SU Scotland

08. Trouble

BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Genesis 37, 39

Joseph is hated by his brothers, sold into slavery and unjustly put in prison

AIMS

To help the children reflect on the idea that God is with them in difficult situations they might face and to encourage them that they can pray to God and ask for his help

Lots of things happened to Joseph which were difficult and seemed unfair, but God was still with him and helped him in these times. Like Joseph we have a choice about how we react when things are hard - we can ask God for help in these situations.

PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- Where do we see signs of God at work in Joseph's story?
- Where have you known God helping you in a difficult situation?

Take some time to pray for your group.

GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

Musical Plates

You will need: paper plates, equipment to play music

Lay out paper plates on the floor (one less than the number of children).
Get the children to move around or dance while the music plays. When the music stops they have to stand on a paper plate (one person per plate). The person who doesn't have a plate to stand on is out. Keep doing this, removing one or two plates each time until there is a winner.

Chain Tig

Choose one child to be the catcher. The others spread out across the room and try to avoid being caught. When a child is caught, they link arms with the catcher and the two of them run together to try to catch more children. Each time a child is caught they join onto the chain. If the chain of children becomes too long you can split it in half. The last child who has not been caught is the winner.

(continued overleaf)

EXPLORING THE BIBLE

Recap

You will need: family tree diagram

Show a family tree diagram *(see additional document: Family tree)* to recap the story of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

God had promised to bless Abraham and give him lots of descendants. Eventually he had a son called Isaac and he had twin boys, Esau and Jacob, that we heard about last time.

Today we're going to think about Jacob's family. He had twelve sons and one daughter and over the next two weeks we're going to focus on one of Jacob's sons who was called Joseph.

Joseph's Story

You will need: robe to represent Joseph's coat, picture of Joseph's dreams (you could use slides 3 and 5 from the collection of pictures here: http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/joseph-dreams), chains (you can get plastic ones in fancy dress shops or in supermarkets/pound shops around Halloween or you could make your own by linking strips of grey cardboard), cloth and cleaning spray, prison bars (cut from cardboard)

Tell the story of Joseph. You could have a child to represent Joseph and give him different props to tie in with different parts of Joseph's story.

Jacob had twelve sons, but Joseph was his favourite. One day Jacob decided to give Joseph a special gift- a beautiful robe. (Give the child playing Joseph coat to wear) **You might have heard it talked about as a coat of many colours or a technicolour dreamcoat but we don't really know what it looks like - the Bible just says it was a beautiful robe.**

Joseph's brothers were very jealous - they hadn't been given anything. Imagine how you would feel if your brother or sister got a really special present and you got nothing. The brothers were very angry about it.

Then things got worse for Joseph. He started to have dreams.

(Give the child playing Joseph a picture of the dreams)

He dreamed that he was out in the fields with his brothers gathering up bundles of grain when all the brothers' bundles of grain bowed down to his. Then he dreamed that the sun, the moon and 11 stars all bowed down to him as well.

The brothers were even more angry. "So you think you're going to be someone great and we're all going to bow down to you, do you?" they said. "That's not going to happen."

One day the brothers were out in the fields when Jacob sent Joseph to see how they were getting on. They saw him coming from a distance and recognised him because of his robe. One of the brothers said, "Here comes Joseph. Let's get rid of him. Let's kill him." Most of them wanted to, but Reuben the eldest brother persuaded them not to kill Joseph but instead to throw him down an empty well.

When Joseph arrived, they took his beautiful robe off him and threw him down the well. They were planning just to leave him there but then some traders came by. They were on their way to Egypt taking things to sell so one of the brothers had an idea - they could sell Joseph to the traders as a slave. They pulled Joseph out from the well and sold him to the traders. He was taken off to Egypt. (Put chains on child playing Joseph)

The brothers put some animal blood on Joseph's coat. They took it home to Jacob and told him they had found it on the road and that Joseph must have been killed by a wild animal. Jacob was heartbroken at the thought that Joseph was dead.

In Egypt, Joseph was sold to a man called Potiphar and put to work in his house. (Give child playing Joseph a cloth and cleaning spray) **Joseph worked hard at his job and it says in the Bible that God was with him. Soon Potiphar realised that Joseph was responsible and trustworthy and put him in charge of running the household. Now Joseph wasn't just a slave - he had an important job to do.**

But soon things went wrong again. Potiphar's wife decided to get Joseph into trouble. She told her husband that Joseph had tried to attack her. It wasn't true at all, but Potiphar believed his wife and had Joseph thrown into prison. (Give child playing Joseph prison bars to hold)

It can't have been very nice for Joseph but again God was with him and he worked hard at the job he was given in prison and was given more responsibility. He must have felt that he had been forgotten about - although he hadn't done anything to deserve it he had to stay in prison for many years.

(continued overleaf)

REFLECT & RESPOND

Reflection

Joseph had a lot of things go wrong in his life that weren't really his fault. How do you think he would have felt about being bullied by his brothers, sold as a slave and put in prison? Have you ever been in a situation where it's felt like lots of things were going wrong? Have there been times when life has seemed unfair?

The Bible tells us that God was with Joseph even in the difficult times.

Remember what we heard about last week and God's promise always to be with his people.

That doesn't mean that life is always easy. We all have times when it feels like life doesn't make sense, or bad things happen, or it seems unfair.

We have a choice about how we deal with those times. Joseph dealt with them by trusting God and by keeping on doing the right thing even when it was hard.

Prayer

You will need: bubble wrap

Give the children pieces of bubble wrap and get them to think about difficult situations they or their friends or family are facing, situations where they might feel under pressure.

Get them to pop a bubble on the bubble wrap for each thing they are thinking of as they bring that situation to God and ask for his help.

Lead them in prayer for all these things. You could give them a piece of bubble wrap to take with them to remind them to continue to pray.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS

Song– Only A Prayer Away

You will need: equipment to play music

This song ties in well with the theme for this session and could be played for the children to listen to as they pray and respond, or they could join in singing the song. You can find it on YouTube here: https://youtu.be/fq_BSFkxHys