



Joseph's Brothers Bow

Genesis 42

Level D

Ages 15-18

Life Focus: I can go to the Lord for help in the Word.

Story Summary: Jacob sent his sons to buy food in Egypt, but kept Benjamin home. In Egypt the brothers bowed down to Joseph, not knowing him. He recognized them but treated them as strangers and accused them of spying. Testing their story, Joseph imprisoned his brothers and then, after three days, he offered to keep one brother while the others took food to the family in exchange for promising to bring Benjamin. The brothers believed this was a punishment for how they had treated Joseph. Joseph commanded that his brothers' sacks be filled with grain and that each man's money be put back in his sack. The brothers were dismayed when they found the money. They told Jacob what had happened, but Jacob would not let Benjamin to go. He thought he would die of grief if Benjamin was harmed.

Lesson 4

Materials needed

		Supplied with Lesson	Additional Materials
1. Getting Started (2-3 min)	Welcome Warm-up Activity	Welcome Warm-up Activity directions p. 30	
2. Focus on the Word use all activities (5-7 min)	Read the Word		Bible or copy of Genesis 42
	Talk About It discussion	Talk About It discussion guide p. 30	
3. Engage with the Word choose one or two activities (15-20 min)	Group Activity set up a maze that students can only get out of by asking for help; follow up with discussion on asking for help	Escape the Maze directions p. 31 <i>Escape the Maze</i> p. 33	blindfolds for each student; lengths of rope or a large ball of yarn; objects to tie rope around at waist height to create a maze e.g. trees, chairs, etc.
	Discussion Joseph accused his brothers of spying—how do we “spy” on others?	You Are Spies! directions pp. 31-32 <i>You Are Spies!</i> p. 34 <i>Civil, Moral and Spiritual Judgments</i> p. 35	pens or pencils
4. Wrap It Up (2-3 min)	Take the Message Home a door hanger with a summary of the lesson and activities	Joseph's Brothers Bow Door Hanger p. 36	color version available at www.newchurch.org/youth-journey-programs

1. Getting Started

Welcome Warm-up Activity

Value Shuffle

Assign a value to each corner of the room: agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree. Ask students to respond to the following statements by moving to the corner of the room that best reflects their response.

1. Reading a good book is better than hiking.
2. Helping people makes me grow spiritually more than reading the Word.
3. What a person believes is more important than what he or she does.

Briefly discuss why students chose the corner of the room they did.

2. Focus on the Word

Read

Genesis 42 (choose selections)

Talk About It



Select questions from the following to promote group discussion:

Have you ever had a hard time recognizing someone you have not seen for a long time? How about remembering an idea that you have not thought about for a long time—a math concept, perhaps? What was it like?

Why didn't Joseph's brothers recognize him? They did not expect to see Joseph. He had become an important ruler in Egypt and wore Egyptian clothes and hairstyle. He spoke Egyptian (not Hebrew), and used an interpreter.

How did Joseph's accusation of spying affect his brothers? Initially they seem to have panicked and complicated their defense by saying they were twelve brothers when there were only ten of them there. They felt guilty about how they had treated Joseph and thought this might be why they were being accused.

One way to understand this story is to think of Joseph as representing the Lord. In what ways does the Lord challenge you to think about what you are doing? Through the Word, conscience, and through other people. He challenges us to take a look at what we are doing from His perspective—the perspective of heaven.

The brothers spent three days in prison. How do we become spiritually imprisoned? False ideas cause mental conflict (temptation) and imprison a person's mind, preventing him or her from being free to see, believe and act from true ideas.

When the brothers arrived at an inn, one brother went to feed his donkey and discovered his money! Who did the brothers think had done this? God—they thought He had done it to get them in trouble.

Does God punish people who do something wrong? No. The Lord is not capable of doing anything evil to anyone. He is love itself, mercy itself, goodness itself (*True Christianity* 651). However, evil actions bring their own consequences.

Why did Joseph's family's go to Egypt? They were hungry and did not want to starve.

Many people in the Bible went to Egypt—including Jesus. Egypt symbolizes true ideas from the Word. Egypt provided food during famines just as the Word provides spiritual food to a mind that is starved for true ideas. In what ways is going to the Word like taking a journey? Each time a person goes to the Word, he or she is going to the Lord. The Lord is there, ready to feed and sustain each person on his or her life's journey. The Lord is present with us...constantly urging us to receive him (*True Christianity* 498).

3. Engage with the Word

Choose one or two activities



Escape the Maze

The Lord alone prepares us for heaven. We cannot get to heaven without Him. Our job is to accept His invitation to follow Him and do the work that this takes. The Heavenly Doctrine teaches that the brothers thinking they were buying their grain is like a person believing he can earn heaven by his own effort. This activity simulates what it is like to try to get to heaven without asking for the Lord's help. Follow the activity with *Escape the Maze* discussion (p. 33) about the importance of asking for help.

1. Before class, create an enclosed "maze" (really a corral with an exit you will close off after all the students are inside) large enough for your group to walk in at the same time. Wrap a rope, string or yarn tightly around trees, barrels, chairs or other objects at waist height. Make sure there are no obstacles on the ground that could trip someone. If there unavoidable obstacles such as tree roots, station a sighted monitor to guide people safely around them.
2. Blindfold students. Guide them one-by-one to a spot on the rope. Place them around the rope facing in different directions.
4. Players must keep one hand on the rope and the other hand in front of their faces at all times, so as not to get hurt if they run into another person.
5. Once all players are situated, close the entrance.
6. Announce that the object is for each player to figure a way out of the maze. They may not untie or go under the rope. They must follow the rope around the obstacles.
7. Once everyone is in place ready to start say, "If you need help during the activity, raise your hand." **Note to Leader:** *This is the key to the whole activity—and the solution to the problem. The ONLY way to get out of the maze is to ask for help.*
8. If a player raises his or her hand and asks, "Is there a way out of here?" the answer is "Yes!" and the game keeps going.
9. In order to escape the maze, a student must raise a hand and ASK for help.
10. Once a player asks for help, go into the maze, take the student's hand or put your hand on their shoulder and lead them out either by opening the "gate" or helping them under the rope.
11. Players who get out must not laugh, talk or disturb others. They may take off their blindfolds.
12. The activity ends when it is no longer beneficial to continue. Keep an eye out for students who are frustrated because they cannot figure out how to escape and are aware that they are one of the last ones left in the maze.
13. Distribute copies of *Escape the Maze* (p. 33) for students to share and discuss.



You Are Spies!

Explore the ways in which you treat others. Do you use true ideas to "spy" on people? In other words, do you listen to what others say or look at what others do simply to find fault? How does the Lord want us to handle this aspect of our relationships with others?

Important Note!

Set up the maze where the students will not be able to look at it ahead of time. Blindfold students before leading them to the maze.

Materials

copy of *Escape the Maze* p. 33 for each student; a blindfold for each student; rope or yarn and enough space to make a large maze

Preparation

Set up a maze using rope or yarn wrapped at waist-height around objects such as trees, chairs, etc. Look for obstacles that might trip people (such as tree roots) and station a monitor there to guide people around them.

New Church Concept: Only the Lord Can Get Us to Heaven

A person is unable of himself to come near the Lord and be joined to Him; rather the Lord has to come near the person and be joined to him. Since the Lord draws a person towards Himself, the appearance is that the person does of himself come near and join himself. This happens when the person refrains from evils, because not doing evils is a person's own choice. When this happens good from the Lord flows in. This good is never lacking; it is present within the life a person has from the Lord. The good accompanying that life is received only in the measure that evils have been removed. The Word is the means by which the Lord's presence among people is achieved because the Word unites a person to heaven and through heaven to the Lord (see *Arcana Coelestia* 9378).

Materials for each student

You Are Spies p. 34; *Civil, Moral and Spiritual Judgments* p. 35; pen or pencil

You Are Spies! Continued

1. Distribute copies of *You Are Spies!* (p. 34) and read as a group. Discuss.
2. Give each student a copy of *Civil, Moral and Spiritual Judgments* (p. 35) and a pen or pencil. Read the top of the page aloud and then invite students to complete the table individually.
3. Divide the group into pairs. Students will discuss their answers with a partner. Note that answers may vary depending on how people interpreted the statements.
4. Remind students that the questions may be answered correctly in different ways. The goal of this activity is to introduce the concept that we can make judgments on a variety of levels.
5. Gather students to share their answers with the larger group.

People who are spies look for nothing but faults in people who know the truth from a love of doing good things so that they may accuse and condemn them.... When people like this read the Word...many of them look for the nakedness of the land, in other words, to see that true ideas of the church are not true.

see *Secrets of Heaven* 5432

People with whom faith [that is, what they know] is separated from charity [that is, a desire to do good and useful things]...see nothing else but errors and perversities in another person. But those who have faith that is guided by charity are different. **They notice the good things, and if they do see evils and falsities they excuse them, and if they can, try to work with that person to correct them.**

Arcana Coelestia 1079.1, emphasis added

4. Wrap It Up

Closing

Gather the students together. Why is it important for us to recognize our need for the Lord's help? In what way might asking for help change your life? In what way can the Word have an important impact on your life?

Hand each student a copy of the *Joseph's Brothers Bow Door Hanger* (p. 36). Read the "You are an instrument of God" section at the top of the hanger with the students. Look at "Give and Receive." 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.

Escape the Maze

1. How did it feel to be stuck in the maze?
2. What was your biggest challenge in trying to find your way out?
3. Can you think of a time when you felt trapped by emotions or thoughts that you could not escape?
4. Which of the following have you tried when you had a problem or made a mistake? How did it work out?
 - trial and error
 - talking to someone (friend, parent, etc.)
 - hiding it and hoping that nobody would find out
 - talking to God
 - thinking through the first step of a possible solution and starting to work on that
 - reading the Word
5. Jacob's family had a problem. They had no food. Picture their intense hunger. What solution did Jacob suggest?
6. Everyone has a body—but your body is not the real you! Your body is a container for your spirit while you live in the world. Your spirit is the “real” you—the you that lives forever! And your spirit needs spiritual food, just as your body needs natural food. Spiritual food is understanding true ideas and wisely practicing them. Angels are nourished by this food (see *Arcana Coelestia* 5576).
7. What setting might lead a person your age to recognize a spiritual hunger?
8. Jesus said “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened” (Matthew 7). Why can't a person go to heaven without the Lord's help?
9. What are some ways you can ask the Lord for help?

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You Are Spies!

Using true ideas to see the faults of others

Includes excerpts from *Friendship, Popularity and Getting Along with People* by Rev. D. Rose

When Joseph’s brothers came to Egypt, Joseph immediately recognized them. He knew his brothers well—just as you are probably more familiar with your family than with other people. So why did he accuse them of being spies?

The Heavenly Doctrine explains the spiritual meaning of “spying”:

People who are spies look for nothing but faults in people who know the truth from a love of doing good things so that they may accuse and condemn them.... When people like this read the Word...many of them look for the nakedness of the land, in other words, to see that true ideas of the church are not true.

see *Secrets of Heaven* 5432

So how are we to react to the faults of others? We are probably aware of some faults and flaws in our closest friends and family members, and we probably know just what behaviors irritate us. Is the right thing to do to ignore their faults and see only their virtues? Or, as a true friend, should we call attention to the weaknesses we notice?

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”

John 15:12-13

The life of charity consists in thinking kindly of another and in wishing him well.

Arcana Coelestia 2284

The Heavenly Doctrine teaches that we should look to the good of other people. That is, we should *promote* their good.

People with whom faith [that is, what they know] is separated from charity [that is, a desire to do good and useful things]...see nothing else but errors and perversities in another person. But those who have faith that is guided by charity are different. **They notice the good things, and if they do see evils and falsities they excuse them, and if they can, try to work with that person to correct them.**

Arcana Coelestia 1079.1, emphasis added

We should have this in mind when we deal with a person’s faults and flaws. We are to wish well and do good to enemies, strangers, and evil people as well as to friends, relatives, and good people. But charity is to be exercised toward each in a different way.

The Lord says, “Judge not, that you be not condemned.” (Matthew 7:1) This cannot in the least mean judging of someone’s moral and civil life in the world, but judging of someone’s spiritual and heavenly life. Who does not see that if people were not allowed to judge of the moral life of those dwelling with them in the world, society would collapse? But to judge what the inner mind or soul is like within, thus what a person’s spiritual state is and so his fate after death—of this one is not permitted to judge, because it is known to the Lord alone.

Conjugial Love 523

Parents, teachers, and legal professionals such as judges, police officers, etc. have a responsibility to correct others, but there are dangers in assuming this role with friends. A person may “help” friends with their faults just to boost his or her own ego. Yet we can do no greater disservice to a friend than to cultivate the friendship by giving the impression that anything he or she does is fine with us. When we give the friendly wink to what we know is wrong, we are turning traitor to our friends.

People who love true ideas for the sake of the truth and of living a good life...search the Word for no other purpose than the truth, from which they form faith and conscience.

see *Secrets of Heaven* 5432

Joseph’s brothers did not bring Benjamin along on their journey. This pictures missing the point of reading the Word—which is for a person to use the true ideas there to improve his or her *own* behavior.

Civil, Moral and Spiritual Judgments

One is never allowed to judge the nature of another person’s spiritual life, for only the Lord knows this. But one is allowed to judge the nature of another person’s civil and moral life.

see Arcana Coelestia 2284.4; Conjugal Love 523

- A **civil judgment** looks at whether or not a person obeys the laws of the country and local community.
- A **moral judgment** relates to whether or not a person does what is good and acts with charity toward the neighbor.
- A **spiritual judgment** is about a person’s spiritual state and focuses on internal motivation, e.g. whether or not he or she will be saved, or his or her relationship with the Lord.

Decide whether each of the following statements reflects a **civil, moral, or spiritual judgment**. Check the box you think is correct.

	Judgment Calls	Civil	Moral	Spiritual
1	“He did that on purpose.”			
2	“She is really acting like a brat!”			
3	“He got paid even though he hardly did any of the job he promised to do.”			
4	“You let evil spirits talk you into doing what you did.”			
5	“I think you’re driving too fast.”			
6	“You’re a bad boy.”			
7	“That was an unkind thing to say.”			
8	“She is just thinking of herself and her own needs. She doesn’t care about us at all.”			
9	“You can’t go around telling people that ‘Joe’s Ice Cream’ sells food with maggots in it.”			
10	“That sounded like a rude comment to me.”			

...that we may live...

Joseph's Brothers Bow

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

You Are an Instrument of God

"God loves each and every human being; and because He cannot do good to them directly, but only indirectly by means of other people, He therefore breathes into people His love."
True Christian Religion 457

It may seem surprising, but the Lord actually needs people to help Him accomplish His work in this world. Your kindness can be an expression of His Divine Love.

You can also receive the Lord's love through the kindness and care of people around you. It can be hard to ask for help, but the Lord wants us all to be of use to one another. Learning to receive help as well as give it is part of His plan for your life.

Give and Receive

I can offer help by...

Think of a way you can help someone today—with a physical or mental task or with emotional support and encouragement.

I can ask for help with...

Is there some activity or relationship that is challenging for you? Look for people who can help—give them the opportunity to give!

I feel the Lord's love when...

Think of an event that made you aware of the presence of the Lord's love, working through you or another person.



and

