Session Six

Session 6 - Vision of Faith

Objective

JOY Children will be able to relate to the story of Joseph who himself becomes a Vision of Faith among his jealous brothers by forgiving them.

Preparation

Some of the focus of this session is going to be about siblings and their relationships with each other. The session centers on the Vision of Faith that Joseph becomes for the rest of his family. The story of Joseph begins in Genesis 35.

The goal would be to carefully explain this story to JOY children in their own terms. It may be a good idea, perhaps, to utilize a children's Bible for this. Also working with the GOYANS will assist them in personalizing the message when they collaborate for the culminating project of this session.

You may also familiarize yourself with the following scripture verses which help us to understand how we can better have Visions of Faith:
Genesis 45:4-7
Luke 32-34

Materials Needed

Copies of Opening and Closing Prayers (1 per person)
Copies of Family Notes (1 per person)
GOYANS as Big Brother/Big Sisters
Multiple copies of the Bible with the Old Testament
A Children's Bible
Construction paper (large pieces in bright colors)
Scrap pieces of fabric
Scissors
Glue
Decorations (fabric glue, glitter etc.)-Optional
Large sheet of butcher paper for base of "coat"
Bags of Multicolored Pony Beads (Each person needs 2 red, 2 orange, 2 yellow, 1 white, 2 purple or 2 light blue, 2 green and 2 blue beads)
1 ? yards of lanyard or other string per person (including GOYANS)

Session 6
Vision of Faith

Opening Prayer *Trisagion (Thrice Holy)*

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory to You our God, glory to You!

Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, present in all places and filling all things, treasury of blessings and Giver of life, come and abide in us. Cleanse us from all impurities and save our souls, gracious Lord.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3x)

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever to the ages of ages. Amen.

All Holy Trinity have mercy on us. Lord, forgive our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, to the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Icebreaker – Vision Volley (Don't tell the kids the name)

You will need at least two large inflated balloons per person. You will also need cards or sheets of paper that have the letters V * I * S * I * O * N on each card (make several sets) You can also have the kids blow up the balloons. Break the kids into groups of six and have them sit in a circle. Give each child a balloon to sit on without breaking. Give each group one balloon which will get tapped across the circle 10 times in a row without dropping it or without breaking it or the balloons they are sitting on. If a balloon breaks, give them another balloon. They will start the count over again. When a group is successful they will get a letter. (Don't tell them what the letters will spell). The first team to collect all of the letters in the word VISION wins.

Discuss

Congratulations to the winning team! What word did you collect?

What does the word vision mean? Who can tell us about a time when you were able to "see" something that no one else could see or a time when you were able to see something in someone else that they couldn't see in themselves?

How did it feel to be a visionary? Was it hard to get people to believe you?

Who can you think of from history who was a visionary? (Christ, the Saints, Martin Luther King Jr., etc.)

Session 6

Vision of Faith

State *(Paraphrase in your own words)*

Today we will explore the People of Faith who had **Visions of Faith**. These are people who have **vision** to see beyond their life circumstances to see the will of God. They are also people who could see beyond the way people have treated them and offer **forgiveness**. They recognized something more in them than they could see in themselves. Listen while I read the following story of a boy who did just that:

There was once a boy who had trouble with his brothers. His name was Joseph, and he was the son of Jacob and Rachel. We read about him and his brothers in the Old Testament book called **Genesis.**

Joseph's father had many sons but Joseph was the favorite. This made all of his brothers jealous. To show Joseph how much he was loved, his father bought him a multi-colored coat. None of the other brothers had a coat like this and it made them even angrier.

Joseph had a gift from God. He was able to have dreams that would prophesize (tell what would happen in the future). He dreamt that his corn stood straight and his brothers' corn that stood up too, but bowed down to Joseph's corn. When his brothers heard this, they were furious and wanted to kill him. Instead they threw Joseph in a pit and sold him to some people passing by on camels. Then, they took his coat and covered it with goat's blood to make it look like he had been killed, and brought it to their father. Jacob became so sad over the loss of his favorite son that he could not be cheered up.

Discuss *(accept all answers and reflect back)*

How would you feel if you were Joseph? What would you think of your brothers? Do you think sending Joseph away was a good way for his brothers to deal with the anger toward him?
What do you think will happen next?

State *(paraphrase in your own words)*

Joseph was said to have God with him because of all that happened to him next.

He was sold by his brothers as a slave to a master named Potiphar. He was wrongfully accused of a crime and was thrown in prison. There, Joseph met the butler and the baker of the **Pharaoh** of Egypt. Joseph used his gift from God to decipher what the other prisoner's dreams meant. When the Pharaoh heard about Joseph's ability, he brought him to the palace to also decipher his dream.

Joseph told Pharaoh that his dream of seven fatted cows followed by seven frail and skinny cows meant that they would have seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine. The Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of hoarding the crops so that when the famine finally came, Egypt would be prepared.

Egypt was indeed prepared, and able to ration all that they had stored. Joseph's family was unaware of what was to come and had not, therefore, prepared. His brothers were so desperate that they went to the Pharaoh's kingdom to grovel for food. They did not even recognize their brother Joseph because he was now the second in command under Pharaoh. But Joseph recognized them. He not only fed his brothers but, most importantly, he forgave them for their jealousy and their actions.

Bible Verse – (Orthodox Study Bible 2008) Genesis 45:4-7 *(Pass out bibles and help participants find the verse)*

"But Joseph said to this brothers, 'Come near to me.' So they came near. Then he said, 'I am Joseph your brother, who you sold into Egypt. Now therefore, do not be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to save life. For this is the second year of famine in the land, and five years still remain in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. For God sent me before you to preserve you as a remnant on the earth, and to sustain you as a great remnant, so now, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler throughout all the land of Egypt."

State *(paraphrase in your own words)*

Perhaps this is the greatest of his visions of faith. He was able to overlook the cruelty that his brothers imposed upon him, and love them enough to offer them food when they had none. He offers life to those who tried to take his.

For this reason, Joseph is a great example for us. The difficult times that he went through teach us about how very hard relationships with siblings can be. We relate to being hurt by a brother, or someone having bad feelings toward us for something we cannot make different. We think of the evil plans we have for our sisters, to set them up to suffer pain, loss, and fear.

Perhaps above all else, Joseph teaches us something more important than our feelings and or pain. He teaches us forgiveness. He freely and openly forgave his brothers for what they did to him. Joseph the Patriarch is celebrated in the church on March 31. He is also commemorated on Holy Monday.

Stop and think for a moment about a time when you were so angry with your sibling(s) about something they did to you. If you don't have siblings, think about a time when a cousin or a friend did something mean to you. What happened?
Where did everything go wrong?
Did you forgive them anyway? *(Allow children to discuss these experiences while connecting to the story.)*

Where did you get the vision to see past their behaviors? *(Because of our faith in God we are given the gift of vision to see past other's actions and to do his will)*
At an earlier meeting we talked about the Prophets, what is the story of Joseph a prophecy of? (*Joseph who was sold into slavery saved his family and others just as Christ was betrayed by Judas. Joseph forgave his brothers as Christ did the thief on the cross-Luke 23:32-34)*

Activity

Joining us are some big brothers and sisters of our parish. Together with the GOYANS, we are going to do a challenge project about brotherly love. To begin, we will pair off using a random selection process.

Each pair will receive their choice of materials such as numerous sheets of colored construction paper, pieces of fabric, glitter, glue etc. You and your GOYA big brother or sister will create a piece of a large, uniquely colored coat, like Joseph's.

Be sure that you depict aspects of the story of Joseph and his brothers' jealously. Work with your partner to make something extra special and reflective of your talent. You may not be able to dream and figure out what everyone else's piece will look like, but you can envision parts of the story and creatively express it using the materials supplied.

Each pair will decorate a "piece" of the multi-colored coat you are going to create. As they create these pieces, arrange them on the butcher paper to create the shape of the silhouette of an over coat. Allow the children to get creative with this by working together and taking turns to figure out what shape the coat should take, how big the pieces should be to make a large enough coat to display in the church hall etc. Tell the GOYANS in advance to offer support but innately let the JOY children take charge and pose the majority of the ideas. This is why it is a challenge project. The challenge is to create a piece of art representing what they learned all by using brotherly love.

While you work on this, think of all the times you chose not to forgive someone. Try to think of ways you could have shown your love for that person even though they may not have shown it to you. Can you find words that mean forgiveness and write them into your creation? We will put the pieces all together as a hope to mend the things that are broken between people and us we did not forgive.

The outcome of our work together will be a most multi-colored coat collage. It will represent the covering of sins that Joseph offered his brothers. He let them live by letting go of any feelings held against them for their jealous behavior. It will be a Vision of Faith that speaks more than dreams as it confirms God's love for us. He covers the pain we have from fighting, holding grudges, and thinking badly of others.

Let's form the big coat that Joseph's father gave him and pray that it will protect us from hands that try to harm us. Thank you, GOYANS, for your helping hands.

Arts and Crafts – Cross of Many Colors

In honor of Joseph's act of forgiveness to his brothers, we will be making a Cross of Many Colors. The beads on the arms of the cross will represent Joseph's 12 brothers. There will be a white bead in the center to represent Joseph and how his Vision of Faith brought his family together again. For this project I will give instructions as a group. The GOYA Stewards may help you and make a cross for themselves if they like.

State

The story of Joseph the Prophet is pretty amazing. It shows us that God's will for us takes some time to see. With time, Joseph was able to see that what happened to him was part of God's plan to save his people. Joseph had the vision to see past what his brothers did to him to forgive them and to save his family. God puts each of us as Christians in the world to help others to see the light of Christ. Your challenge is to have the vision of faith to try to see the best in your brothers and sisters in Christ and to act in a loving and forgiving way as Joseph did.

Closing Prayer

A Prayer of a Child

Our Father who art in heaven, bless my father and mother, my brothers and sisters and those who tend and care for me, for their love for me and the benefits I receive at their hands. Help me, I pray to you, to be respectful and obedient to them in all things according to your will: and give me your grace to perform all my duties carefully and faithfully and to resist all temptation that may come my way. Amen.

Expanded Ideas

Further discussion on what it takes to forgive someone. Build an entire coat of attributes of people who forgive. Use feeling words on the sleeves to represent what it is like when someone forgives you. Likewise, create a coat with the opposite, filling it with words and thoughts that are hurtful and unforgiving. Fill the sleeves with feeling words that represent what we feel when someone is angry and hurtful.

Ask the parish priest to help the group understand the process leading to our forgiveness. He can help us understand how God calls us to repentance to be free of bonds of sin, like Joseph.

Have one more discussion to allow children to express their intention and design of their part of the garment. Have them share their process of deciding how it will look. Was it easy to work with the big brother/big sister from GOYA?

Make multicolored tie died t-shirts reminiscent of Joseph's coat

Glossary

Drought – A period of dryness especially when prolonged that causes extensive damage to crops or prevents their successful growth
Forgiveness – to give up resentment or bad feelings
Genesis – The first book of the New Testament written by Moses
Pharaoh – A ruler of ancient Egypt
Sibling – Brother or sister
Vision - Something seen, something seen in a dream or a trance, unusual discernment or foresight, direct mystical awareness of the supernatural usually in a visual form

Arts and Crafts - Cross of Many Colors

Supplies Needed

Bags of Multicolored Pony Beads (Each person needs 2 red, 2 orange, 2 yellow, 1 white, 2 purple(or light blue), 2 green and 2 blue beads)
1 ? yards of lanyard or other string per person

Directions

Fold the string in half and thread one red bead down to the fold
Thread both of the strings through the orange, yellow, and white beads
Separate the strings. One at a time, on both sides put a green, purple and dark blue bead coming out from the center
Take the strings on the right and left and wrap them around the dark blue bead threading them through the green and light blue beads. Secure the beads by pulling the strings taught
Thread both strings through the bottom of the white center bead, coming out of the top
Add yellow, orange and red beads to both strings together
Separate both strings and wrap around the red bead threading them through the bottom to the top and tighten to secure
Tie a knot at the length you want in order to wear or to hang from a rear view mirror, book bag, etc.

Family Notes - Visions of Faith

Today your child(ren) learned about People of Faith who have Visions of Faith. They reviewed the Story of the Prophet Joseph and the visions that saved his people. They also discussed what gives us visions of faith so that we may see the best in others and offer forgiveness in order to do Gods will. To find out a little more of what they learned, ask the following questions:
What happened between Joseph and his brothers?
How did Joseph help Pharaoh?
What happened as a result of Joseph's visions?

Models of Visions of Faith in February

St. Isodore of Pelusium (4)
St. Agatha the Virgin Martyr (5)
St. John Cassian the Confessor (29)

Activities

Have a piece of "humble pie." Once a month have a pie night when each person humbles themselves and asks forgiveness for something that happened during the course of the month. Enjoy the pie while humbly forgiving someone else.
Talk with your kids about why Joseph's father gave him the special coat and not everyone else. Explain why things do not always seem "Even Steven." Talk about how you dealt with sibling rivalry as a child and what you learned.
Enjoy a summer bonfire in the woods, at the beach or in the back yard. Sing songs and make S'mores. Offer prayers for people who are in need and ask forgiveness of those around the fire.
Watch the movie Joseph: King of Dreams for a family movie night

For Further Information

A beautifully illustrated book on the story of Joseph is The Coat of Many Colors by Jenny Koralek and Pauline Baynes. It can be found on Amazon.com. For reflections on forgiveness and other topics, read The Spiritual Reflections of Father John of Kronstadt which can be purchased from svspress.com

Session 11 Prayers

Opening Prayers

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory to You our God, glory to You!

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Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3x)

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever to the ages of ages. Amen.

All Holy Trinity have mercy on us. Lord, forgive our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

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Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Closing Prayers

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