

Genesis 45:9-28; 46:1-7 and 29-30; 47:1-12

Aim of Lesson

To show how God watches over the lives of people who trust him, and has a plan for them.

Background study

Genesis 45-50.

Suggested outline of lesson

In order to bring home the reality of this story, begin by discussing reunions within the children's own experience and knowledge, and the joy these bring after many years of separation. Such stories are often reported by the media, and recent cases can be quoted. Show how much effort goes into effecting the actual meeting.

Describe the provision Joseph made, with Pharaoh's encouragement and generosity. Even the king shared Joseph's enthusiasm and desire to bring all the family together.

The journey back to Canaan would have taken many days, during which the brothers had ample time to adjust their minds to the recent turn of events, and to prepare themselves to break the news to their father. Whatever they said would involve a confession on their part.

The news was received by Jacob first with shock and then with disbelief. Having mourned his son's death for over twenty years, it was difficult for him to adjust to the idea of Joseph being alive. But the sight of the wagons, gifts and supplies served to convince him that his sons were now telling the truth. It was too late for recriminations; Jacob was a very old man and was anxious not to waste further time. Before he died, he wanted to see his beloved son.

Describe the busy scene and excited anticipation as the family gathered all their belongings together - tents, provisions and skins of water, equipment of various kinds, clothing, etc., and loaded them on to carts and asses. The children would have been running around, some helping and others getting in the way. Flocks and herds would have to be assembled and led. The entire family was emigrating to Egypt.

As the caravan journeyed towards Egypt (show the route on the map), what thoughts were going through Jacob's mind? His foremost feelings were those of thankfulness, which compelled him to offer sacrifices to the Lord God when they stopped for the night at Beersheba. Any apprehension he was feeling was dispelled by God's reassurance: "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt". Jacob had good reason to have confidence in God's assurance, having experienced his protection in his youth when he was far from home. The uncomfortable, tiring, and dusty journey was as nothing compared with the joyful prospect of seeing again his favourite son.

Direct the children's attention back to Egypt, where Joseph could do nothing more than await the arrival for which he longed. From time to time, during the previous few weeks, he must have wondered what progress was being made, and whether all was well. When at last Judah brought the news that the travellers were near, Joseph could wait no longer. He summoned his chariot and hurried to meet them. At this point describe this most moving of incidents as Joseph and Jacob came face to face. Their changed circumstances and appearance were of no consequence now that they were reunited. They hugged each other and were so overwhelmed with happiness that they cried. Jacob's life was now complete, so that he was able to say: "Now let me die". He knew that there could be no greater happiness for him than he felt at that moment. In fact, he lived another seventeen years and saw the family settled in the land that Pharaoh had given to them. The welcome given to Joseph's family is an indication of Pharaoh's tremendous respect for Joseph.

Relevance to the children's lives

Let us never take for granted the love and care shown by our parents. Can we think of ways to show how much we appreciate and love them? Do we remember to thank God for our parents?

Worksheets

These should be self-explanatory.

Prayer

Dear Lord God, we thank you that you have given us parents to love and care for us. Please help us to show them that we love them. Amen.

Memory verse

"And Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with food" (Genesis 47:12).