

LESSON 4

GOD PLANS



BIBLE READING

Genesis 42:1-38



TEACHING POINT

God's plan for his people is beginning to be worked out.



LEADER'S PREPARATION

QUESTIONS

Why won't Jacob let Benjamin go with his brothers?

42:4

Benjamin has taken Joseph's place as his father's favourite, the remaining son, so Jacob thinks, of his beloved Rachel.



Why does Joseph speak harshly to his brothers?

Joseph recognised his brothers (42:8) - although at least 20 years had passed, they had been adults at the time they sold him to the Midianites. They did not recognise him - he had

been a teenager but was now an adult, in unexpected authority, wearing Egyptian clothes, shaven and speaking through an interpreter.



42:7-17 Joseph tests his brothers to see if they have changed. He is not seeking revenge.

How does Joseph intend to make them prove that they are honest? In the end, what does he do instead?

42:15-16 Benjamin must come to Egypt. The brothers must stay in prison while one of them goes back to Canaan to fetch Benjamin.

42:18-20 After three days in prison Joseph decides that only one brother needs to remain in prison. The remaining brothers are to take grain back for their families. If they do not return with Benjamin the penalty is death, presumably for the brother left in prison.

Why do the brothers think this is happening?

42:21-22 The brothers remember how they treated Joseph. They equate what is happening to them with what they did to him.

What does Joseph do to the brothers who go back to Canaan?

42:25 He gives orders to put the money they brought for payment into the full sacks of grain and to give them provisions for their journey.



What does Jacob make of the whole thing when they get back?

- 42:35 When he sees the money in the top of the sacks he, along with his sons, is frightened.
- 42:36 Jacob dissolves into self-pity. He blames the brothers for the loss of Joseph and Simeon and accuses them of wanting to deprive him of Benjamin.
- 42:38 Jacob refuses to allow Benjamin to go to Egypt. He declares that the loss of Benjamin would kill him.

What shows us that the brothers (or at least some of them) are beginning to change?

- 42:37 Reuben is prepared to take responsibility for his youngest brother.

Have Joseph's dreams come true?

- 42:6 The brothers bow down to Joseph, which is similar to his first dream (37:5-7). The dream as recounted by Joseph does not state whether it referred to all eleven brothers or only the ten older ones. The second dream has not been fulfilled (37:9).
- 42:10 By calling themselves his servants they accept Joseph's right to rule them (cf. 37:8)



PLANNING THE SESSION

Welcome

- Introduce yourselves.
- Start the meeting with prayer.

Getting to Know You

Find someone with a birthday on the same day of the month, or as near as possible, and ask them what is the best and worst thing about brothers and sisters. The birthday does not have to be in the same month.



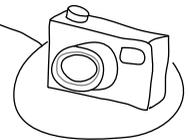
Talk Time

Discuss what is happening in the various Christian Unions represented by the group.



Focus Time

Hostage Game. Pick a person from the group to be the hostage taker. (S)he picks a hostage and chooses an item or amount of money to be the ransom. The ransom is not divulged to the rest of the group. The rest of the group have twenty questions, with only yes/no answers, to try and guess the ransom. If they succeed, the hostage is released. If they fail, the hostage taker wins.



Bible Time

See the worksheet on pages 56-57 for the Bible study questions and running order. Photocopy these pages for each group member for use during the study.



Recap on the last session using the Story Sofa. One of the leaders acts as a character from the story and is interviewed. Recount the events of 41:44-57.

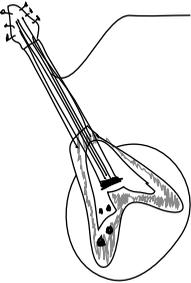
Read the whole of Genesis 42:1-38 before breaking into smaller groups to study the passage. Download the story of Joseph's brothers in Egypt from thebricktestament.com to use as a visual aid.

At the end of the study check the questions recorded on the flipchart in Session 1 to see if any have been answered.



Prayer Time

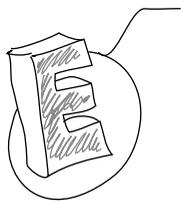
In study groups pray for families.



Praise Time

Musical groups – songs such as 'When I was lost' and 'Give thanks to the Lord our God and King' (see www.kingswaysongs.com or www.emumusic.com for words and music).

Non-musical groups – read the hymn 'God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year'.



Extra Ideas

1. Use the created character to recap the story instead of the Story Sofa (see Lesson 3 Extra Ideas on page 31).
2. Search youtube.com for clips on 'Joseph' and download appropriate ones onto a laptop. Show these through a LCD projector and discuss how the clips affect the group's understanding of Joseph.