guilt?
- How do you feel when you know you have done something wrong?
- How do you feel when you have asked for forgiveness? Read **Psalm 32:1**.

God understands how awful we feel when guilt settles in our hearts. He gives us opportunities to come to Him and say we're sorry for what we have done wrong, as well as saying we're sorry to those we have hurt. God wants to free us from guilt, not punish us for our mistakes.

PARENT FAITH TALK:

Share about a time you felt happy after forgiveness replaced your guilt.

Do: Is there something you feel guilty about? Find a hiding place on your own and go there to tell God and ask for His forgiveness. Then step "out of hiding" into the freedom of being forgiven!

PRAY: Pray Psalm 32:1 back to God, inserting your own name in place of "he" and "whose."





FRIDAY

HOMeward BOUND WITH PRECIOUS FOOD

Tears streamed down Joseph's face. He let them fall. He then quickly dried his eyes before returning to his older brothers to play the role of tough governor of Egypt. He chose Simeon to stay behind in prison, and "tied him up while the other brothers watched" (Genesis 42:24, ICB). But in secret Joseph showered his other brothers with kindness. He ordered his servants to fill their sacks with grain, put each man's money back in his sack, and provide extra food for the journey.

After loading up their donkeys, the worried brothers began their long trek home. When they stopped for the night, something surprising happened. *READ GENESIS 42:27.*

Terror gripped them all over again, and they said to each other, "What is this that God has done to us?" (Genesis 42:28). Those stressed-out brothers had no idea their loving brother just couldn't bring himself to accept money from his father or brothers.

When they finally reached home, their anxious families heard their frightening story. When the rest of the brothers found their money returned inside their sacks too, fear filled their hearts. Jacob was so distressed that he said, "Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me" (Genesis 42:36).

Poor Father Jacob. If only he knew Joseph was safe in Egypt, sharing God's love with the people there. If only he knew Joseph loved his brothers and was opening the way for them to be freed from their guilt. If only . . .

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Why do you think Joseph waited to tell his brothers who he was?

FRIDAY NIGHT

SHARE AND PRAISE

Engage your family in a story circle. Hold hands, then begin telling this week's story of Joseph. After you have told a little, squeeze the hand of the person next to you and have them continue. Keep going until the story is told.

FAMILY JOURNAL

- How many ways did God show His love for the Egyptians in this story? And for Joseph's brothers?
- What is your favorite part of this week's lesson? Why?

PRAY

Thank God for your favorite part of this week's story and for His amazing love for you.

FOR YOU, PARENTS

"And the graces of our Saviour's character, implanted in our hearts, will shed around us a precious fragrance. The spirit of love, meekness, and forbearance pervading our life will have power to soften and subdue hard hearts and win to Christ bitter opposers of the faith" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 174).

THE SWEET SMELL OF CHRIST

“God uses us to spread his knowledge everywhere like a sweet-smelling perfume. Our offering to God is this: We are the sweet smell of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are being lost” (2 Corinthians 2:14, 15, ICB). Think about the way Joseph’s life was a “sweet-smelling perfume” in Egypt. How did he share God’s love with the Egyptians and his brothers?

PERFUME LOWDOWN

- Perfume making is considered both an art and a science. Why do you think that is?
- While the first perfumer recorded in history was a woman in Babylon, the Egyptians were the first to make perfume a part of their culture, creating beautiful glass and stone vessels to hold their balms and oils.
- Rose and Jasmine are the most common floral ingredients in perfume. Musk (once from a deer, now human-made) and vetiver (a woody-smelling root) are common in men’s fragrances.
- Perfume makers today can use scents made from chemicals that copy almost every smell you can think of: wet grass, washed laundry, crisp apples . . . even toasted cheese!
- Perfumes are often based on scent families. The four main types are: floral (flowers), fresh (like water or citrus), woody (like a forest), or Oriental (like sandalwood or patchouli).

YOUR SCENT

- Go for a “perfume walk” around your house, garden, or a local park. Pause to smell your favorite things. If possible, collect nice things to bring inside: something herby, floral, woody, sweet . . .
- Create a scent library on paper, noting all the smells you love that might make a great perfume. What would be a terrible smell to bottle?
- You may like to design a bottle for a perfume or men’s fragrance called “2 Corinthians 2:15.” What qualities, rather than scents, would go into this perfume?

THE REAL PERFUME: SERVICE CHALLENGE

- Read over **2 Corinthians 2:15** again. As a family brainstorm ways you could be “sweet-smelling perfume” in your community. You might like to: sing at an aged care home, visit a lonely person, have a literature stall at a local fair, pray with someone who is hurting, do some baking and deliver it to a needy family.
- Choose one of your ideas and write a plan outlining how and when you will make it happen.
- Think about how to not only show people about Jesus but tell them about Him too.

A FAMILY REUNITED



GOD SEES THE END FROM THE BEGINNING AND CAN TURN DIFFICULT EXPERIENCES INTO BLESSINGS.

MEMORY VERSE

"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

WORD OF THE WEEK—PROVIDENCE:

God's guidance and care for us, and His wise preparation for our future needs. We see God's providence in our lives when we don't know what we need or how our needs will be met. For example: God's providence is having a neighbor share their vegetables when they don't know you have almost run out of food.

A HARD CHOICE

The sacks of grain were emptying fast. The terrible famine that had driven the brothers to seek food in Egypt had only gotten worse since their return home. Now with grain dwindling, the brothers knew they could not ignore their bigger problem any longer: they needed to take Benjamin to Egypt to free their brother Simeon from prison.

"Go back, buy us a little food," said Father Jacob (Genesis 43:2). There was no way they could go back without Benjamin, they explained again. Would their father finally agree now that times were desperate?

Judah, the brother who had suggested they sell their little brother so long ago, now put his own life on the line for his whole family. He would take Benjamin and be totally responsible for him. "If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever" (Genesis 43:9). After a difficult conversation, old Father Jacob finally agreed.

Donkeys were loaded with presents for the governor, and sad goodbyes were said. Then with tears in his eyes Jacob prayed for his sons before they departed. "I pray that God All-Powerful will cause the governor to be merciful to you. I pray that he will allow Simeon and Benjamin to come back with you" (Genesis 43:14, ICB).

This beautiful prayer encouraged the brothers as they headed back to Egypt. They really didn't want to face the stern Egyptian governor again. But God was already answering Father Jacob's prayer. God was guiding the brothers, and He was preparing something wonderful for them in Egypt—more wonderful than they could ever dream of.

Sometimes we don't want to do difficult things, but God is with us, and He is wisely preparing for good things to happen when we do.



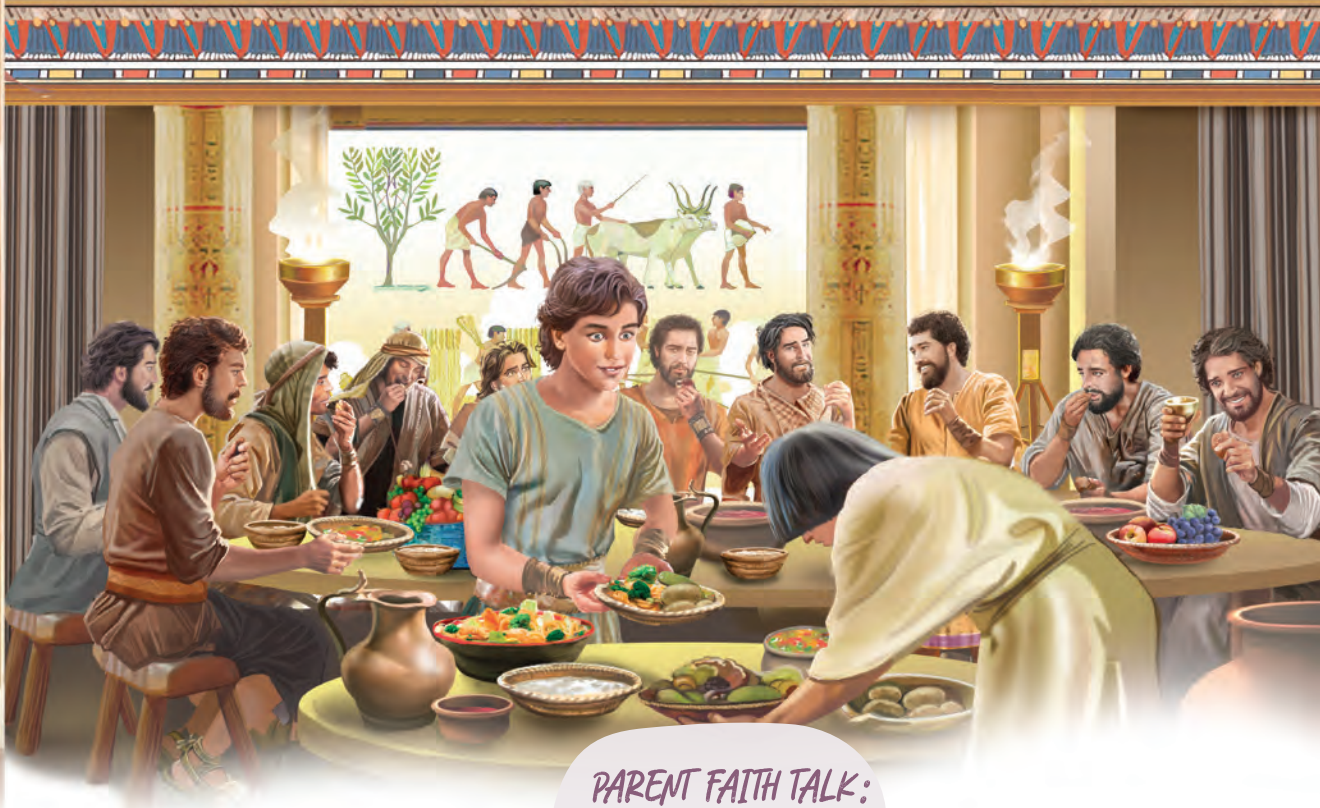
PRAY: Ask God to help you do difficult things when you don't really want to.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Why do you think Judah acted differently now?
- Have you ever had to do something difficult that must be done?

DO: Read **Philippians 4:19**, your memory verse. Write it out and display it where you will see it each day. Underline the words that encourage you.





PARENT FAITH TALK:

Share a time you have seen God's providence in your life.

DO: Is there someone at school who would appreciate a nicer lunch than the plain one they usually have? Offer to share with them one day this week. Plan to take extra.

MONDAY

A SURPRISE LUNCH

Joseph's heart skipped a beat. Once again, his brothers stood before him. But now, there was one more. Benjamin was here! Joseph stopped himself from running to his brother and wrapping him in a hug. Turning instead to his steward, his most-trusted assistant, he ordered that the men be brought to his house—for lunch! Then, with a swish of his robe, he was gone. Joseph rushed away to a private place so he could weep. Benjamin, his little brother, was here!

But the brothers stood frozen with fear. They told the steward all about their worries. Why were they scared? *READ GENESIS 43:18.*

The steward kindly replied, "Peace be with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks" (Genesis 43:23). Then he brought out their brother Simeon and led them to Joseph's grand home. Seeing Governor Joseph, the brothers bowed low—as low as they could go! Joseph's eyes opened wide. It was just like the sheaves of grain and the twinkling stars in his dreams. The special dreams from God were coming true! Joseph felt in awe as his brothers slowly stood up. God had put him in Egypt long ago so that he could provide for his family now. This was God's providence.

But had his brothers truly changed? He would test them again. He had his servants give Benjamin five times more food than the others. His plate was piled higher, and higher, and higher! Joseph watched and listened. Would his brothers be jealous and mean?

Not a jealous look or angry word passed their lips. The brothers all ate together with joy. Joseph's smile grew wider and wider.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Why do you think Joseph gave his hungry brothers a big, yummy lunch?
- How did God provide for the brothers' needs in this story? Try to also think about more than just their physical needs.

PRAY: Thank God for His providence and care in your life.



□ TUESDAY

ONE FINAL TEST

Joseph was *almost* convinced that his brothers had truly changed, but he decided to test them one more time. What did he do? *READ GENESIS 44:1, 2.*

As the morning sun peeped over the horizon, the well-fed brothers left Egypt with their bulging sacks of grain. They laughed and chatted happily together. What a relief to be taking Benjamin home to their father, safe and well.

But their happiness didn't last long. The sound of pounding hooves suddenly came from behind. In a blur of color, Joseph's steward overtook them and brought them to a sudden stop. Jumping to the ground, he accused them of stealing Joseph's cup. Angrily he asked, "Why have you paid back evil for good? . . . You have done a very wicked thing!" (Genesis 44:4, 5, ICB). He searched the men's sacks and found Joseph's cup. The stunned brothers tore their clothes to show their grief and headed back to Egypt. Their journey was hard, because "worry makes a person feel as if he is carrying a heavy load" (Proverbs 12:25, ICB).

As punishment, Governor Joseph demanded that Benjamin become his slave, while the others were to go free. That's when Judah stepped in. God had worked a beautiful miracle in his heart, turning cruelty into compassion. He begged to take Benjamin's place. That way Benjamin could return home, for how would Father Jacob ever cope with the loss of another favored son?

Clutching their torn robes, the fearful brothers waited for the governor to respond. They didn't know it yet, but God was about to turn this difficult experience into a blessing. Only God knows the end from the beginning, so only He knew things would turn out well.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- How willing would you have been to take Benjamin's place? Why did Judah offer to do that?

Our all-knowing God sees the end from the beginning. We can trust Him to turn our worries and difficult situations into blessings.

DO: Dress up as you imagine Judah would have looked. Pretend you are Judah as you read his beautiful speech in **Genesis 44:18-34** to your family. Discuss how selfless Judah had become. (Note: You may choose to practice this now and present it for Sabbath evening worship.)

MISSION CHALLENGE:

Give the friend you invited to Sabbath School something to keep learning about Jesus.

PRAY: Thank God that He can turn your worries into blessings.

MY BROTHERS!

After Judah's beautiful speech, Joseph couldn't hide the truth from his brothers any longer. He knew without a doubt that they were truly sorry for treating him cruelly, and that God had changed their hard hearts. He wept and told his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" (Genesis 45:3).

The brothers froze in amazement! Could *this* man, the great governor of Egypt, be their little brother? Then terror crossed their faces. *This* was the brother they had thrown into a pit. *This* was the brother they had sold to the traders.

In a flash Joseph realized how they felt, and he said, "Come close to me . . . I am your brother Joseph. You sold me as a slave to go to Egypt. Now don't be worried. Don't be angry with yourselves because you sold me here. God sent me here ahead of you to save people's lives. No food has grown on the land for two years now. And there will be five more years without planting or harvest. So God sent me here ahead of you. This was to make sure you have some descendants left on earth. And it was to keep you alive in an amazing way. So it was not you who sent me here, but God" (Genesis 45:4-8, ICB).

The brothers could hardly believe their ears. Joseph was forgiving them! Not only that, he was telling them how wonderful God was to overturn their cruelty and use him to save them from the famine.

What a beautiful picture of God's providence. God had turned Joseph's difficult experiences into blessings and given him a heart to see and accept God's leading in his life.

DO: On a piece of paper, write how someone has hurt you. Ask an adult to help you burn the paper, then blow the ashes away. Think about how this is like God's forgiveness.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Who else forgave people who were very cruel to him? Read **Luke 23:33, 34**.
- When have you been able to forgive someone?
Did you feel blessed when you did?

PRAY: Ask God to give you a forgiving heart like Joseph's.

As God grows His beautiful love in our hearts, we will be able to trust Him to overturn the cruelty of others. God will help us to forgive them and share His love when they feel guilty.



EXCITING NEWS

The brothers stared at Joseph with wide eyes. Joseph—the little brother they had sold—was forgiving them! With tears in his eyes, Joseph held out his hand toward them. He still had more good news to give. Read about it in *GENESIS 45:9-12*.

Joseph ran to Benjamin and held him close. Then he hugged each brother. The brothers confessed their sin and said sorry. Their long years of guilt and regret were over. Their faces lit up with joy!

Pharaoh met the brothers and told them to take wagons and food for the trip home. Even the king was excited to see Joseph's family together again. Joseph gave them beautiful clothes, as well as gifts for his father. Then he sent them quickly on their way. The sooner they left, the sooner he could see his father again.

The brothers sped home with the exciting news. At first old Father Jacob couldn't believe what he heard; his precious son Joseph—*alive*? Then he saw the long train of wagons and the loaded animals. Convinced, he exclaimed, "It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die" (Genesis 45:28).

Before leaving for Egypt, the brothers confessed everything to Father Jacob. He forgave and blessed his sorry sons, for he could see that good had overruled their sin. Once again the weight of guilt was lifted from them.

Then the huge wagon train set out for Egypt. What two beautiful things happened on the way? *READ GENESIS 46:1-4*.

What a blessing it was to praise God for His providence and to have total faith that God would guide and protect. Jacob and his family could face the future with courage in their hearts and promises to claim.

We can praise our awesome God when we see His blessings, and while we are still waiting to see them. We can confidently trust our future to Him, knowing that He will supply all our needs.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- What's a blessing from God that you would like to thank and praise Him for?
- Recite or sing your memory verse and reflect on how it has been fulfilled in the lives of Joseph's family. When could you claim this promise?

FAST FACT: Beersheba was the place on the southern border of Canaan where Abraham and Isaac had made altars to worship God in the past. It was considered a sacred place, so it was natural for Jacob to stop and worship there on his journey.

PRAY: Praise God for His providence in your life. And thank Him that His providence will be a blessing in your future.





□ FRIDAY

FAMILY REUNION

As the wagon train rolled into Egypt Joseph sprang from his chariot and raced to meet his precious father. He threw his arms around Jacob's neck and wept for a long time. Smiling through happy tears, Jacob in his old age said, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive" (Genesis 46:30).

Jacob was so happy to see Joseph and his heart so peaceful that he felt like his life was complete. But Jacob didn't die right away. God gave him another 17 peaceful years with his long-lost son and his reunited children. He watched his whole family thrive in Egypt, and he believed God's promise was being fulfilled; "I am God almighty . . . a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you" (Genesis 35:11).

God had used Joseph's life, with all its ups and downs, to keep the promise alive. Through His providence, thousands were kept from starvation, and a whole nation learned that the God of heaven is real and can be trusted. In the dark times Joseph couldn't see the happy ending to his story. But he had trusted God through it all, and the difficulties had turned to blessings.

Like Joseph, you may have difficult times and not be able to see a happy ending to your story. But trust Him, and He will supply your needs. Always remember: "And my God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- How could the story have ended for Jacob's family if Joseph hadn't trusted God?

FRIDAY NIGHT

SHARE AND PRAISE

Think of, and discuss, a time something difficult turned into something good for your family. Work together to match the difficult times in Joseph's life with the blessings. Then sing "Showers of Blessings" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 195).

- Thrown into a pit
- Learned the Egyptian language and culture
- Sold to the traders
- Kept many people alive
- Reunited with family
- Potiphar's slave
- Learned patience and interpreted dreams
- In prison
- Saved from being killed by brothers
- Governor of Egypt
- Went to Egypt and showed the people what God is like

FAMILY JOURNAL

- One great new thought I have discovered in this lesson is . . .
- If you could put yourself in the story, who would you choose to be? Why?

PRAY

Read **Psalm 92:1**. Pray around a family circle, thanking God for something that stands out to you in the Joseph story.

LOST AT SEA!

The day seemed calm and full of promise as the trio set out in the sailboat from the small town of Fairhaven on the shores of Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts (United States of America). Ellen Harmon, her sister Sarah, and their friend, Mr. Gurney, were excited to visit a family on nearby West Island.

However, once out in the Atlantic Ocean, their mood shifted as the sky began to quickly change. A fierce storm set in: howling winds, lightning and thunder, and heavy rain. Time seemed to disappear as they tried to frantically stay afloat. Frightened, they realized that night was falling. Would they sink in these wild waves? It was impossible to control the sailboat in such a storm!

Holding on tightly, Ellen knelt and cried to God to deliver them while the waves crashed over the side, drenching them all. And right in the middle of the storm, God gave Ellen a vision. She was shown that they would be kept safe and that God would dry up every drop in the ocean before He would let them drown, because Ellen's work for God had only just begun.

Great peace and joy replaced the fear of those on board the little sailboat. They sang and praised God together as the lightening flashed around them.

Meanwhile, Mr. Gurney was finding it very difficult to control the boat. He threw the anchor over, but it just dragged in the water while the boat kept tossing on the waves, driven by the wind. They had no idea where they were, for it was so dark they could not see from one end of the boat to the other. Then at last the anchor gripped the bottom of the ocean, showing they were near land.

"Help! Help!" Mr. Gurney shouted over and over, hoping someone in one of the two homes on the island would hear him over the storm. Everyone was asleep except a little girl. In God's providence she heard the faint cries for help and woke her father!

The man rowed out to sea in the blackness, heading toward the cries for help. The sailboat was soon found, and those on board were rescued. How glad they were to be rowed to shore in the kind man's little boat.

The grateful passengers spent most of the night thanking and praising God for His wonderful goodness and providence.

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FOR YOU, PARENTS: "There is One to whom you can go for counsel, whose wisdom is infinite. He has invited you to come to Him, for He will supply your need" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 72).

RUTH AND NAOMI



GOD CAN HEAL
BROKEN HEARTS.

MEMORY VERSE

**“He heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds”
(Psalm 147:3).**

WORD OF THE WEEK—COMMITMENT:

To give yourself fully to someone or something, even when it may be difficult to do so. For example: “My mother made a commitment to help children learn to read.”

This week’s lesson is based on the story of Ruth as found in Ruth 1. Some insights have also been drawn from *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, pp. 428-434, to enhance this lesson. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story*, vol. 3, pp. 137-140.

GOD'S FOREVER PROMISE

The story of God's promise to Abraham still echoed around the campfire at night. When the stars came out the promise seemed even brighter. God had indeed blessed the children of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, making them into a large people group: the children of Israel.

Now generations after Moses had led the people through the wilderness and back into the land God had promised them, the faithful ones continued to tell of God's deliverance. The stories needed to be heard, for many in Israel had turned to idols instead of worshipping God.

Elimelech, a man from the tribe of Judah, knew the stories of God's care. He also knew the Israelites were now facing disaster. What was threatening their lives? Read the first sentence of *RUTH 1:1*.

Elimelech saw that the fields of grain in his home of Bethlehem were withered, the ground was cracked and dry, and the animals were dying from hunger. His wife, Naomi, had little to feed their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. What would he do?

Just as Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph's family moved to foreign lands when they were hungry, Elimelech decided to move to the land of Moab until the famine in Canaan was over. There was plenty of fresh water there and rich soil for growing all the food his little family would need. They would miss their home in Canaan terribly, but they knew that God would be with them in a strange and foreign land, for He says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

Sometimes parents have to make difficult decisions because they are committed to doing the best they can to care for their families. God kept His promise to Abraham, and He will continue to keep His promises. God is with you and your family to help and guide you, whatever changes come your way.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- When have those who care for you had to make a difficult decision that was for the best?

DO: Do you know anyone who has moved to a new country because life was difficult back home? What could your family do to help them settle into their lives in a different and strange place? Commit to helping in some way.

PRAY: Thank God for always keeping His promises.

MISSION CHALLENGE:

Invite your friend who came to Sabbath School to come with you again, or to share family worship with you.

HEARTBREAK IN A STRANGE LAND

Elimelech, Naomi, Mahlon, and Chilion loaded up their belongings and traveled down the dusty roads of Canaan, across the Jordan River, and up to the highlands of Moab, where the grass was green and lush. Here the family lived and had plenty to eat. All around them the Moabites worshipped idols, but the little family from Bethlehem continued to worship the one and only true God, who loved and cared for them.

Then came the very saddest of days. Elimelech died. Heartbroken, Naomi bravely did her best to care for Mahlon and Chilion on her own. What gave Naomi the strength and courage to carry on after Elimelech died? *READ PSALM 34:18.*

Life was hard, but she knew that “God is our protection and our strength. He always helps in times of trouble” (Psalm 46:1, ICB). Just as God had comforted Jacob when he lost Rachel, He was close to Naomi in her grief.

Life became a little easier after her sons were married. They brought their wives, Ruth and Orpah, to their family home, as the custom was in those days. Naomi grew to love them, and they her, for she was a loving and unselfish mother-in-law. As Ruth and Orpah lived with God’s family, they came to learn that the God of heaven is a God of love, so very different from the idol gods their families worshipped. And they were truly happy.

Our loving God can see your heart, and He knows when it is hurting. He can help you get through heartbreak too. God understands the sadness you feel if your pet dies, or you lose a grandparent, or your best friend moves away. His promises are for you to claim too.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- What would you have done to comfort Naomi if you had been there?
- Is there something in your life that has made you sad or heartbroken?
God wants to heal your heart and make you happy again.

DO: Draw a heart and color it red. Now, place a Band-Aid/plaster/bandage over the heart and write on it with a marker: Psalm 147:3. Can you recite your memory verse? Consider sharing it with someone you know.

PRAY: Place your hands over your heart and thank God for His promise to be with you when you are heartbroken.

PARENT FAITH TALK: Share a heartbreak you have experienced and how God got you through it. What Bible verse helped you to be strong?





TUESDAY

GOD UNDERSTANDS

Happy years slipped by, and then heartbreak came again to Naomi's family. Mahlon and Chilion died, leaving both Ruth and Orpah without their husbands and Naomi without her precious sons.

Grief filled their hearts and their little home in Moab. Gone was the joy of working and sharing meals together. Gone was the possibility of children and grandchildren to bring laughter to busy days. And gone was any hope of carrying on the family name of Elimelech. This was truly heartbreaking, as this name linked them with God's chosen people: with Abraham in their past, and God's promised rescuer in their future.

The three widows cried together. They understood each other's sorrow and supported each other. Through it all they clung to the knowledge that God was with them, even though it might not always have felt like it. Underneath all their grief they knew that "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3). God was committed to Ruth, Naomi, and Orpah, loving them and slowly healing them. What a wonderful, wonderful God!

When our hearts are broken we sometimes feel all alone, as if no one understands what we're going through. But others have experienced heartbreak too. They can support us when our hearts are broken, and we can support them through their heartbreak. The Bible also reminds us that no matter how broken we may feel, God understands. All He really needs is for us to bring our load of grief to Him. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Read **John 11:35**. How much does this verse help you to know that God understands His heartbroken children?
- What do you think might happen next in the story?

DO: Hugs can be a blessing to sad or heartbroken people. Think about people in your life who may appreciate a hug: parents, grandparents, cousins, siblings. If appropriate, give them one.

FAST FACT: Research tells us we need four hugs a day for survival, and eight to remain emotionally healthy.

PRAY: Hug your parents as you pray together for anyone you know who is grieving, and for all the heartbroken people in the world.

GOD'S TRUTH ABOUT DEATH

Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion lay buried. Their lives on this earth had come to an end, but was that the end of their story? Have you ever wondered what happens to people when they die? The Bible has the answers. Let's take a look.

1. Death is called a "sleep." John 11:11-13 tells us, "After Jesus said this, he added, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. But I am going there to wake him.' . . . Jesus meant that Lazarus was dead" (ICB). Jesus woke Lazarus up and raised him from the dead after he had been buried in a tomb for four days. David and Daniel also called death a sleep (Psalm 13:3; Daniel 12:2). (Note: Although the Bible likens death to a sleep because Jesus can wake up those who have died, death and sleep are not the same thing. A dead person has stopped breathing, but when we sleep at night we continue to breathe. Make sure your child understands this without worrying about going to sleep at night.)
2. Dead people don't know anything (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6). If they don't know anything, what can't they do?
READ PSALM 6:5 AND 115:17.
3. Some people, even some Christians, believe that people go to heaven when they die and that they can look down on their friends and family on the earth and come to visit them. But that is not true, for Job 7:9, 10 says, "So he who goes down to the grave does not come up. He shall never return to his house, Nor shall his place know him anymore."
4. When Jesus comes what happens to those who have died? Read *JOHN 5:28, 29 AND 1 THESSALONIANS 4:16*. Won't that be a wonderful day for those who love God and are sleeping in their graves!
5. There will be no death in heaven or the new earth, for Revelation 21:4 says, "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying."

DO: If possible go to a cemetery with your family, or if that's not appropriate in your culture, ask an adult to describe what it's like. Imagine being there when Jesus returns to call people from their graves. Pray that God will comfort the families of the people buried there.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- What do you think Naomi would have looked forward to most about heaven?
- Whom could you comfort with God's truth about death?

It is comforting to know that death is not the end of the story for people who love God. We can look forward to spending time with them in heaven, after Jesus has woken them up from their sleep.

PRAY: Thank God that you have been able to learn the truth about death.



HEADING HOME

Naomi had heard the most exciting news: the famine in Canaan was over! This was great news to Naomi, for she had missed her homeland and her relatives there. At last, after 10 years in Moab, she would return to the Promised Land. God had made a way!

Ruth and Orpah began the trek toward Bethlehem with Naomi, for they loved their mother-in-law and were committed to caring for her. Along the way, Naomi thought about how things might be for the two young widows in a strange land so different from Moab. She sadly but kindly told them to go home to their own mothers. What good things did she wish for them? *READ RUTH 1:9.*

The young women burst into tears and said no, but Naomi insisted. Finally Orpah kissed Naomi goodbye, but Ruth clung to her mother-in-law. Naomi tried to persuade her to return with Orpah, but Ruth had made up her mind. In words never to be forgotten she promised Naomi, "Wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God" (Ruth 1:16).

What a beautiful commitment to come from a young woman who was willing to give up relatives, friends, and everything familiar. Ruth loved not only her mother-in-law but also the God of heaven.

With happy hearts, the two women continued their journey together. Their loving commitment to each other was deep and true.

Ruth's only knowledge of our wonderful God was what she saw in Naomi, and this led her to commit to Him. The loveliness of the way you live your life can win others to Jesus too.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Read **Psalm 46:7**. How well do you think Naomi and Ruth knew this truth? How well do you know it?
- Why do you think Ruth went with Naomi? How many possible reasons can you think of?

DO: If there are new Christians in your church, plan two or three questions to ask them about how they came to make their commitment to Jesus.

PRAY: Thank God for helping you live your life in ways that draw others to Him.

FOR YOU, PARENTS:

"The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian" (Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 470). Be encouraged; God is working in your life to grow "a loving and lovable Christian."





FRIDAY

NAOMI'S HOME!

The whole of Bethlehem was abuzz! Naomi was home! In the midst of the excitement some of the women said, *"Is this Naomi?"* (Ruth 1:19).

Yes, it was Naomi, but not the same Naomi who had left home with Elimelech and her sons. The years away had been hard ones. Naomi said to the women, "I went out full, and the Lord has brought me home again empty" (Ruth 1:21). Naomi was being honest about how she felt. Sometimes her life still seemed empty without her husband and sons, for God heals broken hearts over time.

Bethlehem reminded Naomi of good times with Elimelech and their little boys and what she'd lost. It was tough, but she faced it with Ruth. Ruth had brought gladness to Naomi's broken heart. Together with God, they would start a new life in Bethlehem. The Lord had brought them home.

As God heals broken hearts over time, painful memories and reminders of loved ones pop up. These are called triggers. They may be as small as seeing a loved one's favorite flower or as big as going into their room. We can be patient and kind when triggers bring pain to others or to ourselves. We can also pray to God as David did: "Turn to me and be kind to me. I am lonely and hurting" (Psalm 25:16, ICB). Our loving God truly understands, and He is committed to healing broken hearts.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Sometimes special days, such as birthdays or Mother's/Father's Days, are difficult for people who have lost someone close. What could you do to bring them comfort and friendship on these days?

FRIDAY NIGHT

SHARE AND PRAISE

- Search online for the narrative song "The God Who Sees," by Nicole C. Mullen and Kathie Lee Gifford, which includes Ruth's story. Watch it together.
- Read Galatians 6:10. Discuss what this verse might look like in your family.
- Give each family member a small card or piece of paper as a "Commitment Card."
- Each choose a different family member and write on the card something good you will do for them during the next week.

FAMILY JOURNAL

- One thing I've learned about God in this story is that ...
- When one of my friends or family members is heartbroken, I will ...

PRAY

As a family, pray a popcorn prayer. Praise God in short sentences, thanking Him for what you have learned about Him in this lesson.

DEEP-FROZEN FROGS

WATCH: With your family, search for "Alaskan Wood Frog" online to see this incredible transformation.



While death seems so final to us, that's not how God sees it. When Jesus was here on earth, He told us that people who have died are just sleeping, even though their hearts have stopped beating. He said this because He can, and *will*, wake them up! God has given us a powerful lesson in nature that shows us His power over life and death.

Did you know that you can deep-freeze a frog—not all frogs, but Alaskan wood frogs?

Most of the animals in Alaska head south for the winter to escape the freezing temperatures but not the frogs. Just before winter the wood frogs do a very strange thing: they freeze!

Once the first snowflakes reach the wood frogs, their skin freezes and their bodies become stiff and crunchy. They don't freeze totally solid, but almost. If you picked them up they wouldn't move, and if you bent one of their legs it would snap off. They have basically become a "frogsicle," because most of the water in their body has turned to ice.

Inside the frog amazing things are happening—things that defy science. When a wood frog is frozen, its heart stops beating, its blood stops flowing around its body, and it stops breathing. Scientists who study these frogs say that in this frozen state they could classify the frog as dead. But it isn't dead—it is just "sleeping."

The most mind-blowing thing of all is that the frogs can stay in this frozen state for up to seven months, in temperatures as low as 1.4°F (–17°C). Then when summer arrives and the sun shines on them, they thaw out and hop away! The warming sun causes their hearts to start beating again, and they rise from their sleepy, frozen state back to life.

His warm, loving presence will recreate and bring to life those who have died, just as if waking them from sleep. He will make their new hearts beat again and they will rise, alive in Him.

Remember this: God has the power to restart hearts. He can, and will, make the dead live again!

RUTH AND BOAZ

GOD NOTICES
MY NEEDS.

MEMORY VERSE

"For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him" (Matthew 6:8).

WORD OF THE WEEK—NOTICE:

See, pay attention to, take note of.
Example: "I noticed that you invited Sam to play with you."



 SUNDAY

FOOD FROM THE FIELDS!

Ruth sat thinking. What could she do to provide food for herself and her mother-in-law? She had made a commitment to make a home and life here in Bethlehem with Naomi, promising to adopt Naomi's God and her people as her own. She was determined to do her best to honor her commitment. But first, how could she help meet their most basic need—food?

The answer came as she watched the fields of Boaz, "a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech" (Ruth 2:1). Ruth and Naomi had returned at the beginning of the barley harvest, and Ruth's keen eyes noticed all the action happening in the beautiful fields of ripe barley and wheat, grains used to make bread. Men were reaping; they were cutting the tall stalks and tying them into bundles. Ruth also noticed women gleaning: they followed behind the reapers, searching for grain that was left behind.

With a bright idea in mind, Ruth rushed to Naomi. She asked, "Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor" (Ruth 2:2). What was Naomi's reply? **READ RUTH 2:2.**

Naomi knew this was God's way of providing for them, because He had given the children of Israel a law long ago, so they would always look after the needs of the poor. It said, "Do not harvest all the way to the corners of your fields. If grain falls onto the ground, don't gather it up" (Leviticus 19:9, ICB).

Our caring God notices people's needs and provides for them in different ways. Sometimes He prompts kind friends or strangers to notice and help, and sometimes He shows us ways we can help ourselves.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- Different people have different needs: friendship, a smile, help with a difficult job, food, a ride somewhere, etc. How good are you at noticing the needs of others?

DO: Challenge yourself to share your memory verse with three people this week.

PRAY: Thank God for noticing your needs before you even ask Him for help.

Jolani

KINDNESS IN THE GLEANING FIELDS

In the early-morning light Ruth found a field and began gleaning behind the reapers. She bent low, searching and gathering. During the morning Boaz, the landowner, arrived at the field and greeted his workers, "The Lord be with you" (Ruth 2:4). As he looked out over his bundles of barley, he noticed Ruth and asked who the new gleaner was.

Boaz walked over and spoke kindly to Ruth. What did he say? **READ RUTH 2:8, 9.**

Ruth bowed low and humbly asked, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" (Ruth 2:10).

Boaz had heard how Ruth had cared for Naomi. He noticed how much Ruth, a foreigner, loved and trusted God. With a kind voice he told her that God would reward her, "The Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge" (Ruth 2:12).

He was saying Ruth was like a little chick who had run under its mother's wings to be protected from danger. We can do the same and say to God, "You are my place of safety and protection. You are my God, and I trust you" (Psalm 91:2, ICB).

Boaz acted as a protector and place of refuge for Ruth too. He told her to glean only in his fields so she would be safe. He gave her lunch and a cool drink. He told his men to purposely leave grain for her and make sure she was safe. He was a provider and protector, just like God.

Our caring God wants us to come to Him and trust Him to provide for our needs, just like a trusting little chick. God is also happy when we notice the needs of others and do what we can to provide for them.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- How does God provide for your needs?
- How does your community provide for the needs of people who don't have enough to eat?

DO: Read **Psalm 91:4**. How does this help you understand what Boaz said? You might like to draw a chick under its mother's wing and write your name on it.

FOR YOU, PARENTS: As a busy parent be encouraged, for God notices and provides for your needs too. "Jesus pointed His hearers to the birds as they warbled their carols of praise, unencumbered with thoughts of care, for 'they sow not, neither do they reap,' and yet the Father provides for their needs. And He asks, 'Are not ye of much more value than they?' (Matthew 6:25, RV)" (Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 95).

PRAY: Thank God for being your place of safety and protection.

FAST FACT: When a mother hen senses danger, she quickly makes a special "danger" clucking sound to call her chicks to her. She scoops them in under her wings and huddles on the ground so they cannot be seen.



A BIG BASKET OF GRAIN

Whack, whack, whack. Ruth used a big stick to beat the seeds of grain from the barley stalks she had gathered throughout the day. Then she put the grain in a basket and weighed it. Almost 30 pounds (14 kilograms)! That was a lot to glean in one day. She lifted the heavy basket to her shoulders and hurried home.

Naomi's mouth dropped in surprise when she saw that bulging basket of grain. She knew instantly that such a big basket was the product of kindness. She asked, "Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you" (Ruth 2:19).

The name of Boaz quickly tumbled from Ruth's mouth. How did Naomi respond, and what did she reveal about Boaz? **READ RUTH 2:20.**

Gladly Ruth told her mother-in-law all about his kindness and how Boaz had told her to glean only in his fields for the rest of the harvest season.

That night Naomi and Ruth would have praised God again as they feasted on fresh roasted grain together and planned to grind the grain to make bread. God had blessed them through Boaz's kindness. Their God had lovingly kept His promise to care for them. The Bible says, "The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise the Lord" (Psalm 22:26).

God loves it when we praise Him for providing for our needs in amazing ways. God can use us to provide for the needs of others, just as He used Boaz. Then those we have helped can praise Him too.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- How would you have felt if you had been Ruth at the end of that first day of gleaning?
- What might you have said in prayer that night?

DO: As a family, challenge yourselves to notice the needs of a person or family in your community. Make a plan to reach out and kindly help them.

MISSION CHALLENGE:

Find out what would help the friend whom you invited to Sabbath School learn more about Jesus. Do they need a ride to church with your family, or might they like to come to your home to hear some Bible stories?

PRAY: Naomi praised God. Pray a prayer of praise, thanking God for something that begins with each letter of the word "praise": PRAISE.





WEDNESDAY

A SURPRISING CUSTOM

While Ruth gleaned in the fields under the hot sun, Naomi's thoughts often wandered. She wished that Ruth could have a husband. She was such a good, kind, and loving woman.

Then Naomi remembered a law in Israel. It said that if a woman's husband died before they had a son, she could ask her husband's closest relative to buy the land that had belonged to her husband. Women could not own land. If the relative chose to buy the land, he would also marry her. This way, the land would go to their firstborn son when he grew up and stay in the family.

Naomi's eyes twinkled, for Boaz was Elimelech's closest relative! And it was clear that Ruth had a special place in his heart. So Naomi told Ruth about this law, and about the unusual custom she would need to follow to see if Boaz was interested in becoming her husband. What did Naomi tell Ruth to do? **READ RUTH 3:3, 4.**

Ruth trusted her mother-in-law and replied, "All that you say to me I will do" (Ruth 3:5). And so she did. That night she timidly crept to where Boaz lay sleeping on a bed of straw and lay still at his feet. As Boaz slept, Ruth waited and wondered. *What would happen? Would Boaz accept her?* She surely hoped so.

God noticed Ruth's need for love and protection. And He helped Naomi remember the law and custom that could allow her to marry Boaz. Our loving God notices what you need too, even when you don't. He knows what you need now and in the future.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- What did God notice Ruth needed?
- Read **Matthew 6:8** (your memory verse). Reflect on how it applied to Ruth and how it might apply to you. Practice learning it by memory.
- Think about the difference between your needs and your wants. Why is it important to know the difference?

DO: Put your finger on the words below that could describe Ruth in today's story.

brave sneaky scared
trusting hopeful annoyed
respectful hard-working

PRAY: Thank God for knowing your needs, even when you don't.

PARENT FAITH TALK:

Share a time God knew of your needs before you did and provided for you ahead of time.

WEDDING CELEBRATIONS

As Boaz turned in his sleep, his foot suddenly touched something. Startled, he jerked upward and noticed the shape of a woman lying in the darkness at his feet. "Who are you?" he questioned (Ruth 3:9).

Ruth answered softly, "I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take me under your wing, for you are a close relative" (Ruth 3:9). How did Boaz reply? *READ RUTH 3:10-14.*

Ruth lay at his feet until morning, just as Boaz had said. Then before daylight she quietly crept home with presents of barley from Boaz for Naomi.

It must have been an anxious morning for Ruth. Would kind Boaz marry her, or would she be bound to another? After hearing what had happened, Naomi told her, "Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day" (Ruth 3:18).

Sure enough, before the day was done Ruth had her answer. Boaz beamed as he shared the news that the other relative had decided not to buy the land and marry her. Kind and protective Boaz was free to marry loving and gentle Ruth!

Boaz had noticed and cared for Ruth in her sad time of need; now he would always be with her to love and protect her. Just like our faithful God.

In time God gave them a baby boy whom they named Obed. When Obed was grown he became the father of Jesse, and Jesse became the father of King David. Ruth, the Moabite who chose Naomi's God, became the mother of kings. And best of all, God chose Ruth to be included in the family line of His own dear Son, Jesus.

THINK ... THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- How did God generously provide for Ruth in this story?
- Whom do you think Ruth might have noticed and helped once she was the wife of a wealthy farmer?

God noticed Boaz and Ruth's needs and knew they would be very happy together. God knows your need for love and affection too.

DO: Ruth trusted the true God who noticed her. To remind you to trust Him too, turn all or part of Isaiah 41:10 into a poster.

PRAY: Thank God for those who love and care for you.



MY GOD IS ALWAYS WITH ME

God says, "So don't worry, because I am with you. . . . I will make you strong and will help you" (Isaiah 41:10, ICB).

Joseph and Ruth, two of the main characters in our lessons this quarter, had learned and loved the truth of these beautiful words. One was a favorite son, the other a woman from a foreign land. Their lives had such different starting points, yet they both came to believe and live by the same truth: *My God is always with me.*

For Joseph this meant trusting God when he was in a pit, sold as a slave and taken to a strange land, made a servant, wrongly accused, and forgotten in prison. For Ruth this meant trusting God as a heartbroken widow, as a lonely female traveler leaving her land and people behind, as a foreigner in a new place, and as a poor gleaner trying to find food to survive.

Neither Joseph nor Ruth could see the happy ending to their story; only God could, for He sees the end from the beginning and notices everything. God was right there with them, no matter what was going on in their lives.

When you live knowing God is always with you, you can trade worry for peace, no matter what's happening around you. *READ PHILIPPIANS 4:7.*

Jesus invites you to trust Him and enjoy this great peace too. He loves you. He notices you. He knows your needs. He gives you peace. He is always with you. Always.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- What experiences in your life have reminded you that God is always with you?

FRIDAY NIGHT

SHARE AND PRAISE

- Have family members secretly draw something from Ruth or Naomi's life. Display them and discuss what we can learn from each picture. Put them in order, point to each picture, and say together, "Our God is always with us!"
- Brainstorm all the ways God noticed and provided for Ruth's needs.
- Sing "My God Loves Me" or "Jesus Loves Me." Think about how He is always with you, loving you.

FAMILY JOURNAL

- What have you learned from both Ruth and Boaz in this week's story?
- Write a prayer to God in response to this week's lesson.

PRAY

Hold hands and each thank God for a need He has noticed and provided for in your life.



ACTS OF KINDNESS

I watched mom pull out of the driveway to go run an errand. She would be gone for quite a while. I turned to my brother Phillip. "What do you want to do? We have the house all to ourselves."

Phillip shrugged. "I don't know. What do you want to do?"

We gave the matter some careful thought. After all, it wasn't every day we had the house to ourselves. Watching TV didn't sound very interesting. Neither did playing with the model train. Suddenly we were struck with an exciting idea.

My brother and I vacuumed every carpet. We made every bed. We washed every dish. We dusted. We even cleaned the bathrooms. And we worked *fast*, because we weren't sure when Mom was going to come home, and we wanted to be completely finished when she walked through the door.

We did finish before Mom got home. That day stands out because Mom was so happy to see all the housework done and because we showed her how much we loved her. Out of all the things my brother and I could have done that day, I'm glad we chose to make Mom happy.

This happened many years ago. I can't remember the other times my brother and I stayed home by ourselves. They might have been important to me at the time, but now they have no meaning. I do remember that day, however, because of the kindness we showed our mother. I doubt I would still remember that day if we had just watched television.

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CHALLENGE: Look for a time this week to surprise your mom by kindly doing something you notice needs doing.

