

Gen. 41, 42

What do you do when you are hungry? Does your mother or father go to the refrigerator or cupboard and get a snack for you? When it's dinner time does your mother cook some good food to put on the table? Where does the food come from?

Well, in Bible times the people had to grow their food in the ground and they needed lots of rain to make the plants grow. Do you remember what a "famine" is? Its when there isn't any rain and the plants all die. Then the people and the animals get very hungry for there is not enough food. A famine was a very bad thing to happen and in the land of Egypt there had been a famine that was lasting for seven long years.

Do you remember how Joseph was taken from prison and chosen by Pharaoh to build big storehouses for grain and food, to prepare for the famine? God had told Joseph that there would be seven long years of famine and his word came true. There was no rain and the people were getting very hungry, so one day, Joseph ordered the storehouse doors to be opened so he could sell the people food for themselves and their animals.



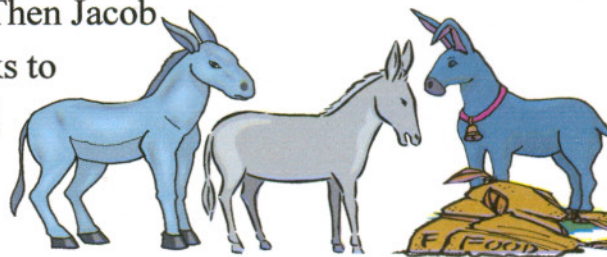
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Soon many people from a long way away began to come to Joseph to get food from the big storehouses.

Do you remember where Joseph once lived when he was a boy? He lived with his father, Jacob and his 11 brothers in the land of Canaan. Joseph's brothers had been very mean to Joseph and threw him in a dry well, because they were jealous of him. They had sold him as a slave and he was carried off to the land of Egypt. Well, God took care of Joseph, and now he was almost as important as Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Joseph's father Jacob, and his brothers thought Joseph would be dead by now. They didn't know he was in Egypt giving food to the hungry people.

One day Jacob gathered his eleven sons and said, "We are near starvation and our animals are dying because there's no food. Now load up the donkeys and travel to the land of Egypt and buy us some grain so we and our animals can live." Then Jacob gave ten of his sons some silver coins and empty sacks to take to Egypt to buy some grain for their families and animals.



One of Joseph's brothers didn't go with the others. This was little Benjamin, the youngest boy. Jacob, Benjamin's father, didn't want Benjamin to leave home, for he was afraid that Benjamin might get lost or killed, just as he thought Joseph had been (Jacob didn't know that Joseph was still alive).

The ten brothers packed some food on their donkeys and began their long journey to Egypt. When they got to the governor's palace, they bowed low to the ground before him. They didn't know this was their very own brother, Joseph. *Why do you think they didn't know Joseph?* Joseph had grown up since they had last seen him and he was wearing fancy Egyptian clothes now, so he looked very different.

Joseph knew his brothers for they hadn't changed all that much. However, he didn't tell them who he was, for he wanted to see if they were still mean and jealous men like they were when Joseph lived with them. So Joseph pretended he didn't know them, and he demanded, "Who are you? Where do you come from? What do you want?"



The brothers told Joseph they were from the land of Canaan and they had come to buy grain. Joseph pretended to be cross, "There are ten of you, that's too much for one family. I think you are spies come to hurt the Egyptians!"

"No, no," the brothers said, we are all from one family. Our father and our youngest brother are at home. We just came to buy food from you."

Joseph was very, very, happy to hear about his little brother Benjamin and to hear that his father was still alive. Joseph said, "I don't think you are from one family, I won't believe you unless you bring your little brother here for me to see for myself." "Oh we can't do that," one of the brothers said. "Our father would never let Benjamin leave home, for his older brother Joseph died, and our father is afraid something might happen to little Benjamin."

(We know Joseph didn't die, don't we? He is standing right there talking to his brothers. That was a pretty good joke to play on them, wasn't it?)

Can you count all the brothers standing by Joseph?



Then Joseph said he would keep one brother named Simeon in Egypt, until the others returned with little Benjamin. Joseph had a servant fill the brother's sacks full of grain and after they paid him the money for the grain, Joseph secretly had their money put back in their grain sacks. When the brothers stopped for the night, they got some grain to give to their donkeys. Imagine their surprise when they found their money in top of the sacks! When they got home they told their father Jacob, all about the trip and how the governor kept Simeon and wanted them to bring Benjamin back to Egypt.

Jacob was very unhappy! He didn't ever want Benjamin to go away from home for he was afraid he would get hurt. Joseph had been gone from home for many years and now Simeon was gone as well. How could he ever let Benjamin out of his sight, he thought. For a long time Jacob's family lived on the grain they got from Egypt, but one day the grain sacks were empty and the families were getting very hungry again.

What would they do? They needed more grain from Egypt.



"You must return to Egypt and get more grain," Jacob told his sons. "Take back the money that you found in your sacks and take more money as well."

"But Father, we can't go to Egypt unless we take Benjamin with us. The governor said he wouldn't even talk to us if Benjamin wasn't with us!" Poor Jacob walked up and down and looked very worried. What could he do, he wondered.

What would you do when you have a big problem and don't know what to do? Do you think it would help to say a prayer to God? The Bible tells us that God hears our prayers and will help us when we have a problem. I'm sure Jacob also prayed for God's help and then he said, "You may take Benjamin to Egypt, and may God be with you so you may bring back Simeon and Benjamin as well."

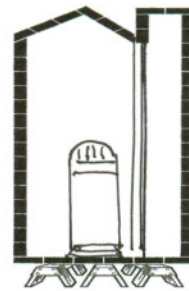
Jacob put his trust in God and in our next lesson we'll see that God heard Jacob's prayers. We can always trust God to help us when we have big worries and problems, can't we?



Question Page

1. Joseph had big storage buildings, do you know what he kept in them? (*grain or horses*)?
2. Why did Joseph's brothers come to Egypt? (*to buy food or to buy jewels*)?
3. Why didn't Joseph's brothers know who he was?
4. What was the name of Joseph's little brother?
5. Did Joseph's little brother go to Egypt with the 10 older brothers?
6. Why was Jacob, (Benjamin's father), afraid to let Benjamin go anywhere?
7. Joseph pretended he didn't know his brothers, was this so Joseph could see if they were still mean and jealous?
8. Joseph kept Simeon with him in Egypt but sent the brothers home with grain. What else did Joseph put in the brother's sacks?
9. Why did Jacob and his sons have to go to Egypt to buy food?
10. Does a famine mean there is lots of rain and good crops or not any rain and no food.
11. Why did Jacob finally agree to let Benjamin go to Egypt? (*did he trust the brothers to take care of Benjamin or did he trust in God to care for Benjamin*)?
12. Can we trust God to take care of us?

There are many kinds of buildings for storing things; can you find two storage buildings that match and color them?



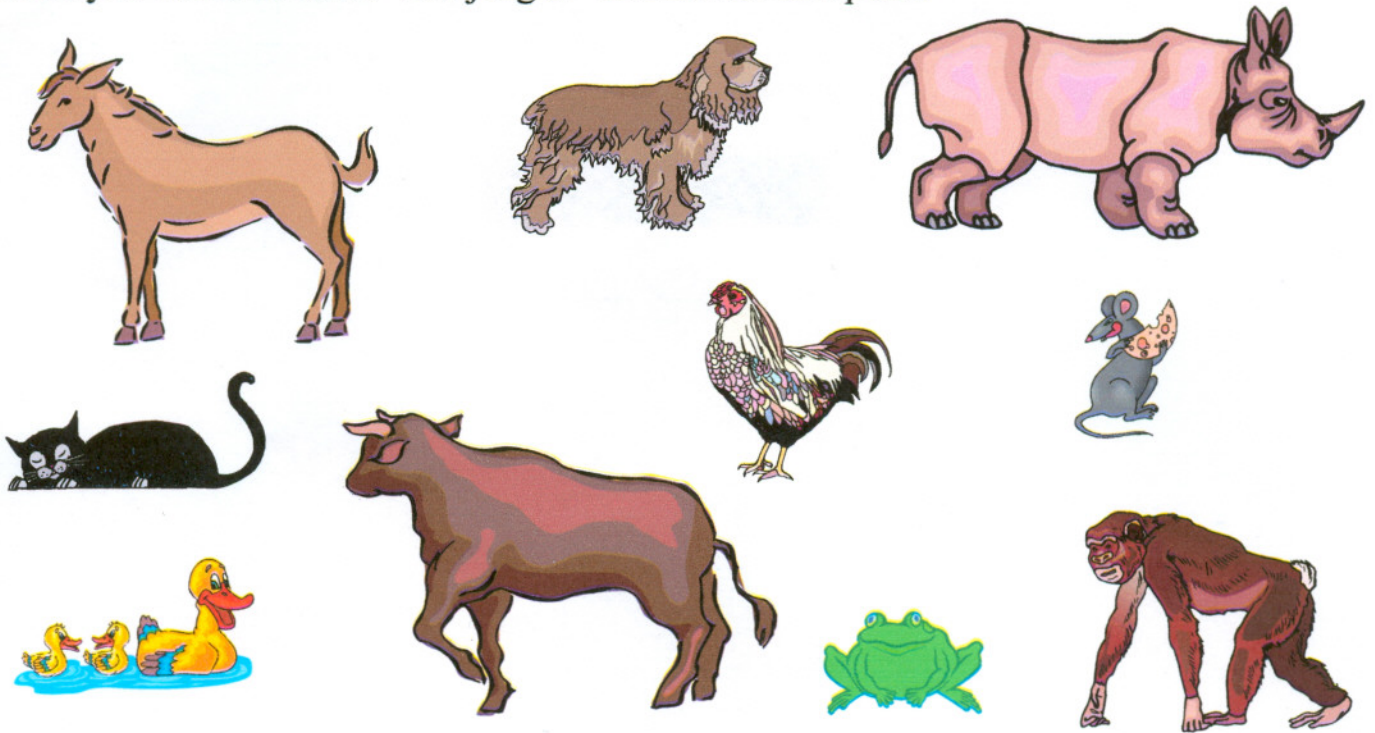
Connect the a-b-c's to draw something the brothers brought back from Egypt. When they opened it they found a surprise. Choose which thing they found from the little drawings at the bottom of the page.

Start → A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H. I. J.

The maze starts at a circle labeled 'Start' with an arrow pointing to 'A'. From 'A', the path goes down to 'J'. From 'J', the path goes up to 'A', then right to 'B', then right to 'C', then right to 'D', then down to 'E', then down to 'F', then down to 'G', then left to 'H', then left to 'I', and finally left to 'J'. At the end of the path is a large oval containing a drawing of yellow flowers. Below the path is a horizontal line with a grassy border. Underneath the line are six small drawings: a brown dog, a red tricycle, a bunch of red tomatoes, a blue cat, a carrot and radishes, and a stack of gold coins.

Draw a picture of the ten brothers who went to Egypt. Color each one's clothes a different color and draw some donkeys for them to ride on.

Which kind of animal did the brothers take with them to Egypt? Which kind of animal would you find on a farm? In a jungle? In a house? In a pond?



Its the time of year when we have snow in some parts of the country. Finish drawing the snow picture, draw your house and a picture of you building another snowman then color.

