

## PREPARING AT HOME

August 14-20, 2017

*Focus reading:* Genesis 45:1–15 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=366786388>).

*Other lectionary readings:* Psalm 133; Romans 11:1–2a, 29–32; Matthew 15:(10–20), 21–28

*Theme:* Reconcile

Last week we learned how sibling rivalry, jealousy, and anger broke a family apart. We last saw Joseph being sold into slavery. Joseph remained alienated from his family for many years, but much has happened by the time we jump ahead to this week's reading. Thanks to his ability to interpret dreams, he has risen to a position of power in Pharaoh's court. A famine has brought his brothers to Egypt in search of food. Since Joseph is now in charge of food distribution, they end up approaching him; but they do not recognize him. Joseph causes his brothers some anxiety when he toys with them a bit but eventually reveals his identity to them and makes peace with them. Joseph is able to see God's hand at work in the midst of the tragic story of his life and his brothers' despicable acts. Joseph sees that God used the events of his past – even the brokenness of his family relationships – in order to place him in a position to save others, ensuring that God's promise of blessing to come through Abraham and Sara's descendants will be fulfilled. Joseph would save his family and the nation of Israel. While there is no excuse for how the brothers mistreated Joseph, there is new life and reconciliation as Joseph responds to God's grace.

### I'M SORRY

Hopefully we have never participated in a murder plot against a family member, but we have no doubt hurt even those closest to us on more than one occasion. How can an apology help? Brainstorm situations which might call for an apology. Practice saying an apology and receiving an apology. What difference does the apology make to the person wronged? To the one who is sorry?

### RECONCILED WITH CREATION

Human beings have mistreated the earth for centuries while still expecting the earth to supply what humanity needs for life. One of the "characters" in this story is a famine. Not only do we need to be reconciled to one another, but we need to be reconciled with creation. How have we mistreated creation? How can we restore what is broken? Young children may draw their ideas before deciding on a plan of action.

### PRAYER

Loving God,  
We are sorry for all of the ways that we have mistreated the people  
and the earth that you have created.  
Help us to care for each other and for the planet  
that we might live as you intend.  
Amen.

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