

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

***When Families Get Together***  
**Genesis 42:6-8; 44:14-34; 45:1-5**

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

## Leaders' Responsibilities:

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## Prior to this Coming Session:

### **Gathering Time Leader:**

### **Bible Study Leader:**

Today's lesson covers chapters 42-45 of Genesis. You may ask someone to read a chapter and be ready to summarize it for the group. For example, ask someone to read Chapter 45 and tell of Joseph's reunion with his family .

### **Worship Time Leader:**

The youth application gives ideas for dramatic interpretation of some of the scenes in today's worship time. Talk with the youth in charge, choose a scene to be interpreted, provide basic props such as scarves for headpieces, rustic fabric for robes, a silver cup to be placed in Benjamin's sack; a luxurious robe for Joseph. Leave time in her plans for the worship time for this youth to present their dramatization.

### **Music Sources:**

**No One Understands Like Jesus**, *The Worship Hymnal*, #155; CCLI #2791

**How Great is Our God**, *The Worship Hymnal*, #5; CCLI # 4348399

**To God Be the Glory**, *The Worship Hymnal*, #28; CCLI # 23426 Public Domain

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***When Families Get Together*****Focal Text**

Genesis 42:6-8; 44:14-34; 45:1-5

**Background Text**

Genesis 42-45

**Main Idea**

Forgiveness and understanding must be at the heart of healthy family relationships that honour God

**Question to Explore**

How can family relationships honour God?

**Teaching Aim**

To lead the class to identify implication for their lives from Joseph's reconciliation with his family.

**Gathering together:**

Sing **No One Understands Like Jesus**

**First thoughts:**

It is easy for us to imagine that earlier family life was free of conflict and the challenges which face us today. Biblical stories indicate that living in family has always been a challenge. Isaac and Rebekah favoured different sons and this ultimately caused great grief. One of those sons was Jacob and he repeated the pattern by favouring Joseph and later Benjamin. In our study today we will consider the topic "When Families Come Together" and try to understand why family dynamics are so complicated and how forgiveness and understanding are absolutely essential to family harmony.

**Closing the Gathering Time:**

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## Teacher Preparation

### *When Families Get Together*

#### **Focal Text**

Genesis 42:6-8; 44:14-34; 45:1-5

#### **Background Text**

Genesis 42-45

#### **Main Idea**

Forgiveness and understanding must be at the heart of healthy family relationships that honour God

#### **Question to Explore**

How can family relationships honour God?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the class to identify implications for their lives from Joseph’s reconciliation with his family.

#### **Introduction to your personal study:**

We were enjoying an evening with a couple I hadn’t seen since college. With eight children between us, the topic of parenting naturally arose. When I mentioned a book I had read titled *Siblings Without Rivalry*, the other father asked, “And where is that found—in the fantasy section?” It is true that conflict is a part of every relationship, including families. In this portion of scripture, Joseph comes face to face with his estranged brothers. God uses these encounters to teach Joseph, and us, many lessons.

#### **Background:**

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Because of Joseph’s gifts of administration and practical guidance, Egypt is more prepared than any of her neighbours for the ensuing drought. The famine continues to worsen. Its impact is felt as far away as Canaan.

## **Focusing on the Meaning:**

**Note: Your “Teacher Preparation” is designed to offer you substantial material for you to feel comfortable leading the group during class time. In the session itself, you will concentrate on the indicated focus verses. Please do not try to cover everything looked at below. The full four chapters or even that covered below would be far too much to even read, much less discuss, in this single session.**

### **Family Dynamics (Genesis 42:1-5)**

As their family ran out of grain, Jacob’s sons apparently were at a loss and just sat looking at each other. If they had heard of the supplies in Egypt, they may have failed to mention it to Jacob, but somehow word reached Jacob. Jacob sent all ten of his oldest sons to buy grain in Egypt. Once again, he showed his favouritism and kept Benjamin, Rachael’s only remaining son home (4-5).

### **Family Reunion (Genesis 42:6-13)**

Joseph had risen in power and prestige in Egypt. Nearly 20 years have passed since his brothers sold him into slavery (37:28). Presumably, Joseph was dressed as an Egyptian high official. His brothers offered him honour and bowed down to him. In spite of the passing years, Joseph immediately recognized them(42:7). He remained in character, treating them as strangers and speaking to them harshly through an interpreter(23). In response to his questioning, they assured him that they were honest men from Canaan and not the spies he accused them of being (8-12). They insisted that they were ten of twelve brothers. ***“The youngest is now with our father and one is no more.”*** How that that phrase must have cut Joseph. After so many years of heartache to hear, ***“one is no more.”***

### **Putting Them to the Test (Genesis 42:14-38)**

Joseph, the Egyptian, continued to accuse the brothers of being spies. He proposed a test: if you are truly honest men, send one of the brothers to bring the youngest brother to Egypt (14-16). Then he put all ten into custody for three days. Finally he allowed nine to return to Canaan and kept one as hostage until they returned with the youngest, Benjamin. Additionally, he had his men return each brother’s money with the grain they bought. Although moved to tears, Joseph still did not reveal his identity to his brothers

(24). The nine brothers returned to Jacob with the grain and money but without Simeon. They were very frightened, but Jacob was incensed. He refused to even consider the possibility of Benjamin returning with them to Egypt.

### **A Second Journey (Genesis 43)**

As the family continued to face the drought in Canaan, they began again to run out of grain. Judah pledged to take personal care of Benjamin if Jacob would let them return to Egypt for more grain. Jacob, faced with starvation of his people, finally relented. You can hear the agony of his decision in his words ***“I am bereaved, I am bereaved”*** (14). Judah took gifts, double the amount of silver, apparently to pay for the first supply of grain and Benjamin back to Egypt (15).

This time the entourage were taken to Joseph’s house and treated as honoured guests in Egypt(17-24). Joseph met personally with them and upon seeing Benjamin was moved to tears and had to hurry out to a private place to weep (25-30). Although Joseph did not eat with them; he astonished them by seating the brothers in order of their ages (32-34).

### **The Plot Thickens (Genesis 44:1-13)**

As the brothers prepared for their return trip to Israel, Joseph again had their silver returned to them and planted his own silver cup in Benjamin’s possession. He then had his steward ride after them to confront them with the theft (1-5). So sure were the brothers of their innocence that they announced that anyone of them who had the cup would die and the rest would become Joseph’s slaves (6-9). When the cup was discovered in Benjamin’s sack they tore their clothes. Although the steward offered the others their freedom they chose to stand with Benjamin and all returned to Egypt (11-13).

### **A Real Family Reunion (Genesis 44:14-34)**

Joseph had named his first son “Manasseh” because he planned to forget his past, yet God brought his brothers face to face with him. Joseph offered to let the others go free and just keep the “guilty” brother, Benjamin. Judah showed great maturity and compassion for his father offering himself in place of Benjamin (14-34). This is one of the longest speeches in Scripture. His obvious concern for his father and brother convince Joseph of his sincerity.

### **Moved to Compassion (Genesis 45:)**

Following Judah’s speech, Joseph could no longer control his emotions. He sent all his servants out and in the privacy of the moment revealed his identity to his brothers (1-4). His brothers were terrified in his presence, no doubt remembering their plot against him. Joseph went on to explain that although they had meant his harm, God used his slavery to preserve Jacob’s family (5-10).



While his brothers were still coming to grips with Joseph's news, Pharaoh received word that Joseph's family was in Egypt. He directed them to return to Canaan to get their families and father, promising them land to settle and carts to travel in (16-20). As the brothers left for Canaan, Joseph insightfully instructs them, ***"Don't quarrel on the way!"*** (24). Perhaps the brothers still have a way to go in their maturity. At first Jacob did not believe them when they told him that Joseph was alive in Egypt (26). Finally with great rejoicing he was convinced and determined to go to Egypt also (27-28).

### **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

### **For Personal Reflection:**

**What have I learned from this study?**

**What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

**What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***When Families Get Together***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

**Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.**

#### **Focal Text**

Genesis 42:6-8; 44:14-34; 45:1-5

#### **Background Text**

Genesis 42-45

#### **Main Idea**

Forgiveness and understanding must be at the heart of healthy family relationships that honour God

#### **Question to Explore**

How can family relationships honour God?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead the class to identify implication for their lives from Joseph's reconciliation with his family

#### **Connect with Life:**

Ask how many in the group live far distances from their parents and/or siblings. What are some of the ways in which they stay connected to their families? How long have those methods of communication been available?

#### **Guide the Study:**

Use the following outline to guide the study. You may write the outline on a whiteboard or a large piece of paper or make individual copies for participants from the outline given at the end of the Worship Time materials.

**Family Dynamics (Genesis 42:1-5)**

**Family Reunion (Genesis 42:6-13)**

**Putting Them to the Test (Genesis 42:14-38)**

**A Second Journey (Genesis 43)**

**The Plot Thickens (Genesis 44:1-13)**

**A Real Family Reunion (Genesis 44:14-34)**

**Moved to Compassion (Genesis 45:)**

Refer to the incident mentioned in the **Introduction to your personal study**.

Ask the group how realistic the title *Siblings Without Rivalry* sounds? Comment that today's Bible story is an extreme example of sibling rivalry. Emphasize that we will see how God was at work in all of the events, however difficult they were at the time of their occurrence.

**Briefly** review the story of Joseph which has been studied in weeks past. Ask for participation from the group in recalling events: Joseph and his coat; the jealousy of his brothers; his being sold into slavery in Egypt; the positive events of his early days in Egypt; his trouble with Potiphar's wife; his time in jail; interpreting the dreams of Pharaoh; his success after that interpretation. (Be careful with your time).

Have someone read Genesis 42: 1-5.

Request participation: Describe the circumstances of Joseph's family which bring them to Egypt.

Read Genesis 42: 6-13.

Why did Joseph recognize his brothers and they not recognize him?

Share this if needed: Joseph was dressed luxuriously while his brothers were dressed as they had always dressed. As far as the brothers knew, Joseph was a slave somewhere if he was alive at all. The ten brothers together would be more easily recognizable.

Look for an answer: How do you think Joseph felt when he heard the words "***The youngest is now with our father and one is no more***"?

Urge a discussion: Let's discuss the options Joseph had when faced with news that his brothers had returned.

Summarize Genesis 42: 14-38 for the group. (The passage is too long to read).

Encourage answers to these questions:

What was the test which Joseph proposed in verses 14-16.

How long were the brothers put into custody? (three days).

Who was allowed to return to Canaan and what were the conditions of that return?

What was Jacob's reaction to the request that Benjamin go to Egypt? (verse 38).

Help out with this information as needed: Jacob was an elderly man; Genesis 47:9 records Jacob answering Pharaoh's question about his age ***"The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers."*** Genesis 47:28 says that Jacob lived 17 years in Egypt and lived to be 147 years old.

Summarize the events of Genesis 43: The family continued to face drought in Canaan and a second trip to Egypt was necessary. Judah promised to take personal care of Benjamin if Jacob would let them return to Egypt.

Have someone read Genesis 43:14 to understand the pain which Jacob is experiencing.

Comment: Genesis 44 continues the drama.

Request a different person to read Genesis 44:1-5.

Be prepared to summarize the events of the chapter since it is too long to read verse by verse in class time.

**Ask someone ahead of time** to summarize the events of Chapter 45.

Note the importance of emotions in family relationships and the depth with which we experience emotions especially with those we love

Discuss the options Joseph had when faced with news that his brothers had returned

Ask how forgiveness frees the one forgiving (even if the offender is not repentant)

**Encourage Application:**

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Review the Main Idea of the session with the group. See if they can relate the concern and actions of Joseph with families today, and perhaps their own families.

Ask the group if they think that studying about Joseph and his family situation could be used in their helping others who come to them with stories of difficult family situations and betrayal by family or friends.

Urge someone to close in prayer thanking God for good family relationships and asking for God's guidance in dealing appropriately with less than perfect family members and situations.

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

# Youth!!! Take Ten

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### ***When Families Get Together*** **Genesis 42:6-8; 44:14-34; 45:1-5**

**A youth will lead the following activity and comments.** No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

#### **Help Create Worship**

Most of the scenes in today's Bible study lend themselves to dramatic interpretation. Choose one of the scenes: Joseph's accusation of his brothers as spies; the brothers' discovery that their silver was in the sacks of grain which they had bought; the discovery of the silver cup in Benjamin's sack; or Joseph's revelation to his brothers.

Plan to use that interpretation in today's worship time or plan ahead for it to be used in next week's worship time.

**Worship Time** (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***When Families Get Together*****Genesis 42:6-8; 44:14-34; 45:1-5****Beginning the Service:**Sing **How Great is Our God**, *The Worship Hymnal*, #5; CCLI # 4348399**To God Be the Glory**, *The Worship Hymnal*, #28; CCLI # 23426 Public Domain

If the youth have prepared a dramatic interpretation, use that as an introduction to the worship time.

**Offering:****Praying for the World:**

Justin Morgan and Korby Griffith have answered the call to be “boots-and-saddles journeymen” among the Sasotho people in Lesotho. They live in a remote mountain village and travel by horse to other villages, evangelizing and discipling people whose access to the Gospel has been severely limited. Pray that they will have a sturdy hut in which to live. Pray that they will learn the culture and the Sesotho language and be prepared for the task ahead. Pray that they will not be lonely or long for comforts of home, but be content in the work the Lord has prepared for him. Since they will be together many hours, make them good companions to one another.

**Sharing Guide:**

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God’s call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

## **When Families Get Together**

### **Genesis 42:6-8; 44:14-34; 45:1-5**

When families come together there is the possibility for pain. Sometimes it is nothing more than the embarrassment that comes at Christmas family dinner when someone is compelled to tell the story of a childhood incident of little importance to anyone but the person involved.

But often it is the deep cutting pain of parents' dreams for children unrealized or of children who have been deeply hurt by divorce and anger in the home where they grew up.

In today's Biblical passage, we hear various expressions of pain. When Joseph's brothers come to Egypt to buy grain because there is no food in Canaan, he recognizes them, but they do not recognize him. He accuses them of being spies and they reply, **"Your servants were twelve brothers, the sons of one man, who lives in the land of Canaan. The youngest is now with our father and one is no more."** How that phrase must have cut Joseph. After so many years of heartache to hear, **"one is no more."** His existence as far as his family had ceased to be. And yet, the brothers had obviously not forgotten that there were twelve brothers originally and it was their anger which led to the loss of the one brother who "is no more".

Most of us can feel the pain in this statement. This author is occasionally asked, "How many brothers and sisters do you have?" With sadness, I reply, "I have a brother older than I who is living, but both of my younger sisters are dead – they died in middle adulthood". Heartache is real and ongoing when family relationships change.

Joseph requires that one of the brothers stay in Egypt and requests that the younger brother be brought to him to redeem the brother left behind. Rueben, the most compassionate of the brothers when Joseph was sold into slavery, saw this as punishment for the act many years before. Verse 24 tells us **"He turned aside from them and began to weep."**

When the time comes that more food is needed, it is obvious that Benjamin, Jacob's youngest son must accompany the brothers to satisfy Joseph's request. Jacob, the father, says **"And may God Almighty grant you mercy before the man so that he will let your other brother and Benjamin come back with you. As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved."**

Jacob, like thousands of parents to have sent sons and daughters off to pioneer lands, to immigrate to new countries or to war, confronted his possible and probable bereavement **"As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved."**

When families come together, it is difficult to forget past wrongs. Joseph had named his first son "Manasseh" because he planned to forget his past, yet God brought his



brothers face to face with him. He now had great power and could have taken them prisoners and ordered their execution. He could have ordered them to serve him as slaves.

His actions show that he needed some indication that the men who stood before him were no longer the jealous and impetuous brothers who sold him into slavery. The elaborate plans which Joseph used to discern how sincere they were indicates the depth of his pain. Finally in verses 18-33 Judah showed great maturity and compassion for his father offering himself in place of Benjamin. This broke Joseph's hesitancy to accept his brothers as his brothers, to forgive them and to make plans to see his father again.

Accepting forgiveness may be nearly as difficult as giving it. When Joseph explained who he was to his brothers, the Scriptures says ***"But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence"*** (Genesis 45:3). Joseph said to his brothers, ***"Come close to me"***. When they had done so, he said, ***"I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you."***

***...it was not you who sent me here, but God."*** (45:4-8).

In spite of difficulties caused by family life, there is also the potential for great joy – some of the greatest joy we know on this earth.

A baby's first toddling steps; a first graders' big smile showing two front teeth missing; a sixth grader leading her commencement program in two languages; a weekly play day with a four year old grandson; teenagers spending their holiday time on a mission trip, - these have been among this writer's many recent family joys.

Chapters 45 and 46 of Genesis contain the story of Joseph's reunion with his brothers and with his aged father. The joy in the reunion is expressed in verse 14 of chapter 45 ***"Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him."***

Joseph then instructed his brothers to return to Canaan and bring their families back to Egypt. They were told to bring Jacob, Joseph's father. Jacob actually had a word from God about this. ***"And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" Here I am, he replied. I am God, the God of your father, he said. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."***

This passage portrays another great truth about families. Faithful families, though flawed at times, often serve as the means by which God's will is accomplished. When

God spoke to Jacob, Scripture records “And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said “**Jacob, Jacob!**” God is speaking to the man Jacob, father of twelve sons including Joseph, but he is also speaking to the whole nation of Israel. What happens to the individual family will impact the entire nation.

We have encountered families whose influence extends far beyond their local sphere. Missionary kids often return to the mission field. A recent conference leader spoke of some of the great ethical leaders of the last century. He has himself had influence in leading peace initiatives and teaching for peace and justice. Only incidentally, we learned that his own father was a state governor for three terms, president of a well-known university, advisor to President Dwight D. Eisenhower of the United States, a visionary leader in establishing the United Nations and president of a large evangelical Christian denomination. This man’s sister teaches in a university and writes one of the most influential textbooks used in the field of developmental psychology. His sons continue a tradition of upholding justice. Families matter.

### **Call to Commitment:**

When families come together, they ought to pray for one another. In fact, even when separated, they can come together through prayer. When this author’s mother became quite elderly, she often complained that she had no meaningful contribution to make to family life. “I can’t even peel potatoes any more,” she would mourn.

We encouraged her to be systematic in her prayer for family members and friends. Her memory had dimmed so we bought an attractive prayer journal and wrote down her children’s names, their spouses, children and grandchildren. When great grandchildren were added, it was obvious that there was a list which would require some time and energy. We added favourite scriptures and names of old friends and her church of many years as well as the school where she had taught. Now she had meaningful work to do.

However busy and profitable the activities of your life may be, there is no more important investment to be made than that of prayer for your family. Extend that prayer to nephews and nieces and long-lost cousins. For some, you will be the only prayer warrior lifting them up to the Father.

### **Concluding the Service:**

Close with a hymn or worship song focusing on prayer or one that lifts your church toward Jesus—such as **Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus**, *The Worship Hymnal* #413.

Use the following outline to guide the study. You may write the outline on a whiteboard or a large piece of paper or make individual copies for participants of the outline.

**Family Dynamics (Genesis 42:1-5)**  
**Family Reunion (Genesis 42:6-13)**  
**Putting Them to the Test (Genesis 42:14-38)**  
**A Second Journey (Genesis 43)**  
**The Plot Thickens (Genesis 44:1-13)**  
**A Real Family Reunion (Genesis 44:14-34)**  
**Moved to Compassion (Genesis 45:)**

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