

SESSION THREE

JOSEPH THE WAITING GAME



*Genesis chapter 37
chapter 39
chapter 40*

*Genesis 41:1-40
42:1-8
45:1-5*

INTRO

It's gotta hurt

Post the following pictures on the wall or bulletin board where students can see them when they walk in:

You'll need...

- *four pictures listed at right*
- *scrap paper*
- *pens*
- *a can*
- *small prizes*

- a muscular body (a man would probably be the best choice)
- a newborn baby
- a high school diploma
- an Olympic medal

Place the scrap paper, pens, and can near the pictures. Post the following instructions near the pictures:

What do these things have in common?

If you think you know—

1. Write your guess on a piece of paper.
2. Sign your name.
3. Fold it.
4. Put the paper in the can.

If we draw your guess and it's right, you'll get a prize.

One by one, draw the guesses out of the can until you find one that is correct.

THE LESSON ON
PERSEVERANCE

HERE'S THE POINT ▲

Trials and temptations are meant to make us strong.

Staying power is what separates those who make it through life successfully from those who buckle under pressure. Helping you hang in there when the going gets rough is God's way of giving your spirit a workout.

Joseph's life is an example of what it means to persevere under pressure and come out on top.

Reward the student who wrote the correct answer (food is a perennially favorite reward—Smarties, M&Ms, a donut).

The answer should go something like this: **Each picture represents a reward that came with perseverance and pain.**

Segue into your Bible lesson by saying—

When you hear “No pain, no gain” or “Go for the burn,” what do you think of? Athletic prowess? Buns of steel? Staying in top physical condition?

How about staying in good spiritual condition? Spirit workouts mimic body workouts—good results come only with perseverance, struggle, and yes, even some pain.

Long before muscle magazines, Joseph knew this truth. Though one trial after another confronted Joseph, he remained faithful every step of the way. In the end, Joseph received the blessings he longed for. His story models how to persevere under pressure—no matter how difficult your circumstances get.



SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

Perseverance under pressure

You'll need...

- copies of *Joseph: Perseverance under Pressure—Small Group Q's 3.2*
- pencils
- extra Bibles

How close are the students in your group? Some of the questions in *Joseph: Perseverance under Pressure* could lead to a deep level of personal sharing if the students feel they can trust their group. Think through the questions and decide ahead of time which ones your students are most likely to respond to candidly.



APPLICATION

Fight or flight?

Is the best response to temptation *fight* or *flight*?

In small groups (or with everyone if your group is small), discuss or debate the best thing to do if faced with any of the following situations. Should a person flee the situation or stay and be strong in the midst of it?

- (for girls) You're at your boyfriend's house because his parents are gone for the weekend, and he wants you to have sex tonight.
- (for guys) You're all alone with your best friend's girl friend (to whom you've always been attracted), and she wants you to kiss her.
- You're at a party where you're the only one who's not drinking.
- Your non-Christian friends (who like to party) are going away for the weekend to ski, and they want you to come.
- You're sitting in class taking a test, surrounded by friends who are all cheating. Then your teacher leaves the room.
- (for girls) You're staying at a friend's house, and she lies to her parents so the two of you can go to an unchaperoned party.
- (for guys) You're staying at a friend's house, and he pulls out a stack of Penthouse magazines.

Modify these
for adults/
inmates

JOSEPH: PERSEVERANCE UNDER PRESSURE

Read aloud or skim the following Scriptures.
Use what you learn to discuss the related questions.

..... **Genesis 37:1-11**

- 1 Do you think Joseph's brothers were justified in their anger? Why/Why not?

..... **Genesis 38**

- 2 Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery because they were jealous. Have you ever been jealous of someone else? If so, how did you handle it?
- 3 Is it possible to keep from getting jealous of others? If so, how?

..... **Genesis 39:2**

- 4 The Lord was with Joseph, even though he had been abandoned by his brothers and sold as a slave. What does that tell you about God's presence in our lives?

..... **Genesis 39:6-18**

- 5 After reading aloud the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, make a list of all the things we can learn about temptation from this story.
- 6 Have you ever felt pressured to give in to a temptation? If so, did the pressure come from yourself, your circumstances, your relationships, or your friends?
- 7 How did you handle the pressure to do wrong?
- 8 What help (if any) does Joseph's story give for how you could handle pressure to do wrong in the future?
- 9 Joseph ended up being punished for doing the right thing. Has that ever happened to you or anyone you know?
- 10 If you had a choice of doing the right thing and getting punished, or doing the wrong thing and getting rewarded, what do you think you would do? (Try to be honest). What do you hope you would do?

..... **Genesis 45:1-5**

- 11 In the end, Joseph was rewarded for his perseverance with a powerful position through which he could help many people. Even though he could have taken revenge on his brothers, he forgave them. Why did he do that?
- 12 What would you have done if you were Joseph?

..... **And finally...**

- 13 Do you think it's easier to pay someone back for what they did or to forgive them? Why?
- 14 Does forgiveness or revenge show more strength?
- 15 Do you feel better after paying back someone who really deserved it or after forgiving that person? (Ask everyone in the group to share their opinion.)
- 16 What one thing did you learn from Joseph's life that you can apply to your own life? How will you apply it?