



Joseph in Prison

Genesis 39:1-2, 20-23; 40:5-14

Level D

Ages 15-18

Life Focus: The Lord is with me no matter what is happening in my life.

Story Summary: Joseph's brothers put him in a pit, and he was later sold to passing traders. He was taken to Egypt where he was sold as a slave. Proving trustworthy, he was soon put in charge of his master Potiphar's household. One day Potiphar's wife falsely accused him of sexual impropriety, and he was thrown in prison. The prison keeper came to trust him and put him in sole charge of the other prisoners. Pharaoh's butler and baker were imprisoned and, while under Joseph's care, they told him their dreams. Joseph explained the dreams, saying that the Lord revealed their meanings. The butler would serve Pharaoh again, but the baker would die. The dreams came true as Joseph predicted.

Lesson 2

Materials needed

Supplied with Lesson

Additional Materials

1. Getting Started (2-3 min)	Welcome Warm-up Activity	Welcome Warm-up Activity directions p. 14	
2. Focus on the Word use all activities (5-7 min)	Read the Word Talk About It discussion	Talk About It discussion guide p. 14	Bible or copy of Genesis 39:1-2, 20-23; 40:5-14
3. Engage with the Word choose one or two activities (15-20 min)	Service Project make cards to comfort people who are going through a difficult time; distribute or give to pastoral care team to distribute	Cards of Hope directions p. 15 <i>Freedom and Imprisonment</i> p. 17 <i>Hope for Healing and Spiritual Freedom</i> p. 18	supplies to make cards, e.g. paper, markers, spe- cial pens, glue, glitter, stickers, paints, enve- lopes
	Debate read quotations from the Word and respond to state- ments; debate opinions with others	The Butler and the Baker: A Debate directions pp. 15-16 <i>The Butler and the Baker: A Debate</i> p. 19	two chairs
4. Wrap It Up (2-3 min)	Take the Message Home a door hanger with a summary of the lesson and activities	Joseph in Prison Door Hanger p. 20	color version available at www.newchurch.org/youth-journey-programs

1. Getting Started

Welcome/Warm-up Activity

True or False?

Focus students' attention by asking whether the following statements are true or false:

- If an experience *feels* good, it *is* good. (False)
- It is possible to know what is true and be a fundamentally selfish person. (True)
- It is possible to do the right actions for the wrong reasons. (True)
- People who behave selfishly are aware of it. (False—not necessarily)

2. Focus on the Word

Read

Genesis 39:1-5, 7-16, 20-23; 40:5-23

Talk
About It



Select questions from the following to promote group discussion:

Joseph's brothers plotted to kill him, but he was lifted out of the pit by passing traders and sold instead. Transported as far as Egypt, he was sold into slavery. Spiritually, Egypt pictures the mind immersed in factual knowledge, e.g. practical knowledge that helps you work—such as computer skills, etc.

Have you ever had a strong desire to have or do something take over or enslave your thinking?

Joseph pictures a desire to be truly good. Joseph resisted Potiphar's wife, refusing to commit adultery. Have you ever been pulled along to do something that you did not really want to do? OR Have you or others you know resisted doing something that you knew you should not do?

Joseph was put in prison. What was Joseph's relationship with the Lord during this difficult time? The Lord was with him, and everything Joseph did prospered. Have you experienced a time like this?

Joseph told the butler and the baker that God alone could interpret dreams. In what way can God interpret your "awake" dreams—the dreams, hopes, and plans you have for your life? He "interprets" our dreams when we measure them with the Lord's Word. This is how we can find out whether they are right and true.

The butler and the baker represent two aspects of our senses. The butler represents information received through the senses. The baker represents wants or longings prompted by the senses. Our natural senses serve us while we are alive on the earth. The butler dreamed that he poured wine into Pharaoh's cup—which was an act of useful service. Pharaoh could drink the wine. Did the baker serve Pharaoh? No, the birds snatched the bread before Pharaoh could get it. The birds picture false thinking that snatches away true and good ideas. When this happens our senses no longer serve our spiritual life, but support habits that destroy our spiritual life, e.g. habitually watching movies that make bad choices seem fine.

Joseph appeared to be forgotten in prison. Sometimes we may feel alone—as if the Lord has forgotten us. But just as He was with Joseph, He is always with us.

3. Engage with the Word

Choose one or two activities

Choice **Cards of Hope**

Reach out to someone who is imprisoned by sickness or difficult circumstances. Create a card that communicates personal words of comfort as well as comfort from the Word. Send the cards to people who are going through hard times, e.g. are housebound, homeless, affected by a disaster, or isolated in a nursing home. If nobody comes to mind right now, give the cards to your pastor or congregational care team to send later.



Keeping the messages non-specific, e.g. "Thinking of you with love" or "Praying you will feel God's presence in your life", will enable you to use the cards for a variety of situations.

1. What is prison like? What would you *not have*? What *would* you have?
2. How can a person be spiritually imprisoned? (Our minds are imprisoned by false ideas and evil motivations inspired by the hells. Hell traps and imprisons us when we lash out in anger or other kinds of selfish behavior. Various disabilities or illnesses may hold a person in a prison-like situation.)
3. Hand out *Freedom and Imprisonment* (p. 17). Read selections aloud with the students. Discuss.
4. Each student will make a card for someone who is imprisoned in some way. If students know a person they would like to send a card to, they can make a special card for that person. If nobody comes to mind, encourage students to design cards that can be sent to a person in need later.
5. Hand out the *Hope for Healing and Spiritual Freedom* (p. 18) quotations from the Word. Students can choose a quote to write on the front or inside of their card. *Option*: Students may use Bibles and choose their own quotations from the Word.
6. Collect any cards students would like to donate to the church. Give them to your pastor or congregational care team.

Choice **The Butler and the Baker: A Debate**

Students will explore why the butler returned to Pharaoh's service and the baker was hanged. The butler corresponds to the intellect—which can think either false or true thoughts. A person preparing for heaven is continually replacing false thoughts with better truer ones. The baker corresponds to our motivations or desires, which are prompted by our natural will and five senses. For example, we might see a sad person and jump to the conclusion that someone did something to cause the sadness. Selfish desires cannot be changed. They must be put to death and new unselfish motivations must be embraced if a person is to enter heaven.

Materials

Freedom and Imprisonment p. 17 for each student and a few copies of *Hope for Healing and Spiritual Freedom* p. 18 to share

optional: Bibles

card making supplies: paper, fancy papers, pens, glue, glitter, stickers, paints, envelopes, etc.

Preparation

identify people in need to send cards to; talk to the pastor if this is helpful

Materials

The Butler and The Baker: A Debate (p. 19) to share, two chairs

Preparation

set up a chair at each end of the room

The Butler and the Baker continued

3. Students favoring the statement, should go to the right side of the room. Students disagreeing with it should move to the left side of the room. Everyone must choose one side or the other, but students can change sides at any time.
4. There is a speaker's chair on each side of the room. Only the person sitting in that chair may speak. Students volunteer to take turns sitting in the chair to support and defend their opinions. As they listen, the other students may move to the other side of the room if their opinions change.
5. Continue debating the statement until the students are ready for a change in topic.
6. Choose one of the "Statements for Further Debate" (p. 19) and continue the activity as long as students remain interested and engaged.

The first phase of our being generated anew is called "reformation"; it has to do with our intellect. Since our will is evil from the day we are born, and since our intellect teaches us what is evil and what is good and that it is possible for us to will one and not the other, it follows that our intellect is the means by which we have to be reformed. During the phase called our reformation, we come to mentally see and admit that evil is evil and goodness is good, and make the decision to choose what is good. When we actually try to abstain from evil and do what is good, the phase called our regeneration begins.

True Christianity 58

4. Wrap It Up

Closing

Gather the students together. What impact might knowing that the Lord is always with you, as He was with Joseph, have on your life? How could you bring this message to a person who is struggling or imprisoned?

Hand each student a copy of the *Joseph in Prison Door Hanger* (p. 20). Read the "God is with you" section at the top of the hanger with the students. Look at "Reach out to God." Encourage the students to do one or more of the activities this week.

Note: a color version of the door hanger can be printed from www.newchurch.org/youth-journey-programs.

Freedom and Imprisonment

Choose two or three readings to share aloud.

Few know what freedom is, and what non-freedom is. Everything a person loves and finds delightful appears to be freedom, and everything contrary to these, non-freedom. Things that come from the love of self and the love of the world and their desires appear to a purely natural person as freedom, but this freedom is from hell. That however which is in keeping with love to the Lord and love towards the neighbor, consequently with the love of what is good and true, is true freedom, being the freedom that exists in heaven.

(see *Arcana Coelestia* 2870)

Hellish and heavenly freedoms are different. Hellish freedom is the freedom to think and will evil, and so far as civil and moral laws do not prevent it, to speak and do it. Heavenly freedom, on the other hand, is the freedom to think and will good, and so far as opportunity is given, to speak and do it. Whatever a person thinks, wills, speaks and does in freedom, he sees as his own, for to everyone all freedom agrees with what he loves. Consequently people caught up in loving evil think that *hellish freedom* is real freedom, whereas people motivated by a love of good perceive that *heavenly freedom* is real freedom, so that each regards the opposite as slavery.

(see *Divine Providence* 43)

The Lord never compels anyone, because everything to which someone is compelled does not appear to him as attributable to him, and whatever does not appear to him as attributable to him cannot be made a matter of his love and so be assigned to him as belonging to him. Therefore a person is continually led by the Lord in freedom, and is also reformed and regenerated in freedom.

(see *Divine Providence* 43)

People who are bound or imprisoned in the Word picture people whose minds are tied up by false thoughts and evil actions. People who deliberately choose evil and falsity lose their freedom to choose and receive true ideas—because they think that what *they* believe is true and that what is *really* true is false! People like this think they are free—because what a person loves appears to them to be freedom.

(see *Arcana Coelestia* 5096)

After death, people who have led a good life are kept in good by the Lord and so are in a state of intelligence and wisdom. In contrast, people who have lived evilly and who love evil appear demented—like animals. They are drawn to what they love and cannot be withheld from it—except against their will. Because this is their character they are confined in hell and made to work. If they refuse to work they are deprived of food, clothing and a bed, and if they actually do evil they are punished. All people who have lived evilly are kept in prison like this after death.

(see *Last Judgment Posthumous* 227)

Discussion questions

1. How can hell trap a person and put him or her into a spiritual prison?
2. Does a person who is in hell feel free?
3. Can a person in hell experience true freedom?
4. Would a person living in hell feel free in heaven? Why or why not?
5. Jesus said, “I was in prison and you came to me” (Matthew 25:36). What responsibility do we have to people who are *spiritually* imprisoned?

Hope for Healing and Spiritual Freedom

<p>You, O Lord, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head. I cried to the Lord with my voice, And He heard me from His holy hill.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Psalm 3:3-4</p>	<p>Be strong and of good courage: do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Joshua 1:9</p>
<p>The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Psalm 145</p>	<p>The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Numbers 6:24-26</p>
<p>The Lord shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Psalm 91:11</p>	<p>The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Psalm 145:9</p>
<p>The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Psalm 23</p>	<p>Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Psalm 23</p>
<p>The multitudes followed Him...and He healed those who had need of healing.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Luke 9</p>	<p>Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Psalm 139</p>
<p>When the Lord is with a person, He leads him, and provides that all things which happen, whether sad or joyful, befall him for good.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Arcana Coelestia</i> 6303</p>	<p>People who are in the stream of Providence are all the time carried along toward everything that is happy, whatever may be the appearance of the means. Those are in the stream of Providence who put their trust in the Lord and attribute all things to Him.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Arcana Coelestia</i> 8478</p>
<p>The Lord takes care of each person...from the first thread of his life to the last of it, and afterward to eternity.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Arcana Coelestia</i> 5992</p>	<p>“Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">John 14:27</p>
<p>Nothing could harm people whom the Lord protects, even if they should be surrounded by all hell, both within and without.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Arcana Coelestia</i> 968</p>	<p>Peace has in it confidence in the Lord, that He directs all things, and provides all things, and that He leads to a good end. When a person is in this faith, he is in peace, for he then fears nothing.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Arcana Coelestia</i> 8455</p>

The Butler and the Baker: A Debate

People are capable of knowing or thinking, and of desiring or loving. The Heavenly Doctrine refers to these two capacities as a person's intellect (understanding), and will. The following quotations describe changes that must happen for a person to be regenerated or, to say it in other words, prepared for heaven.

Teachings from the Word

The person who has been regenerated must have a new will and a new intellect, because these two faculties are what make us human. They are the parts of us that are regenerated. The quality of these two faculties determines the quality of the human being. People who have an evil will are evil; if their intellect supports that will, they are even more evil. The opposite is true of good people.

True Christianity 601

The following comparisons can illustrate what people are like when their intellect has been lifted up but the love in their will has not. They are like an eagle that soars on high, but as soon as it sees something to eat below, such as hens, cygnets, or even little lambs, it drops like a stone and devours them.

True Christianity 590

The first phase of our being generated anew is called "reformation"; it has to do with our intellect. Since our will is evil from the day we are born, and since our intellect teaches us what is evil and what is good and that it is possible for us to will one and not the other, it follows that our intellect is the means by which we have to be reformed. During the phase called our reformation, we come to mentally see and admit that evil is evil and goodness is good, and make the decision to choose what is good. When we actually try to abstain from evil and do what is good, the phase called our regeneration begins.

True Christianity 587

People who have received a new will from the Lord have a conscience. The new will is their conscience, so if they act against their conscience they are acting against their new will. And since the good of charity makes up the new will it also makes up a person's conscience.

see Arcana Coelestia 9115

The new will is the Lord's presence with a person, and because it is the Lord's it must never be mixed with things that belong to the person's own will, which is rotten.

see Arcana Coelestia 1001

Statement for Debate:

**To enter heaven a person needs to know what is true and have faith.
What the person *does* is not really important.**

Statements for Further Debate:

It doesn't really matter what you *think* as long as you *do* the right thing.

**I can tell what is good. I have a good feeling that makes me happy inside
if something is good.**

But the Lord was with Joseph...

Joseph in Prison

Cut out the shaded doorhanger. Fold it in half and hang it over a door.

God is with you

"During our spiritual tests we are apparently left completely alone, although in fact we are not alone—at those times God is most intimately present...giving us support."

True Christianity 126

At times we all feel imprisoned, either by external circumstances or by our own thoughts and feelings. Yet the Lord is always present with each one of us.

Think of the sun. On stormy days or at night, we cannot see it. In winter, we do not feel its warmth. But we know that the sun does not ever really leave the earth. If it did, we would die. The Lord is the sun of our inner life.

Reach out to God

I feel trapped because...

Prayer is speaking with God. Tell the Lord about your troubles and ask for His help.

I need a way to deal with my problem...

The Word or Bible is the Lord's message to us. Read it, looking for comfort and answers.

I can see the Lord at work in...

Look for signs of the Lord's presence in your life—in a clear stream, a baby's laughter, a friend's kindness. Find a reflection of the Lord from which to draw strength and courage.

Be strong *AND* COURAGEOUS.

Do not be afraid;
do not be DISCOURAGED,
for the

Lord your



wherever

YOU
GO.

Joshua 1:7-9