



# Joseph Reveals Himself

Genesis 44:18-34; 45:1-15, 25-28

## Level D

Ages 15-18

**Life Focus:** I can be compassionate and forgiving.

**Story Summary:** Judah came forward and begged Joseph to make him a slave so that Benjamin could return home to his father. On hearing this, Joseph sent the Egyptians out and revealed his true identity. Dismayed, the brothers were speechless as he asked after their father. Joseph acknowledged how they had treated him, but told them not to be angry with themselves. He said that *God* had sent him to Egypt to save lives during the famine. He sent word to his father to hurry and come to Egypt. He promised to care for the family in the land of Goshen. He kissed Benjamin and his other brothers, and they talked. Pharaoh was pleased and offered Joseph's family the best of the land. He sent them away with carts and food for their journey. Joseph gave them clothing, and to Benjamin he gave five changes of clothing and silver. Jacob's heart stood still in disbelief at the news that Joseph was alive, and he determined that he would go and see him.

## Lesson 6

*Materials Needed*

		<i>Supplied with Lesson</i>	<i>Additional Materials</i>
<b>1. Getting Started</b> (2-3 min)	<b>Welcome Warm-up Activity</b>	<b>Welcome Warm-up Activity</b> directions p. 50	3 books: an autobiography, a work of fiction, the Word or Bible
<b>2. Focus on the Word</b> use all activities (5-7 min)	<b>Read the Word</b>  <b>Talk About It</b> discussion	<b>Talk About It</b> discussion guide p. 50	Bible or copy of Genesis 44:18-34; 45:1-15, 25-28
<b>3. Engage with the Word</b> choose 1 or 2 activities (15-20 min)	<b>Video</b> view a video showing how 'Benjamin' changes lives; discuss	<b>It Doesn't Work Without Benjamin</b> online at <a href="http://www.bitly.com/ItDoesntWorkWithoutBenjamin">www.bitly.com/ItDoesntWorkWithoutBenjamin</a>  discussion questions p. 51	computer or other viewing device - watch online or download; see p. 4 for downloading directions
	<b>Discussion</b> visuals and readings support a discussion on the vital link 'Benjamin' plays in re-generation or re-birth	<b>How Does Benjamin Connect Us with the Lord?</b> directions pp. 51-52 <i>At first we misunderstand the Lord</i> chart p. 53 <i>How we come to understand the Lord</i> chart p. 54 <i>How Can I Get to Heaven</i> p. 55	pens or pencils
<b>4. Wrap It Up</b> (2-3 min)	<b>Take the Message Home</b> a door hanger with a summary of the lesson and activities	<b>Joseph Reveals Himself Door Hanger</b> p. 56	color version available at <a href="http://www.newchurch.org/youth-journey-programs">www.newchurch.org/youth-journey-programs</a>

# 1. Getting Started

## Welcome Warm-up Activity

### Hidden Message

Show students three books. The books should be 1.) an autobiography 2.) a work of fiction 3.) the Word or Bible.

Ask the following questions about each book:

- What does the cover of this book tell you about what's inside? (binding, title or lack of title, size, etc.)
- Does the title tell you what the author cares about? (Did the author name the book or did others?)
- How might this book have an impact on your life?

Joseph's brothers saw him as an Egyptian and did not recognize him. Similarly, we may hear the Lord's words but not recognize that He is speaking because He does not appear to us as we expect. What impact might that have on our ability to listen and pay attention to Him?

# 2. Focus on the Word

**Read**      **Genesis 44:18-34; 45:1-15, 25-28** (choose selections)

## Talk About It



Select questions from the following to promote group discussion:

**Judah spoke out about what the brothers had done and how it had affected the family since it happened. He was worried about how his father would react if Benjamin did not return home. He offered to become Joseph's slave.**

**Can you think of a time when you have been in a position to "lay down *your* life" (or at least part of your life) for another person? Are there people in your life who have done this for you?** E.g. parents, military, friends. Look for an opportunity to introduce the idea of Jesus laying down His life for us.

**What effect did Judah's words have on Joseph?** He sent the Egyptian servants out and revealed himself.

**How did Joseph's brothers react?** They were speechless. They had not recognized Joseph at all, despite talking to him several times.

**Compare the way Joseph felt with the way his brothers felt at this point. Why might the brothers have been afraid?**

**What part did Judah's confession play in Joseph's choice to reveal himself at that time?**

**The Lord is always with us—but like the brothers—we do not always recognize him. How does the Lord reveal Himself to us? What might prevent us from seeing Him?**

**The Lord permitted Joseph to experience slavery and imprisonment so he could help Pharaoh and save lives. Was God with Joseph equally during the good and the difficult times? Is He with you equally during good and hard times? When is the Lord closest to us?**

**Joseph forgave his brothers despite their hatred and cruel treatment. What does this story tell us about the Lord's forgiveness? What does it suggest about the way we should forgive others?**

# 3. Engage with the Word

Choose one or two activities



## It Doesn't Work Without Benjamin

'Benjamin' is the quality in us that connects the true ideas we know from the Word with our actions. Watch the video and discuss, using the questions below.

1. A key New Church idea is that what happens around us is less important than how we react to what is happening. This is part of the spiritual freedom the Lord offers us. Can you think of an example of a person who seems to have many reasons to be happy, but is not? Can you think of an example of a person who appears to have good cause to be unhappy, but is not?
2. Our minds constantly receive inflowing thoughts from both good and evil spirits. The evil spirits are constantly on the look-out for opportunities to influence us to react to our experiences in hurtful and destructive ways. They want us to be angry, hateful and impatient; to feel discouraged or inadequate. They want us to be overwhelmed by responsibilities, to feel demotivated, stuck or apathetic. How do the effects of their efforts show up in the video? (Interpreting the facts about the girl to make fun of her or interpreting the facts about his own life to think he was a loser.)
3. One of the points the video makes is that facts need a direction or goal to organize them into a particular meaning or lead to a particular action. A boy sees a girl in his class and the facts he notices initially lead him to think of making fun of her. If the facts didn't change, why did he choose to befriend her?
4. Could *feeling* happier help the person who feels like a loser have a happier life if he continues making similar choices and doing similar actions, such as those that led him to not getting a date and to getting a D?
5. How would you put the idea behind *It Doesn't Work Without Benjamin* into your own words?



## How Does Benjamin Connect Us with the Lord?\*

As soon as Joseph learns that Benjamin is alive he wants him to come to Egypt so that they can be reunited. Joseph in Egypt pictures an inner goodness, a love that wants to bring about good for others in their natural lives.

Joseph's other ten brothers are true ideas that we know. To begin with, these true ideas are under the influence of our natural loves rather than under the influence of spiritual love (Joseph). As a result, we do not have a clear purpose to bring about good for others and look to our own advantage in what we do. We cannot "connect" with a clear internal loving purpose unless we recognize that we have despised and mistreated spiritual love (Joseph). This is why the brothers have such a hard time with Joseph in Egypt.

Benjamin is the connecting link between Joseph and the other brothers. Benjamin represents true ideas, like the other ten brothers, *and* he represents good, like Joseph. He is truth that is inspired by spiritual love. Benjamin is truth that we are able to be excited about. It seems "new" because we suddenly see how it relates to our lives. It feels full of spiritual purpose, unselfish.

### Video Directions

View video at [www.bitly.com/ItDoesntWorkWithoutBenjamin](http://www.bitly.com/ItDoesntWorkWithoutBenjamin)

OR

Download video to your computer or other device. See downloading directions on p. 4.

### New Church Concept: Benjamin

Benjamin represents the intermediate between... internal good, which is "Joseph," and truths in the natural, which are the "ten sons of Jacob," and he also represents new truth. The case is this. In order to be an intermediate, something must derive from both the internal and from the external... This is a secret which cannot be more clearly set forth; and it cannot be understood except by those who are in the thought that each person has an internal and an external distinct from each other; and who are also in the affection of knowing truths (*Secrets of Heaven* 5822).

### Materials for each student

copies of *At first we misunderstand the Lord* p. 53, *How we come to understand the Lord* p. 54, and *How Can I Get to Heaven* p. 55

### New Church Concept: Our Second Birth

The New Church teaches that at birth we tend to love ourselves. To enter a state of heaven we need to act in a spirit of unselfish love. When we act from that love we are "born again."

This change happens through learning what is true. At first we may follow this truth from our head more than our heart. This is the first phase of being born again.

The second phase comes when we've practiced that truth over a long time. It begins to become more heart-felt. We begin to love the truth and the life that it points to. We have a new heart and a new spirit. This is the promise made in Ezekiel: "I will give you a new heart and I will put a new spirit within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you (Ezek. 36:26,27).

## How Does Benjamin Connect Us with the Lord? *continued*

1. Benjamin's arrival in Egypt sets the stage for his family to be reunited. This event pictures a transformational step in a person's spiritual journey to heaven. We will start by looking at an overview of a person's journey to heaven so we can see how Benjamin fits in to the big picture. Hand out *How Can I Get to Heaven?* Read aloud, pausing for questions and comments.
2. Let's take a closer look at what happens *inside* a person's mind during this process. The first diagram we will be looking at pictures how we understand the Lord when we are starting out in life. Hand out *At first we misunderstand the Lord*. Take a moment to look over the diagram. Notice all the different parts and labels.
3. The Lord is at the top right. He is infinite and eternal—Divine Love and Wisdom Itself. He reveals Himself to us in His Word (see arrow to the left). We do not see Him in His fullness—this is impossible because He is above time and space. We gather facts about the Lord in our memory by reading and learning from the Word, e.g. 10 Commandments, stories, etc.
4. The facts we learn are organized by what we love—what we are interested in and “going for” in life. As we start out, our minds are ruled or organized by *natural* motivations. While these motivations are leading our lives we have a *natural* understanding of true ideas. What does this *natural understanding* look like? Look at the bottom right. (The truth is all there, we just don't understand it correctly.)
5. What kind of relationship do we have with the Lord at this stage of life? (no *genuine* relationship)
6. Hand out *How we come to understand the Lord*. Compare the two diagrams. What is the same and what has changed? (Give students time to look and respond.)
7. What difference does ‘Benjamin’ make in a person's spiritual life? How does ‘he’ change our relationship with the Lord? (Benjamin makes all the difference—the “new will” is the key to being joined with the Lord's Divine Love and Wisdom. Without this will we do not have a spiritual understanding of truth and cannot be conjoined with the Lord.)
8. After looking at these diagrams, what do you think a diagram showing the mind of a person who chooses *not* to go to heaven would look like? Why can't a person who consciously chooses to be selfish be joined with the Lord?
9. At times every person makes mistakes or acts selfishly. Even angels struggle with selfish motivations sometimes!

A person who is being regenerated and being made spiritual is first led to good by means of truth; for a person does not know what spiritual good is except through truth drawn from the Word. In this way a person is initiated into good. Afterward, when the person has been initiated, he is no longer led to good through truth, but to truth through good, for the person then not only sees from good the truths which he knew before, but also from good brings forth new truths which he did not and could not know before; for good is attended with a longing for truths, because with these it is “nourished” and perfected. These new truths differ greatly from the truths which the person had previously known; for those which he knew before had little life, while those which he now acquires have life from good. (see *Arcana Coelestia* 5804)

## 4. Wrap It Up

### Closing

Gather the students together. It is easy to feel angry and hurt when we are treated badly. It is difficult to imagine yourself in someone else's shoes. As we practice trying to do this, our hearts can be opened up with compassion. With the Lord's help we can try to forgive and make a fresh start.

Hand each student a copy of the *Joseph Reveals Himself Door Hanger* (p. 56). Read the “You can forgive” section at the top of the hanger with the students. Look at “Focus on the good.” Encourage the students to do one or more of the activities this week.

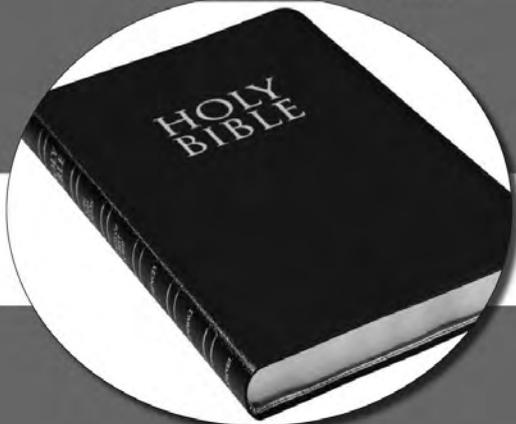
# At first we misunderstand the Lord

our higher consciousness

# TRUTH

## truth

from divine revelation



our natural mind



facts in our memory

organized by  
the old will or  
natural  
motivations

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# hurtt

a natural  
understanding  
of truth

# How we can come to understand the Lord and what He is really trying to teach us.

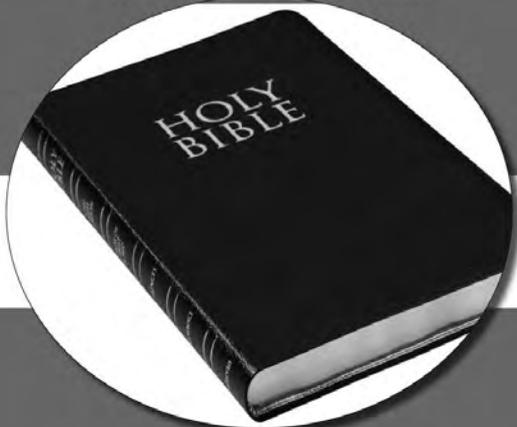
our higher consciousness

TRUTH



truth

from divine revalation



our natural mind

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organized by  
the new will or  
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motivations

truth

Benjamin

a spiritual  
understanding  
of truth

facts in our memory

## How Can I Get to Heaven?

Jesus said, “Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.... Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3.2,5-6). From the time we are infants (our “first birth”) we tend to love ourselves. We act for ourselves, in our own narrow interests. This is “flesh” love. To enter a state of heaven we need to act in a spirit of unselfish love, in the Divine Spirit. When we act from that love we are born again.

How do we make this change? The New Church teaches that the change happens through a series of steps. The first step involves learning the truth. When we hear the truth, *something* in us (something we’re not even aware of at the moment) recognizes this truth. That something wants to be “right” with the truth. And when we’re not “right” with it we feel uncomfortable. The interesting thing is, when we decide to commit ourselves to follow this truth, we don’t do it from any deep *love* or *enjoyment* of being spiritual. We don’t *feel* like an angel. We follow the truth more from our head than from our heart. This is the first phase of the new birth. (This is being “born of *water*”—i.e. truth—but not yet “of the Spirit.”)

The second phase comes when we’ve practiced that truth over a period of time, from our best understanding. It begins to become heart-felt. We begin to *love* that truth and the life that it points to. More and more we feel real *pleasure* in living that life. This new pleasure in doing what is good is a gift from the Lord. We call this feeling a “new will”. This is being born again. In the words of Ezekiel, we have a new heart and a new spirit, according to the Lord’s promise: “I will give you a new heart and I will put a new spirit within you. I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you” (Ezekiel 36:26, 27).

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Do not therefore be grieved  
or angry...

## Joseph Reveals Himself

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

### ***You can forgive***

"People who are in charity scarcely see the evil of another, but see all his goods and truths, and put a good interpretation on what is evil and false. The angels are all like this, and they have this quality from the Lord who bends all evil into good." *Secrets of Heaven* 1079

We do need to be able recognize evil so that we can protect ourselves from it. But, at the same time, we will be happier if we focus on the good aspects of the people around us and of the situations in which we find ourselves.

Focusing on what is good helps us to get along with others and to make the best of wherever we are. It allows us to forgive people who have hurt us and to respond with true charity even when we may have felt attacked.

### ***Focus on the good***

*I appreciate...*

If you are upset or angry with someone, think of at least one good quality of that person or one kind or useful thing he or she has done.

*I can recognize that...*

When people do things that make you feel hurt or angry, try putting yourself in their shoes—that is, imagine how they may be thinking and feeling at that moment.

*Looking back, I realize that...*

Think of an event in the past that was troubling or painful at the time. Did anything good come out of it?

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.  
Where there is injury, pardon.  
Where there is doubt, faith.  
Where there is despair, hope.  
Where there is darkness, light.  
Where there is sadness, joy.

**O Divine Master,**

Grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood, as to understand;  
to be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born  
to eternal life.

**Amen**

Prayer of Saint Francis