

# Joseph Annoys His Brothers

**Joseph's Story**  
Genesis 37:1-36

Bible Point

**God is good no matter what...even when life's unfair.**

## Purpose

The word *good* has become a little boring. "How are you today?" "Good." "How was practice?" "It was good." Whatever it is, it wasn't bad. It wasn't great—but it was good.

God's goodness is different. In Psalm 86:5, David writes, "O Lord, you are so good." David's statement wasn't a generic response; it was a big statement to encompass the depth of God's unchanging character. Circumstances don't change God's goodness. When life is wonderful, God is good. When life doesn't go as planned, God is still good.

Kids' lives have ups and downs, too. They deal with changing teachers, coaches, houses, and shoe sizes. Elementary kids' sense of justice is so strong—if they're good, they expect good things as a result. But as Joseph's life shows us, that's not always the case. Help kids know and trust God's never-changing goodness.



## Prayer

God, you're not just okay; you're constantly, faithfully, and forever good. Thanks for being so good to me and the kids I lead. I love you. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Prep

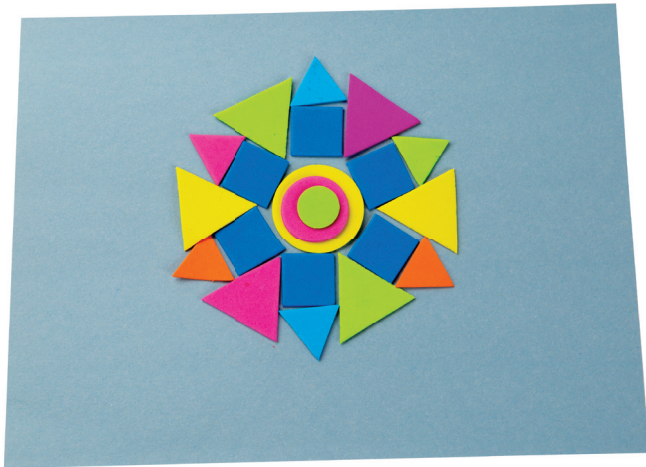
Opening Options	Sing & Play	Bible Discovery & Friendship Finale	Apply-It Options
<input type="checkbox"/> Option Cards* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Foam Creations:</i> assorted foam shapes, paper, pencils, glue sticks <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Domino Match:</i> several sets of dominoes	<input type="checkbox"/> countdown video* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Music Video</i> DVD* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Buddy Video</i> DVD* <input type="checkbox"/> Mack Bible Memory Buddy poster* <input type="checkbox"/> media player <input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark Nahum 1:7)	<input type="checkbox"/> "Joseph Annoys His Brothers" Bible Story poster* <input type="checkbox"/> Mack Bible Memory Buddy stickers* (1 per child) <input type="checkbox"/> Take-It-Home Flyers* (Unit 1, Week 1) (1 per child) <input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark Genesis 37:2, 3-4, 5-11, 23-28) <input type="checkbox"/> paper <input type="checkbox"/> markers <input type="checkbox"/> box or container	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Explore More:</i> Bibles, empty soda cans (1 per Crew), water (3 ounces per Crew) <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Game:</i> a classroom object, such as a pencil or eraser

\* in your **Simply Loved Kit**



# Opening Options

Set up one—or both—of these intro activities to start your time together. Each activity connects kids to the Bible Point and to each other. Cut apart these Option Cards, and place one by each activity you choose. Crew Guides will follow the directions and build friendships with kids as they make discoveries together!



## Foam Creations

### Supplies

- assorted foam shapes, paper, pencils, glue sticks

Design a colorful creation with foam shapes on top of a piece of paper. Glue the shapes in place, then invent a name for your creation and write it on the paper.

- ?** If you could design a new bedroom, what colors would you use?
- ?** If you could design a new bedroom for a family member, what colors would you use?

In our Bible story, we'll hear about a younger brother who received a beautiful gift—which was awesome—but it made his older brothers jealous—which isn't so awesome. Whether things are good or bad, God stays the same. **God is good no matter what!**

## Domino Match

### Supplies

- several sets of dominoes
- Place dominoes facedown and shuffle them.
- Each player selects 12 dominoes.
- The player with the highest double starts.
- Players take turns adding dominoes with matching numbers of dots.
- Players draw if they don't have a match. If there is no play, they keep the domino.
- The first player to use all dominoes and shout "Domino!" wins.
- If play stops and no one has a match, the game is over; players count the dots on their remaining dominoes, and the lowest number wins.

- ?** Who's in your family? Who do you look or act the most like?

We might not be a perfect match with our family members, but it's good when families stick together. **God is good no matter what.** Through Jesus, we're all part of God's family.

# Opening

Now's a great time for Opening Options. Choose one—or both—to introduce today's Bible discoveries.



countdown video (1 minute)

Help kids transition, clean up the activities, and sit with Connect Crews. A Connect Crew is a small group of kids with one Crew Guide.

## Sing & Play

Hello! It's always a *good* time to praise our *good* God. Let's start with a song!



"God Is Good" music video

### Bible Point

Today we're discovering **God is good no matter what**. Every time you hear the words "**God is good**," pump your fist in the air and shout, "No matter what!" Let's try that together.

- Repeat several times.

When we say **God is good no matter what**, we don't mean that God's just okay. God's goodness is different from how you'd describe how your breakfast tasted or how you did on your spelling test. God's goodness is huge! It's what we hold on to when times get tough. **God is good** (*no matter what!*). Let's celebrate God's goodness with a song.

Repetition cements learning, so be sure to say today's Bible Point A LOT. Have fun with it! Kids will love listening for it and responding with "*...no matter what!*"



"God Is for Me" music video

### Supplies

- Bible
- media player
- *Music Video* DVD
  - "God Is Good" music video
  - "Doxology" music video
  - "Good in Every Way" music video
- *Buddy Video* DVD
  - Mack Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 1)
- Mack Bible Memory Buddy poster





## Bible Memory Buddy & Verse

Let's meet our Bible Memory Buddy. It's Mack the rhino! Show the Bible Memory Buddy poster. How much do you know about rhinos? Let's find out with a This-or-That Challenge! You'll hear two fun facts about rhinos. It's up to you to decide which is true—this fact or that!

- ❓ What does the word *rhinoceros* mean? Is it "thick skin" or "nose horn"?
  - Have everyone point to the skin on their arm to vote for *this* (thick skin) or their nose to vote for *that* (nose horn).
  - Make a drumroll sound by patting your thighs or the floor.
  - Dramatically give the answer: **Rhinoceros means "nose horn"!**
- Have everyone play imaginary trumpets for a few moments to celebrate.
- Watch the Bible Memory Buddy video to meet Mack.



### Mack Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 1)



Show the Bible. **The Bible is God's true story of love! It's one big book that's filled with a bunch of little books. Our Bible Memory Verse is Nahum 1:7. Let's say the verse together. I'll say a line, and then you repeat after me.**

**"The Lord is good, (put hands over heart)  
a strong refuge (place hands over head to make a roof)  
when trouble comes." (hand over brow, peering into distance)**  
(Nahum 1:7)

**A refuge is a safe place. When it's raining during a baseball game, you find refuge in the dugout. Or when it's really cold outside, you find refuge in a warm house. God is our refuge. He's our go-to friend when trouble comes. God is good (no matter what!). So we don't need to worry about a thing. Let's sing about that!**



### "Won't Worry 'Bout a Thing" music video

# Bible Discovery

## Circle Up & Connect

Let's circle up and spend a little time simply getting to know each other in smaller groups called **Connect Crews**.

- Arrange kids into Connect Crews with one helper—or Crew Guide—per group.
  - Invite kids to sit in knee-to-knee circles with their Connect Crews.
  - Have kids give their Crew Guides and each other high-fives.
  - Have kids take turns saying their names and answering this question. Crew Guides go first.
- ❓ **Tell about a good dream you've had.**

## Experience the Bible Story

Let's explore God's Word together. It's packed with amazing stories that tell us about God and his plan to get rid of the sin that's messed up the perfect world he created. God's plan included a special family—the Israelites. Abraham was the great-granddad of this family. He had a son named Isaac, who had a son named Jacob. Jacob had 12 sons—and one of those sons is the star of our story today: Joseph!

Imagine having 11 brothers and some sisters, too. That was Joseph's family. You might be thinking that it's hard enough to have one or two brothers or sisters. Some of you may not have siblings, but you may have cousins or other kids around your family.

**I'm curious; what's the hardest part about having other kids in your family?**  
Welcome a few responses from the whole group.

**Thanks for sharing. Things aren't always fair in families. Sometimes you have to clean up messes you didn't make. Or you have to wait to eat dinner until your brother's done with soccer practice. Or your parents miss seeing your ballet recital because your little sister had a meltdown in the audience. Sigh. Not fair.**

**Well, there are two sides to every story. So let's take a look at this story from Joseph's point of view *and* from his brothers' perspective.**

Separate the class into two groups: the "Joes" and the "Bros." Have the Joes sit together on one side of the room, and have the Bros sit together on the other side.

**Let's read the first part of the story. It's found in Genesis 37.**



Read aloud Genesis 37:2.

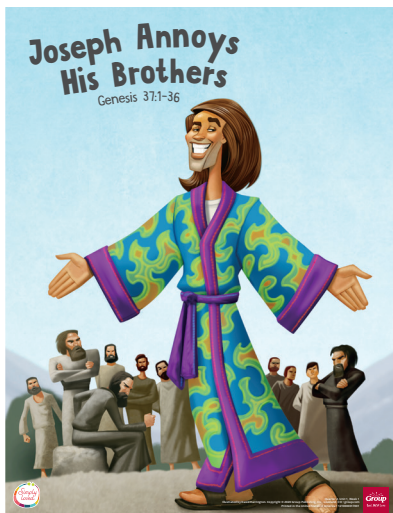
**Let's start with the brothers. They're mad because Joseph tattled on them. Bros, point at the Joes and say "Tattletale!" Pause. It's not fair when someone blabs about you behind your back.**

## Supplies

- Bible
- "Joseph Annoys His Brothers" Bible Story poster
- paper
- markers
- box or container

We call helpers **Crew Guides**. If you lead a small class, you can be the Crew Guide. Simply circle up with the kids. If you have helpers, form smaller groups so each child can be known—and so kids can befriend your helpers, too!





Okay, now let's see the Joes' point of view. Joseph didn't do anything wrong. It's not his fault his brothers were doing bad things. He just calls it like it is. Joes, point at the brothers and say, "You're bad!" Pause. It's not fair that the Bros were mad at Joseph for telling the truth. Let's read what happened next.



Read aloud Genesis 37:3-4.

Show the Bible Story poster. Okay, back to the brothers. They hate Joseph because their dad gave him special treatment. Bros, cross your arms and say, "Not cool, Joe!" Pause. It's not fair that Joseph got a beautiful coat and they didn't.

Now, Joes, you got a great gift. Wouldn't it be nice if your brothers were happy for you and didn't make you feel lousy about it? It's not like you asked for it, right? Joes, shrug your shoulders and say, "Not cool, Bro." Pause. It's not fair that Joe's brothers were mad at him for something he didn't do.

Hmm. We seem to be at a stalemate. Both sides aren't getting fair treatment. Let's read what happens next.



Read aloud Genesis 37:5-11.

Those are some unusual dreams. Back in Bible times, though, dreams were a big deal. People thought that dreams were one way gods talked to people. Joseph's family believed in the one true God, so these dreams weren't happening just because Joseph ate broccoli before bed. God could actually be up to something!

Bros, the thought of bowing down to your brother makes your skin crawl. You dislike him even more. Go ahead and turn your back to the Joes and say, "In your dreams, little Joe!" Pause. It wasn't fair that Joseph rubbed their faces in his wacky dreams.

Joes, you can't help what your brain does when you're sleeping! It's not fair that your brothers hate you because of a dream. You didn't make it up. Go ahead and stand up, Joes, and say, "It's so, Bro!" Pause.

Jacob, the dad, wondered about these dreams. He knew God well enough to know that he works in surprising ways. **God is good** (*no matter what!*). God had been good to his family so far. Maybe Jacob wondered about God's plan for the future.

Okay, I'm going to summarize this next part. Joe's brothers were out of town watching the family's sheep. They saw Little Bro Joe coming, and they wanted to kill him. Not tease him, not give him a wedge; kill him. They hated him that much.

They came up with a plan to take his special coat, dip it in some animal blood, and make it seem like he had been eaten by a wild animal. Their dad would be sad, sure—but they wouldn't be in trouble.

Reuben, the oldest brother, didn't like the idea. Designate one of the older kids in your group to be Reuben. Reuben, stand up and repeat after me, "Let's not." Pause. "Let's throw him in this empty well instead." Pause. Reuben was secretly planning to go get Joe later and take him home. You're a nice guy, Reuben. You can have a seat with your Bros again. Let's read what happened.



Read aloud Genesis 37:23-28.

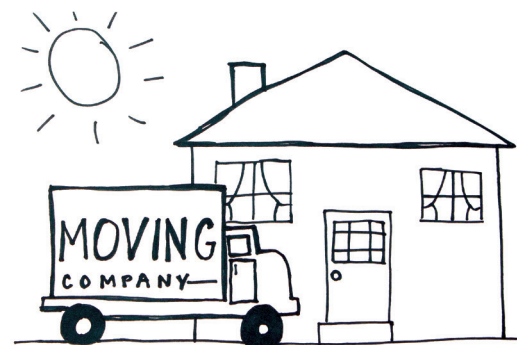
Okay, let's think about the brothers' side of the story. They're pretty terrible, but at least they didn't hurt Joseph. He was so annoying, but least now he'd be out of their hair. He wasn't their problem anymore. Bros, go ahead and wave goodbye to the Joes. Pause.

And Joes. Whoa. You were going to see your Bros and all of a sudden your coat is gone, you're in a hole, and then your life changes forever. You can't go where you want to go anymore or do whatever you want to do. You're a servant, and you're off to live in a new place you've never been before. Talk about scary. Joes, go ahead and wave goodbye to your brothers. Pause.

Thank the Joes and the Bros, and ask them to return to sit with their Connect Crews again.

## The Heart of the Matter

Sigh. This isn't such a good story. It's filled with hatred and jealousy and unfair situations. And yet God was still at work in this family. He had good plans—for his people and for the world. Joseph ending up in Egypt would ultimately be a good thing. But it sure didn't feel like it then. I wish we could teleport to that well and tell Joe, "**God is good** (no matter what!)." He probably needed to hear that message. Maybe you do, too. Let's talk about that in our Connect Crews.



- Have Connect Crews sit in knee-to-knee circles.
- Distribute paper and markers.
- ❓ **Write about or draw a picture of a hard time you faced. How did God's goodness help you in that situation?**
- Tell kids they'll have time to work, and then they'll share with their Connect Crews.
- Give kids two minutes to draw or write and then share their stories with Connect Crews.
- Crew Guides give thumbs-up when everyone has had a chance to share.

Create an opportunity for all kids to share, but don't force kids to talk if they don't want to. Good friends have patience and are okay waiting to talk.

**Thanks for sharing your stories. Life isn't always fair. People misunderstand us. And annoy us. And hurt us when we don't deserve it. But friends, God is good** (no matter what!). He was with Joseph. He was even with Joseph's brothers. And he's with you and me, too.

- Put the box or container at the front of your room.
- Invite kids to give their papers to Crew Guides, then have Crew Guides bring the papers forward and place them in the box or container.

**This container is like a refuge. It's a safe place during hard times. Just like it holds our papers, God holds us. God is our good refuge. We can go to him for help when we need it the most. Let's pray and ask for his help right now.** Hold the container as you pray.

Simply talk to God or pray this prayer. "**God, you are so good. Thanks for being a strong refuge when trouble comes. No matter what my friends have gone through or are going through, thanks that you love them and that you are good. In Jesus' name, amen.**"

Now's a great time for Apply-It Options. Choose one—or both—of the following reinforcement activities to support today's Bible discoveries before the Friendship Finale.

# Apply-It Options


Choose one—or both—of these activities to support kids' learning after Bible Discovery.

## Explore More

### Supplies

- Bibles, empty soda cans (1 per Crew), water (3 ounces per Crew)

**God had a plan for Joseph. But he also had plans for the other brothers. Take Judah, for instance. He's part of Jesus' earthly family!**

 Distribute Bibles, and help kids find and read Matthew 1:1-3, 16.

**God can work in surprising and different ways. Let's do a surprising experiment.**

- Give each Connect Crew an empty soda can, and have kids try to balance it on its bottom edge.
- Then give each Connect Crew 3 ounces of water to add to the can.
- Have all Connect Crews try to tilt and balance the bottom edge of their cans on a flat surface.

**Surprise! Your cans balance!**

Without the water, the cans fell flat. But with the water inside, our cans balanced. **God is good** (*no matter what!*). Without God, we might feel hopeless when life isn't fair. But with God in our lives, we're filled with hope and power to make a difference!



## Game

### Supplies

- a classroom object, such as a pencil or eraser
- Show everyone the classroom object.
- Explain that everyone playing the game is a Shepherd, and the classroom object is the "sheep."
- Have Shepherds close their eyes and sing a familiar song like "Happy Birthday" or "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" as one person hides the object somewhere in the room.
- When the song is over, Shepherds try to find the sheep.
- The person who hid the sheep can provide hints, telling Shepherds near the object that they're "hot" and those far away that they're "cold."
- Whoever finds the sheep hides it again.

**You'd make good shepherds! You didn't give up until you found the sheep.**

**? Tell about a time you lost something.**

**God is good** (*no matter what!*). We may lose other things or even people in our lives. But we never lose God's friendship. He loves us and won't stop watching over us.





# Friendship Finale

Have kids sit in knee-to-knee circles with their Connect Crews.

Our Bible Memory Buddy Mack reminds us **God is good** (no matter what!). You'll each receive a Mack sticker to help you remember to trust God throughout your week. You can wear it or save it to take home with you. Crew Guides will give each person a sticker like this.



## Supplies

- Mack Bible Memory Buddy stickers (1 per child)
- Take-It-Home Flyers (Unit 1, Week 1) (1 per child)

Saying each child's name in a loving way helps kids simply experience God's love through you!

- Ask a willing person to help you demonstrate the following actions.
- Crew Guides stand, offer a hand to help kids stand, too, then give each child a sticker.
- As they give each child a Bible Memory Buddy sticker, Crew Guides say, "[Child's name], **God is good no matter what.**"
- Crew Guides give thumbs-up when everyone has received a sticker.

When Jesus lived on earth, a long time after Joseph, life wasn't always fair for him, either. He knows what it's like to depend on God's goodness no matter what.

I'd like to read you something about our friend Jesus. As you listen, please close your eyes like you're sleeping. Maybe smile like you're having a really good dream like Joseph did. Now listen as I read about Jesus.

- Read the first section of the Unit 1, Week 1 Take-It-Home Flyer.
- Now I'll give you one of these flyers to help you talk about Jesus' love in your Connect Crews *and* at home, too. Consider this practice time for talking about Jesus with your family at home.
- Distribute Take-It-Home Flyers to Crew Guides, and have them share about their own friendship with Jesus as they answer the "Talk Starter" question and then invite kids to share.
- Kids share prayer requests—things they'd like to tell Jesus—in their Connect Crews.
- Connect Crews pray together.
- Crew Guides distribute Take-It-Home Flyers and follow the directions to help kids fold the paper to "fly" home.

