

Forgiveness

Aim of the assembly:

People may treat us badly, which leads us to exclude them and label them. The amazing example of Joseph shows us someone who was a peacemaker, even though people had treated him wrongly all the time. His forgiving attitude turned the whole situation around.

We want to make children aware of the process in which resentment and judgment builds up, leading to a breakdown in relationship. Show them by the example of Joseph an inspiration to deal with these situations in a forgiving and generous manner.

Props needed

Builder's hard hat and visor, sledge hammer, fence post, stack of boxes. You will need to have a copy of our "Joseph powerpoint" which can be found....

Intro: drama skit – less than 3min

(Bob dressed up as a builder with sledgehammer and fencepost. Wendy in normal clothes.)

B: (sideglance on assembly) Morning all ... (prepares his tools and looks for a place to put the fencepost, talking to himself...) Yes, I think I'll put it here ... that'll do. (Talks to himself) That should fix it, I will put my fence here, and then my very annoying brother George can stay on the other side. I will be here, he will be over there, problem fixed. This is a very GOOD IDEA!

W: Hello, what are you doing there? Actually, what ARE you doing there?

B: I'm putting up a fence. Then my annoying brother George can live over there and I don't have to put up with his attitude any more.

W: You can't put up a fence HERE!! ??

B: Well, you watch me and see whether I can or can't.

W: No, sorry, wait a moment, you really can't put a fence here in the middle of the assembly hall. What on earth do you want it for anyway?

B: (Explaining patiently...) I want it to keep George out of my way! He is my very annoying brother, and I have had enough of it all. I'm going to put a fence up and then he can live over there, and I will live over here on the nice side with my friends who don't annoy me!

W: (Amazed at the idea and a little speechless..) You can't do THAT!

B: Well, I told you, you wait right here and see whether I can. Actually you can help me, hold this post here while I whack it with the hammer. (They play around a bit with her having her hand and head in the way of the hammer ...)

W: (takes the fencepost in her hands, then thinks about it and gives it back) No, I am not going to help you. You can't put the fence here – and anyway, it is a stupid idea.

B: I don't think so. I think it is a very good idea.

W: Who are you going to put on the other side?

B: Well, the annoying people, I told you!

W: And who decides who is annoying, may I ask?

B: Well, I do!

W: Listen, if you put up the fence here, the school will definitely think that you are one extremely bad builder and you will have to go to the baddies yourself. So there, stop it right now, take your fencepost – you CANNOT PUT A FENCE HERE.

B: (goes off stage, still mumbling to himself that he thinks that it is a jolly good idea really and if people only listened to him, things could be much easier in general.)

W: (to lead into Joseph): Well, what do you think of that? You can't do that, simply build a fence and put everyone who annoys you on the other side. What a strange idea!

Bob and Wendy introduce theme

Hello, we are Wendy and Bob - and we have come today to tell you about an amazing person from the Bible who was amazing at making peace with others. His name was Joseph and this is his story ... and if you already know it, let us remind you ...

Introduce memory verse

(Talking as if they were greeting each other...)

Bob: By the way Wendy: AS MUCH AS IT IS UP TO YOU, LIVE AT PEACE WITH EVERYONE.

Wendy to Bob: By the way Bob: AS MUCH AS IT IS UP TO YOU, LIVE AT PEACE WITH EVERYONE.

Joseph presentation

B: Wendy, amazingly, I actually know a song about Joseph, would you like to hear it? (and to audience) Would you help me sing it, please. The 1st line of the song will be on the pictures, and we repeat part of the line in the verse. To the tune of "London bridge is falling down" – the words just about fit if you try. And each verse ends on "Oh what a family-ie!". Make sure that you have practised it beforehand and practice with the children before telling the story.

Slide 1> J and the brothers – Verse 1 and 2 of song

Joseph's father had 12 sons/ A coat of many colours was his pride

Slide 2> J thrown in a pit – All his brothers were so jealous/ His brothers threw him in a pit

Slide 3> J sold – Egypt bought him as a slave

Slide 4> Thrown into prison – They left him rotting in a jail

Slide5> Forgotten and languishing in prison – They left him rotting in a jail

Slide 6> made 2nd ruler in Egypt – Joseph became a mighty man

Slide7> meeting the starving brothers and HELPING THEM, instead of taking revenge

His brothers came to him for food/ Joseph forgave and fed them all

Application – 2min

Bob returns with a stack of collapsible boxes. Each box has a large sign attached to the bottom of the box. Bring in the boxes collapsed and open them up one by one. Each box has a single word on it. “Mean, unkind, nasty, unfair ”

As you open them, show the word, comment on it and build it up into a small wall.

Bob: Well, let me think about this ... May I talk to you for a moment about Joseph? I mean Joseph lived a long time ago, what has that got to do with me today??

In one point Joseph was just the same. He was a person like you and me. And when one person is mean to another, they get hurt, they get upset, they might get angry. Remember the slides you saw as you came in? What would you do if ... someone breaks your toy ... or talks badly about you ... or excludes you all the time ... or hurts you in some way?

Well, look at this, (Takes box 1) I want to show you what people normally do. Say Lois is MEAN to me in some way. The next time I see her, I hold on to this memory “Lois is mean” and it is there for both of us. Invisible, not like this box, but it is there in our minds. And if she then does something else a few days later, say she is nasty to me, then I add this in my mind to the first box. “Lois is mean and nasty” and every time I see her from then on, I see her from behind my boxes.

This happened a lot to Joseph, didn't it. His brothers were mean, they were UNKIND, they sold him, and then they pretended to forget about him – they were really NASTY to their brother. But other people were also mean to Joseph. When Joseph was thrown into prison, other people were UNFAIR to him, they treated him badly, left him in prison. Joseph could have built up a huge tower of boxes!!

You all thought it was a bad idea when I was Bob, to build a fence to keep the annoying brother out ...well I think this kind of wall is a bad idea too.

And that's where I think he was amazing and unusual: He did not!

Instead he put these things away, behind him. This is so amazing, I think God helped him to do it!

So his brothers were mean – but Joseph forgave them and put it behind him (Putting boxes aside and dismantling the tower.)

His brothers were nasty – but Joseph forgave them and put it behind him

People were unfair – Joseph forgave them and put it behind him

In the end, when Joseph met his brothers after many years, he was not angry and resentful. He reached out to them and helped them as a brother should.

(Illustrate by standing close to Wendy and shaking hands with her.)

Memory verse

(Like a greeting...)

By the way Wendy: AS MUCH AS IT IS UP TO YOU, LIVE AT PEACE WITH EVERYONE.

By the way Bob: AS MUCH AS IT IS UP TO YOU, LIVE AT PEACE WITH EVERYONE.

Make the children repeat the verse a few times.

Ro 12,18 As much as it is up to you, live at peace with everyone

Let us pray together

God who forgives, we ask you to help us to live in peace with everyone!