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Series: A Miraculous Church
Spring Year 2, Lesson 57

Joseph is Jailed—God Uses it for Good

Primary Scripture: Genesis 42-50

Key Verse: Genesis 50:20, Joseph said, “Even though you planned evil against me, God planned good to come out of it.”

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

Kids try to make sense of life when life gets tough. It seems, at such times, that God might have forgotten us and is refusing to answer our prayers. Instead, kids need to know that God can use tough times to grow our trust in him. God is interested in giving us the very best, shaping us to be more like himself. As we examine Joseph’s life, we see how it was plagued with difficulties and unfairness. God used these, on the other hand, for the greater good, both for Joseph and all of his people.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Jesus took what the devil meant for evil, the crucifixion, and turned it into victory as the act that paid the price of our sin.

Jesus in us: In tough times, it’s comforting to know that Jesus, through his Spirit, dwells within us. That’s how close he is.

Jesus through us: As we cling more tightly to Jesus to help us through our tough times, he uses that model of faith to draw others to know him.

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols, such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Supplies: (Optional) A backpack and about five or six bricks. The following activity can be done by encouraging students to use their imaginations or demonstrated by using a backpack and bricks.

Choose a volunteer assistant beforehand and tell him that you will place a backpack on his back and add bricks to it as kids in the audience share ideas. Tell this assistant to slowly begin to crouch (or squat) lower, and lower, with knees buckling, each time a brick is added. Help him to gauge how low to go each time by saying that you'll just take about five examples and on the sixth example, when the last brick is added to the backpack, to be on his knees.

Invite the pre-selected assistant onto the stage.

I need you to demonstrate for us a position of power or strength. Show us how a weightlifter might pose for the camera to show off his or her muscles. *If the volunteer doesn't know how that looks, offer some ideas of poses or just get the volunteer to stand up straight and flex his arm muscles.*

Now, this is a position of physical strength. But even though we can appear strong on the outside, sometimes we don't feel so strong on the inside. This can happen especially when we experience tough times.

Can you give me some ideas of tough times that a kid might go through? For example, let's say that your pet dies. That can be very tough. What others can you suggest? Take ideas, and add bricks to the backpack for each idea until assistant is in a kneeling position.

Some people would think that this is not a position of strength. But did you know that in the Bible God says:

2 Corinthians 12:9

“...My power is strongest when you are weak.”

For the Christian, the position of greatest power is when we're on our knees. We're not standing on our own strength, but we're depending and trusting on God and able to feel his power.

Refer to kneeling assistant.

Now, put your hands together to give us the image of you praying.

Start to take off the backpack as you say:

With this prayer, we take off our heavy loads and give them to God as we give him our worship and praise.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

Your choice of music.

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Ask this as a rhetorical question:

What I'm going to talk about next is a very difficult subject that is going to require mature learners. So, in your own mind, I want you to quietly and reverently think of an image that you may have seen on TV or in a book that involves torture. Torture is when someone does something evil against another person just to hurt them as much as they can. Don't expect any discussion on this question.

From that image, can you see anything used that could also act as a symbol of torture, even a commonly used symbol of torture?

Did you know that the cross is a symbol of torture? That's how it was used. Its purposed was to cause as much pain as possible when people were nailed to it, until they eventually died. I'm sure that Satan loved to see people hurt others and cause such pain. But God says that there's a surprising truth. What Satan or mean people do to hurt people, God can use for good. You can think of the cross as an instrument of torture and evil.

But what good happened on the cross because Jesus gave his life for us there? He took away our sin.

So, what Satan meant for evil, God meant for good. It's meant for our good, too. Trusting Jesus as our Savior, means that we trust that he takes all of that evil on himself and is punished for it so that we can be forgiven and go free. When this happens, we can be called sons and daughters of God himself. Let's pray that God would remind us of that now.

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for taking evil and making good come out of it right on the cross. You took our sin, which is evil, and put it on Jesus, so that we could have the perfect life that Jesus lived put on us. When evil things happen to us, we need help to trust you and remember that you can make good happen out of anything for those who trust you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

There was once a woman whose husband unexpectedly died at a young age. She had very little money saved and had no way to take care of herself. When she was down to her last two coins, do you know what she did with them? She gave them to the offering at church. Do you know who was watching? Jesus. It happened in Jesus' time, and he noticed what she gave and he stopped. He said, "Do you see what she has done? Out of her love for God, she has given all that she has. That is more than everyone else has given here."

Even though she was going through hard times, she still trusted God and gave him her last coins. Do you think he took care of her? Do you think that she had enough to live on after that? I'm sure she did because God can use tough times to make good things happen when we trust in him.

Have kids place their offerings into the basket.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

Game: Option #1- **Elbow Tag**

ROUND ONE

Insert your kid's names where the examples are underlined:

Kids, everyone choose a partner. Now link elbows with your partner and spread around the room. We are going to play Elbow Tag. This is like regular tag. You have one person who is "it" chasing another.

Let me break apart this pair, (select a pair and insert their names. For this example...) Johnny and James. Do you know how to play tag? Johnny, you're "it." James you're running. GO! Ohh-hh Johnny just tagged James. That means that James is now "it" and Johnny is trying to run away. Great demonstration.

But what about all these people linked together by their elbows? Here's what happens. Let's imagine that Johnny is "it" chasing James. For James to get away or be safe, he comes and links elbows with (insert another pair's names. For this example they are...) Mary who is linked with Heather. Now, he's safe and can't be tagged. But Heather, who is on the outside of this threesome, is now the one running. If she is tagged, she will be "it" and will have to chase Johnny back. Where can she go to be safe? Correct. She can link elbows with another pair. The person on the outside of this threesome will run, instead.

ROUND TWO

Instead of only having one child chasing another, add a second pair of kids so that you can have two kids be "it," each chasing their own "runner." This means you'll have four kids running at the same time, so encourage them to be careful so they don't collide.

This helps involve more kids but can become more confusing. Remind the kids to watch out for each other.

ROUND THREE

Everyone get back into pairs. Now, each pair find another pair to join elbows with. That means there will be four people in each group. Spread out around the room. I'm going to take one group of four (for example, we'll call them the following. Insert your student's names) Heather, Mary, James, and Johnny. I'm going to divide them into two pairs. The pairs must stay elbowed together. James and Johnny, you're "it" and now you're chasing Mary and Heather. Mary and Heather, take off running. They are running with their elbows still linked together. Where can they be safe? If they link together with another group of four, they will be safe. Now I see they are linked with (insert your student's names in the underlined sections) Taylor, Jordan, Chandler and Marcy. As soon as Mary and Heather link in, the two on the opposite end must start running. Chandler and Marcy, you start running and try not to get caught. But if you get tagged, you will need to tag back.

Teaching Point:

Did you know that we are also connected throughout history by links that are even stronger? That link is the promise of God that connects people all throughout the Bible. It's just like they're connected elbow to elbow until they reach Jesus. Then Jesus' connection reaches all the way to us.

Game Option #2 – “Set Me Free:”

Mark off two home-base lines at opposite ends of the room. Divide the kids into two equal teams and instruct each team to stand behind their line. Within each team, have kids number themselves off by ones and twos so, when it's time to play, half of each team remains behind the line until it's their group's turn and places are switched. (Whether or not to divide teams behind the line depends upon the number of kids in attendance.)

Point out to kids that there is a “prison” marked with an X to the left of each team's goal line. Tell them that their goal is to avoid getting put into the other team's “prison.”

When the leader starts the game, he/she needs to identify that kids in group one, from both sides of the room, are the first out to play. The leader sounds a buzzer, rings a bell or just says, “Ready, get set, go!” to start the game. Kids from both teams, numbered as ones, run out into the open space and try to “tag” kids from the other team. When a kid has been “tagged” he must go into the other team's “prison” where he may be joined by new prisoners.

When new prisoners arrive, one prisoner must be on the X at all times. However, the new prisoners must attach to each other by holding hands and creating a human chain out into the play area as far as they can go. If/when a “prisoner” gets tagged by a player from his/her own team, he is free to return to the home-base area or help his team in the main play area. The team who fills up their “prison” with the other team’s “prisoners” wins.

Bible Reading:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Joseph...That’s a God Thing!

Dramatic Teaching

Supplies: Prepare three signs with large lettering for the audience to read aloud:

- *Sign #1 – A Bad Thing*
- *Sign #2 – A Good Thing*

Practice

Today I need your help in a review of some things about the life of Joseph. When I hold up sign #1, I need you to say, “That’s a bad thing.”

Let’s practice.

Hold up sign #1. Students say, “That’s a bad thing.” Practice again, if needed.

Okay, now, when I hold up sign #2, I need you to say, “That’s a good thing.”

Hold up sign #2. Students say, “That’s a good thing.” Practice again, if needed.

Participation

Here is the story of Joseph, which ended with him saying to his brothers:

Genesis 50:20

“Even though you planned evil against me, God planned good to come out of it. This was to keep many people alive, as he is doing now.”

**Joseph...That's not a good thing, or a bad thing, that's a GOD thing!
Let's find out how that GOD thing happened as we listen and participate in this Bible story.**

Joseph had the gift of interpreting dreams. This means that if he heard someone describe a dream they didn't understand, then he could correctly explain what it meant and how it would affect that person's life. He interpreted his father's dream correctly.

Hold up the sign:

A good thing!

No, that's a bad thing because he interpreted the dream to mean that all of his brothers and his father would bow down to him. They got jealous, threw him in a pit, and then sold him into slavery.

Hold up the sign:

A bad thing!

No, that's a good thing because he was sold to an officer named Potiphar in the army living in Egypt.

Hold up the sign:

A good thing!

No, that's a bad thing because he was a slave.

Hold up the sign:

A bad thing!

No, that's a good thing because he worked so hard and faithfully that he worked himself right to the very top.

Hold up the sign:

A good thing!

No, that's a bad thing. Joseph was noticed by Potiphar's wife, who wanted him as a boyfriend when her husband was away, and lied about him when he refused. So, he was thrown into jail.

Hold up the sign:

A bad thing!

No, that's a good thing. In jail he helped to interpret the dreams of two other prisoners, a baker and a butler. He interpreted Pharaoh's butler's dream by telling him that he would eventually be freed from jail.

Hold up the sign:

A good thing!

No, that's a bad thing. Joseph told the butler to put in a good word for him to Pharaoh and have him released from jail, too.

Hold up the sign:

A bad thing!

Yes, that IS a bad thing. The butler did go free, but he forgot to tell the Pharaoh about freeing Joseph.

Hold up the sign:

A bad thing!

No, that's a good thing. Because two years later when Pharaoh had a dream that needed to be interpreted, the butler remembered about Joseph being in jail and sent for him to help Pharaoh.

Hold up the sign:

A good thing!

No, that's a GOD thing. God used Joseph at this time to be the ruler over all the land of Egypt and help move all of his brothers from back home to the land of Egypt so that they could survive the seven years of famine and live in prosperity with him in Egypt. What his brothers had meant for evil, God used for good. It was a *God* thing.

Video

Please show the video from The Animated Stories from the Bible, *Joseph in Egypt*, Family Entertainment Network, Inc., 1992, ISBN # 1-56489-066-X. Order from http://www.nestfamily.com/store/product_detail.asp?productID=JED. Begin at 14:14 after opening statement, "I will be freed, Potiphar..." to 22:31 where the people are cheering for Joseph.



Witness

Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Tell about a tough time you went through that God used to make good things happen.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Line Option:** Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

_____ **Prayer Chair:** Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit in the chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees, and take turns praying.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- (Optional) A backpack
- (Optional) five or six bricks

Bible Reading:

- video from *The Animated Stories From the Bible, Joseph in Egypt*, Family Entertainment Network, Inc., 1992, ISBN # 1-56489-066-X—order from http://www.nestfamily.com/store/product_detail.asp?productID=JED

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Bad

Thing !

A

Good

Thing !