

Online-Friendly Interactive Learning Activities for Fall 2020

NIV Online-Friendly Involvement Learning Lesson 1 | September 6, 2020

Into the Lesson

Option. Before class members arrive, place in chairs copies of the “Yep—That’s Family!” exercise from the activity page, which you can download [here](#). Your early arrivers can work on this as indicated. If you’re meeting completely or partially online, send the activity page exercise to remote class members via e-mail or text.

Write the following on the board: *What is the difference between a house and a home?* Be sure to share your screen—if all participants are meeting online and you’re capturing notes on your computer—or turn your webcam toward the board—if your class is a hybrid of those physically and virtually present—so your online learners can see and participate.

As volunteers share their responses, jot down their ideas on the board. Then ask how a house becomes a home. After several responses, flip it around and ask “What actions and attitudes could cause a home to devolve into being merely a house?”

After learners offer responses regarding family strife, etc., make a transition by saying, “Family strife is nothing new—it goes clear back to Genesis 4. Let’s examine a case of reconciliation to see what it can teach us today.”

Into the Word

Ask learners what they know about Esau and Jacob, the sons of Isaac and Rebekah. (*Expected responses:* they were twins; Isaac favored Esau; Rebekah favored Jacob; etc.) If no one does so, summarize Jacob’s “like father, like son” favoritism. Ask students to share how the parents’ favoritism caused calamity in the family. (*Expected responses* are per Genesis 25:27-34; 27:1-45.)

Distribute handouts* (you prepare) titled “Family Conflict” that feature four columns headed *Lesson Text / Jacob’s Actions / Joseph’s Actions / Brothers’ Actions*. Under the far-left column (Lesson Text), have printed the following as labels to rows: A—verse 2; B—verses 3-4; C—verses 5-11; D—verses 23-24a; E—verse 28. Include these instructions: “Read through each section of the lesson text of Genesis 37:2-11, 23-24a, 28. As you do, fill in the chart as the headers imply concerning actions that contributed to family conflict. Not every box will require a response.”

Have learners discuss and complete the chart in small groups. If you're meeting online, you might make use of Zoom breakouts to create discussion groups. If you're in a hybrid situation, you might group all the online people into one group and the in-person people in other groups. Afterward, reconvene for whole-class discussion. Using the rows to go verse by verse through the lesson text, ask "What's so?" as you pause at each intersection of row and header. After appropriate responses (which should be obvious from the text), ask "So what?" to dig below a mere recitation of historical facts. Probe for different conclusions. Encourage learners not to allow personal experiences of family conflict to read into the text something that is not there.

(*Option.* Distribute copies of the "Exegesis, Not Eisegesis" activity from the activity page, which you can download [here](#), for learners to complete as indicated.)

Into Life

Form learners into study pairs (physically and/or via Zoom breakouts**) and give each a handout* (you prepare) on which are printed the following questions:

1. In what ways does favoritism damage family relationships today?
2. When have you seen accusations of favoritism where none existed?
3. How can you make amends for your own errors regarding questions 1 and 2?
4. What are some ways you can minister to those who bear the scars of favoritism, either as victim or perpetrator?
5. What are some practices church staff members can adopt to avoid perceptions of favoritism?

Case study. An elder in a church has two grandsons: one is a grandson of natural descent; the other became a grandson when the man's daughter married a man who had a son. The grandfather set up a snack vending service at his workplace, with proceeds going to a college fund for the grandson of natural descent only. This is causing friction with the son-in-law, who is the natural father of both boys. The grandfather defends his favoritism by saying, "Blood is thicker than water." How would you counsel this man?

* Note: Whenever you distribute copies of anything, use hard-copy (paper) handouts for those physically present and e-copies for those joining online via Zoom, etc.

** For a tutorial on how to use Zoom breakouts, go [here](#).

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NIV Online-Friendly Involvement Learning

Lesson 2 | September 13, 2020

Into the Lesson

Give each learner physically present a large index card; ask on-line learners to get something to draw on. Ask them to draw a graph of their lives, tracing major ups and downs. Allow one minute to complete the task, then form small groups of four or five (physically and/or via Zoom breakouts**) for sharing their graphs, summarizing the ups and downs of their life experiences. (If you're meeting online, you might make use of Zoom breakouts to create discussion groups. If you're in a hybrid situation, you might group all the online people into one group and the in-person people in other groups.)

Alternative. Distribute copies of the “Storytelling” exercise from the activity page, which you can download [here](#). Have learners pair off and share their stories. Ask for volunteers to tell briefly their stories of someone whose faith helped them through a difficult time.

After either activity say, “Everyone’s life has its ups and downs. This was especially true of Joseph. Let’s see part of the result of his faithfulness.”

Into the Word

Read aloud the lesson text of Genesis 41:25-33, 37-40, and 50-52. Focus on the last word of verse 52 as you ask, “What suffering did Joseph endure while he was in Egypt?” (*Expected responses* include being enslaved, being falsely accused of attempted rape by Potiphar’s wife and thrown into prison, and being forgotten by a fellow inmate whom he had helped.)

Continue to set the context by asking, “How did God make Joseph fruitful in the midst of his troubles? (*Expected responses include* being put in charge of Potiphar’s household, being put in charge of the prison, and receiving revelations from God that resulted in release from prison.)

Invite learners to consider how Joseph’s faithfulness shaped his character as Genesis 41:25-33, 37-40, and 50-52 is read aloud again, this time by three volunteers. Then divide the class into three groups (physically and/or via Zoom breakouts**). Assign each group one of the verse segments: 25-33, 37-40, and 50-52. Ask groups to identify fruit or character traits of Joseph in their assigned segment. After a few minutes reconvene for whole-class discussion.

Next, read John 15:4-8 (which is part of the text for lesson 10). Ask learners to consider what the fruits they have listed suggest about Joseph’s relationship with God and what Joseph believed about him. Explore the relationship between *the fruits* and *the roots* of Joseph’s life in either whole-class or small-group discussion. Be prepared to offer your own conclusions in that regard.

Option. Ask, “Who are some other people in the Bible who went through hard times but came through it stronger because of their faith and faithfulness?” As learners mention names such as Job, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Hannah, Elijah, Jeremiah, etc., jot those names on the board. Be sure to share your screen—if all participants are meeting online and you’re capturing notes on your computer—or turn your webcam toward the board—if your class is a hybrid of those

physically and virtually present—so your online learners can see and participate.

Into Life

Distribute handouts* (you prepare) that list helpful practices that learners may use in the week ahead to remind them of specific attributes of God. Also include a listing of such attributes. (*Examples:* God is good, trustworthy, patient, just, all-powerful, all-knowing, holy.) Further include at least one Scripture text with each attribute, along with these instructions: “Create a key phrase for each characteristic of God listed. Then incorporate those summaries into your devotional time this week.”

Form small groups to discuss those key phrases. (For online participants, use Zoom breakout rooms**.) Have groups share those phrases in the ensuing whole-class discussion. Challenge learners each to choose for prayer focus one key phrase that resonates with them and will remind them daily in the week ahead of who God truly is and how they are to live. Remind learners that the goal is to grow deep roots in God as Joseph did. Discuss how deep and shallow roots are related to bearing fruit.

Option. Distribute copies* of the “Your Life Tree” exercise from the activity page, which you can download [here](#), to complete as indicated. This can be a do-at-home activity.

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NIV Online-Friendly Involvement Learning

Lesson 3 | September 20, 2020

Into the Lesson

As learners arrive, have this question written on the board:

What are some of the tensions regarding revenge that you have seen in movies?

Be sure to share your screen—if all participants are meeting online and you’re capturing notes on your computer—or turn your webcam toward the board—if your class is a hybrid of those physically and virtually present—so your online learners can see and participate. Encourage learners to share examples; allow time for open discussion.

Alternative. Distribute copies* of the “Movie Plot: Revenge Is Mine!” exercise from the activity page, which you can download [here](#). Divide the class into groups to complete as indicated. (For those participating online, use Zoom breakouts** to create discussion groups. After 10 minutes or so, have groups share results.)

After either activity, share a story of a time when you entertained thoughts of revenge against a family member. Say, “I am sure many if not all of us have our own revenge stories, whether of revenge merely pondered or actually carried out. Let’s see how one servant of God dealt with this same temptation.”

Into the Word

Give each learner a handout* (you prepare) on which is printed a variety of emoji. As a minimum, have emoji depicting anger, surprise, horror, laughter, skepticism, embarrassment, disbelief, guilt, deviousness, cluelessness, and boredom. (*Option.* Depending on the nature of your class, the handout may or may not feature definitions alongside the emoji.) Have these instructions printed at the top of the handout: “As you hear Genesis 42:6-25a read, match emoji with verses. Each emoji can be used once, more than once, or not at all. And each verse can take more than one emoji.”

Before the reading, pause to evaluate the class for comprehension. If learners seem to need further explanation, suggest one or more of the following matches: regarding verse 6: cluelessness emoji for the brothers; regarding verse 7: surprise emoji for Joseph.

Have learners make their emoji matches while you read Genesis 42:6-25a slowly. After you have finished, lead a discussion that compares and contrasts learners’ results. (*Option.* Have learners do this in pairs or triads.)

Wrap up the discussion by asking, “In what ways can decisions about taking revenge poison one’s future?” Encourage open discussion.

Option. Split the class in half (physically and/or via Zoom breakouts**) and give each group copies of the “Be It Resolved” exercise from the activity page, which you can download [here](#). Conduct the indicated debate after groups develop their arguments.

(Alternative. Use an informal point/counterpoint format instead.)

Make a transition by focusing on Genesis 42:24-25a as you ask how strong emotions can influence one’s decision to take or not take revenge.

Into Life

Lead a discussion on how past misdeeds (both as perpetrator and victim) can be emotionally and relationally poisonous. Ask for examples without names; jot responses on the board as they are mentioned. Focus on one as you distribute to study pairs handouts* (you prepare) on which are printed the following statements:

1. If acting in revenge, the following could happen: _____.
2. If we were to act in love, the following could happen: _____.

After a few minutes, reconvene for the whole class to compare and contrast the responses.

Write the text of Romans 12:19 on the board. Be sure to share your screen—if all participants are meeting online and you’re capturing notes on your computer—or turn your webcam toward the board—if your class is a hybrid of those physically and virtually present—so your online learners can see and participate. Have learners read it aloud in unison. Distribute index cards on which learners can copy this text. Challenge them to post it in a place where they will see it several times daily in the week ahead.

State that the first thing the class will do when reconvening next week is recalling the text aloud in unison as learners have memorized it.

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NIV Online-Friendly Involvement Learning

Lesson 4 | September 27, 2020

Into the Lesson

Solicit volunteers to share (briefly) details of a time when they remained hopeful while facing a negative life change. After a few such stories, ask the class to identify common threads of perseverance in the accounts.

Make a transition by saying, “Of all the hurts we suffer, betrayal is likely the most painful. Let’s see how a Bible hero dealt with this problem.”

Into the Word

Write *Reasons for Weeping* at the top of the board or your screen. Be sure to share your screen—if all participants are meeting online and you’re capturing notes on your computer—or turn your webcam toward the board—if your class is a hybrid of those physically and virtually present—so your online learners can see and participate.

Underneath, write *Sadness* and *Joy* as headers for two columns. Ask the class to voice specific types of sadness and joy for a person who might shed tears; jot responses in the respective columns. (*Possible responses for tears of sadness*: death of a loved one, estrangement, guilt over wrongdoing, etc.; *for tears of joy*: a significant material gain, reconciliation, reversal of a loss, etc.)

Divide the class into four groups, designating them **Joseph’s Tears**, **Benjamin’s Tears**, **Egyptians’ Interpretation**, and **Brothers’ Interpretation**. (If you’re meeting online, you might make use of Zoom breakouts to create discussion groups. If you’re in a hybrid situation, you might group all the online people into one group and the in-person people in other groups.) Distribute handouts* (you prepare) with these instructions: “Read today’s text of Genesis 45:1-8, 10-15. If your group is named after a person, determine why that person wept. If your group name designates a collective, state how those people probably interpreted the tears and wailing.”

After several minutes, reconvene for whole-class discussion. Allow each group in turn to share conclusions; encourage the non-presenting groups to question and challenge those conclusions.

At appropriate points, ask the presenting group how God might be seen at work in the strong emotions present in the text. Allow time for thorough discussion. Expect “me too” stories to be voiced; don’t discourage these, but don’t let them drag out either.

Lead a discussion of the text by posing the following questions for whole-class discussion. Be sure to pause between questions to allow learners time to respond.

1. From a Hollywood movie standpoint, what did Joseph’s brothers deserve to receive from him?

2. What made it possible for Joseph to overcome his desire for revenge?
3. Was Joseph's reaction the same as forgiveness? Why, or why not?
4. What was the bigger picture that Joseph realized?
5. Do you agree that Genesis 45:5 is the key verse of today's text? Why, or why not?

Option. For lively discussion, have a volunteer secretly prepared to disagree with either a yes or no answer on questions 3 and/or 5, giving reasons why.

Option. Distribute copies of the "Joseph's Actions and Mine" exercise from the activity page, which you can download [here](#), for learners to discuss and complete in study pairs.

Into Life

Distribute handouts* (you create) titled "My Prayer and Discipleship Time," featuring these two challenges:

- *My best steps in modeling love are*
- *My best actions in modeling forgiveness are*

Have learners make commitments to study partners to use the two fill-in statements as daily prayer focus in the coming week.

Option. Distribute copies* of the "Grateful for God's Blessings" exercise from the activity page, which you can download [here](#), for learners to complete as indicated in study pairs (physically and/or via Zoom breakouts). Allow time for whole-class sharing.

Option. To see the spiritual values of Joseph's family members in the larger context of Genesis, distribute copies of the "Values Matrix" exercise from the activity page; use as a small-group exercise as time permits.

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