

Lesson 8: The Silver Cup in the Sack and the Consequences of Sin

Objectives: Students will...

- 1) Study Genesis Chapter 44: Joseph's brothers are tested with a silver cup in Benjamin's sack
- 2) Learn how Joseph tests his brothers to see if they truly had changed.
- 3) Learn how the brothers had changed and trusted each other to tell the truth and help one another.
- 4) See the continued consequences of our actions by looking at Joseph and the brother's as they deal with one another.

Supplies:

Teacher Materials (provided in classroom)

- Bible(s)
- Markers/Pencil Crayons
- Pens/Pencils
- Attendance Chart (See Template)
- Stickers for Attendance
- Glue or Glue sticks to share
- Scissors to share
- Plastic or paper cup – one per student
- Aluminum foil wrap – enough to wrap the outside of each cup with foil – one piece per student
- Stickers, Jewels, and/or Ribbon that could be glued or stuck onto the foil cup to show it is special – some per student
- Silver cup – plastic cup wrapped in aluminum foil made before class – can be used as a visual for the story and then later as part of the game
- Small Paper Lunch Bags – twelve for Find the Cup Game

Optional:

- Storybook of this chapter in Genesis with pictures to show kids (if available) and/or
- Flannel Display Board and characters to show the story of this chapter. (if available)

Snack:

- Pretzel Sticks 8 - 10 per child
- Napkins for snack one per child
- Juice or water and cup one per child

Lesson:

1) Introduction to Lesson

2-5 minutes

As students enter, welcome them and help find a chair to sit at. Thank them for coming. Take attendance. Once children are seated say:

What did we study last week about Joseph? Joseph's brothers returned a second time to Egypt and brought their youngest brother Benjamin. Simeon was released from jail and Joseph held a feast for the brothers although they still had not realized it was actually Joseph.

This week we will see that Joseph tests his brothers to see if they have truly changed and we will see their reaction to his test.

2) Joseph Tests His Brothers with a Silver Cup

20 minutes

Optional: if you have a book with pictures showing this story or visuals you can show the pictures as you read from the Bible.

***Optional:** before class take a plastic or paper cup and cover it with foil to look like a silver cup – you can even add sticker jewels to make it look special. As you are discussing questions you can show the students the cup or let them pass it around so they get to visualize the cup as they talk.

Ask students to turn to Genesis 44:1-5. Then ask them to follow along as you read.
Read **Genesis 44:1-5** – Joseph puts money and a cup in his brothers' bags.

As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away: The brothers left Egypt in high spirits. They were treated well, had their sacks full of grain, and Simeon was out of prison. Their father's fear of something horrible happening did not come true.....

Discussion Questions:

Why do you think Joseph put a silver cup in Benjamin's sack? Allow students to answer. Some might think he is simply using his position of power to torment his brothers in revenge for their cruelty towards him; but knowing the character of Joseph, this isn't the case. He is guided by the hand of God, testing the hearts of his brothers, and bringing them to complete repentance.

Explain:

Divination: was using something in order to find out the future. People back in that time used objects to try and find out the future. God says we are not to do that and it doesn't work if we try today. We cannot find out the future, but we can still talk to God in prayer and find out His will through studying the Bible.

Why did Joseph say it was a cup for divination?

It was probably the custom of Egyptians to use divination so he might have said it was a cup for divination to scare his brothers even more to show the cup was "extra" special. And, that by Benjamin taking the cup he was really taking an Egyptians source of predicting the future. We also read later in verse 15 that he uses the excuse of the Egyptians being able to use divination as his reason for finding out it was the brother's who had stolen his cup. **We do know** though that Joseph's spiritual insight and wisdom were due to his relationship with the living God not a cup.

Read **Genesis 44:6-10** – The brother's claim their innocence

Discussion Questions:

What was found in Benjamin's bag? The silver cup.

How did the silver cup get in the bag? Joseph's servant had placed it in there at Joseph's request.

What did they all agree should happen to the person who had the silver cup? Should be killed and the rest be made slaves.

The brothers claim they are innocent of theft. The brothers confidently stated that they did not have the cup. This shows that they had a healthy trust in each other. If they did not trust each other they would have immediately wondered which brother stole the cup.

They were so confident they did not have the cup (and trusted each other so much), they declared the thief should be killed and all the others taken as slaves.

Read **Genesis 44:11-13** – The cup is found in Benjamin's sack

The cup was found in Benjamin's sack: The reaction of the brothers shows that this was the worst thing imaginable. Not only that the cup was found among them, but that it was in Benjamin's sack - their father's favorite son, the one he worried about the most. Now Benjamin was sentenced to a life of slavery in Egypt - if not death.

Each man loaded his donkey and returned: When Joseph was taken as a slave the brothers allowed him to go and thought nothing of it. Now they are willing to stand with Benjamin as he faces slavery or death. This demonstrates a significant change in the heart and attitude of Joseph's brothers. They are willing to stand behind their brother - their father's favorite son.

Read **Genesis 44:14-17** - Judah stands up for his brother to keep him from death

Who does Judah say found out that Benjamin stole the cup in verse 16? God - Judah revealed God's work among the brothers. In Judah's mind, the brothers are now destined to live the rest of their lives as slaves in Egypt because they sold Joseph as a slave some 20 years before. They believe and fear God.

Read **Genesis 44:18-33**- Judah intercedes for Benjamin.

This is the moment of truth! This is Joseph's final test of his brothers. All this time, Joseph has been testing them to see whether or not they have changed. They have passed several tests already.

- They brought Benjamin as Joseph had requested, Gen. 43:15-16.
- They returned for their brother Simeon, Gen. 43:23.
- They even returned all the grain money they had been given back, Gen. 43:20-22.

This is the ultimate test! 22 years earlier, they had hated Joseph so much that they had attacked him, cast him into a pit and sold him into slavery. They had broken their father's heart by lying to him about what had happened to Joseph. They had maintained that lie for all these years. Now, they have the opportunity to get rid of the other son of Rachel.

This is the ultimate test. These men do not know it, but they are about to reveal to Joseph what kind of men they have become. There are no accusations thrown at one another. There are no compromises. There is simply a unified resolve to stand by their brother.

That's the place God wants us to reach as well! He wants us to come to the place where we stop making excuses for our behavior. He wants us to come to the place where we are willing to own up to our sins!

When the brothers appear before Joseph, they bow themselves to the ground before him. Again, this fulfills the dreams Joseph had as a young man, Gen. 37:5-11.

Judah confesses their sin. He doesn't name names, but he does confess the fact that they had sinned and that God was punishing them for their sin. He seems to believe that what they are about to face, slavery in Egypt, is a direct result of their unconfessed sin. He offers himself, along with all the rest of the brothers as Joseph's servants.

Discussion Question:

What does Joseph say to Judah in verse 17? Only Benjamin needs to stay as a slave the rest can go home.

What was Judah's response? He pleads with Joseph to take Judah as a replacement instead of Benjamin.

Does that sound like Judah has changed his ways from a liar and conspirer to a caring person? Yes!

Joseph gets to see that the brothers are willing to stand together. They had the chance to turn their backs on Benjamin, but they didn't, starting in verse 13 Judah stands up and puts his father, Benjamin and the rest of the brothers ahead of himself.

We will see Joseph's wonderful reaction next week when we continue to study the life of Joseph!

If there is time pass around the silver cup you made before class and discuss how Joseph's brothers had changed. Talk also what it means to change when a person becomes a Christian.

Like Joseph's brothers changed over time, what changes should we see in a person's life when they become a Christian?

Read **Ephesians 4:21-32** and have the children name some of the ways we get "better" as Christians! And how great it is to be with people who are like that and will help you when you have struggles!

Answers: We should become more righteous, holy, speak truthfully, don't sin in your anger, don't give the devil a foothold, steal no longer, do things that are useful and work, share with those in need, don't say unwholesome words, build others up, benefit those who listen, do not grieve the Holy Spirit, get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, malice and be kind, compassionate and forgiving!

What are ways that Joseph's brothers had changed? They were truthful, they didn't steal, they weren't angry or bitter and they were kind and compassionate to Jacob and Benjamin.

3) Students Make Silver Cup

5-10 minutes

Hand out one paper cup and aluminum foil piece to each child, have them cover the cup in the foil by wrapping it, then pass around tape so they can tape the foil to the cup. Hand out stickers, jewels, ribbon and whatever you have so they can decorate their cups to remind them of how Joseph hid the silver cup in Benjamin's sack! Have students help clean up before moving on to the next activity.

4) Find the Silver Cup in the Paper Bag Game

5-10 minutes

Before class get twelve paper lunch bags and take a plastic cup and wrap it in silver foil to be the silver cup in the sack. Place the silver cup in one of the lunch bags and then roll up each lunch bag so children cannot see inside.

At class put out the bags on the table and let each child choose one bag to open to see if the cup is in the sack. Go around the table and keep playing until the cup is found!

If desired, hide the cup again and fold the bags, mix up the bags on the table so no one remembers what bag has the cup and play again! Remind them that just as they are excited and anticipating finding the cup – imagine how the brother's felt when Joseph's men were going through their bags looking for the cup.

Discuss:

How do you think the brother's felt when the cup was found?

How did you feel when the cup was found?

What is the difference? The brothers didn't expect the cup to be in the sacks, you were. The brother's trusted each other and believed that none of them had taken it, you expected that the cup was to be there because you trusted that I said it would be in one of the bags.

Ask students to go around the room thinking and stating one thing they remember from today's Bible account of Joseph.

5) Optional - Snack: Pretzel Sticks

5 minutes

Hand out pieces of pretzels enough for each child to have 6-8. Also give each child a glass of water or juice. Explain that, **"When the famine happened, many people were without grain. We are eating pretzels today to remind us of the famine and why Joseph's family had to come to Egypt - they were out of grain!** Provide a napkin for children to clean their hands. Discuss questions while snacking.

6) Optional - Songs

5 minutes

Have children sing songs with you. Some examples:

- 1) **Old Testament Books of the Bible - Sung to the Alphabet song**
- 2) **Songs of Joseph** (See Printed Song Sheet). Keep copies and sing each week.

7) Close in prayer

*If desired, ask the children if they have any prayer requests and write them down to help you remember. Then ask all children to bow their heads and fold their hands to pray.

Pray that we should not hurt our families, that we should trust in God, and we should be honest. Thank God for all He gives us including our families. Pray that we will remember to be kind to our friends and families and remember to do something nice for each family member this week. Thank God for Jesus and for all that God provides for us. Just as He took care of Joseph, may He take care of us today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Thank you for serving Christ in this way!