

**Mosaic**  
**God is love**

SAMPLE



# GOD'S PLAN FOR JOSEPH

*Come with Joseph through many adventures, dangers, good and bad times, and see how his life was part of God's plan.*

## BIBLE BACKGROUND FOR YOU

**The story of Joseph takes up a large part of Genesis. It is brilliantly told with great dramatic climaxes and cliffhangers.**

Unfortunately, it is impossible to capture all of this broad canvas by dividing the story up. It would be well worth reading the whole story for yourself (in chapters 37–50) just to get the flavour. It is a story of family breakdown and sibling rivalry, of national politics and sexual intrigue. Above all, it is a story of God being with his people. This is not always evident in the ups and downs of Joseph's life, but looking back, Joseph can see that God was always there and was working to a bigger plan.

If Joseph thought that his dreams were a guarantee of a golden future, he soon found out otherwise. Life is like that. A number certainly of the older children in our groups will be finding that being a friend of Jesus doesn't always ensure that things work out perfectly. But through Joseph's experiences – the loneliness, the temptation, the imprisonment and abandonment, the reunion with his brothers – God was preserving the people of Egypt and the descendants of Abraham so that the promise of Genesis 12:1–3 would become true. It may all have looked disastrous but 'God made it turn out for good' (Genesis 50:20).

## For your small group with a wide age range

Through all the ups and downs of life, God is not only with us, but is working out his plan for us. Hard though it is for younger children especially to see the long view, the story of Joseph captures this essential truth. Encourage older children to put their trust in God's long-term plan for them even when the present is hard. Maybe some relevant aspect of your own story may help! Joseph's change from self-centred youth to compassionate maturity was God's achievement, so all ages can learn to trust him, even though we don't know how our own 'story' will turn out.

## Resources for ministry

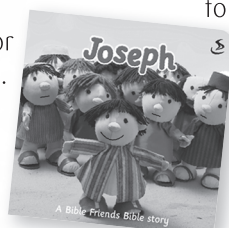
### Joseph

The life story of Joseph, told especially for the youngest children in your mixed-age group, in a popular board book format. Joseph has many dramatic adventures in this retelling of a popular Old Testament story. This book features full-colour photographic spreads of the much-loved *Bible Friends* characters. The board book format is durable and perfectly sized for small hands, with short text for a leader, parent or carer to read to the child. £3.99  
ISBN 978 1 84427 294 5

## Highlights from *LightLive*

Go to the 'Search *LightLive*' tab at [www.lightlive.org](http://www.lightlive.org) and enter this session's Bible reference to find:

- 'Audio Bible story': a regular mp3 download for 3–7s
- 'Learn and remember': a PowerPoint of a Bible verse to learn, for 5–11s (see also page 37)
- 'Presentation': an activity with animation for 11–14s
- Search for 'The Joseph story' for an animated version of the *Joseph* board book



## SERIES 1 GOD'S PLAN FOR JOSEPH

# SESSION 1

# Joseph dreams



### Bible:

Genesis 37

**Aim:** To realise that even when things are bad, God has a plan

## CORE PROGRAMME

For 3-14s

### Family fortunes

10 - 20 minutes

**Why:** to realise that even when things are bad, God has a plan

**With:** pictures of Joseph and his family from page 10, *SU Bible Timeline* or *The Big Bible Storybook Timeline* (all optional), sticky notes

#### 1 Prepare

Before the session, prepare enough copies of pictures of Joseph and his family (at least three characters labelled 'Jacob', 'Joseph' and 'Brothers') for one per pair of children or make copies of the pictures on page 10. (Alternatively, prepare labels saying 'Jacob', 'Joseph' and 'Brothers' for the children to wear.)

#### 2 Bible Timeline

Invite the children to find where Joseph fits in on the *Bible Timeline*. Who was his father? Who else was in his family? Explain that he had 11 brothers and a sister.

#### 3 Feelings

Encourage the children to get into pairs; give each pair a copy of the family picture and the sticky notes. (Alternatively, select three children to be Joseph, Jacob and Brothers, and give them their labels to wear. Explain that they don't have to do or say anything, just be prepared to have extra labels stuck on them!) Invite each child to write the following words, one on each sticky note: foolishness, jealousy, favouritism, hate, anger, boasting, guilty. Check that the children know the meaning of each word. Invite them to write 'God' on one further sticky note.

#### 4 Story

Explain to the children that you are going to read the first part of Joseph's story from Genesis. Invite them to work together and place a sticky note on a character whenever they think that character expresses that particular emotion. (If you are doing the alternative version a sticky note should be placed on the real person.) Read Genesis 37 slowly from a child-friendly version, pausing to allow the children to identify and discuss an emotion. At the end, look at their pictures (or the live characters) and see which of the emotions were expressed (some may be more than once). Ask: 'Is it quite like a normal family?' Find out why or why not.

#### 5 Think

Ask the children if there are any sticky notes they haven't used. (They probably won't have used the 'God' label.) Ask them why they haven't used the 'God' label. (God wasn't mentioned in the story.) If a group has used it, it could provide interesting discussion. Challenge them to think about whether God was present in the story, even if he wasn't mentioned. Explain that even though some pretty horrible things happened to Joseph, God still had a plan for his life. Challenge the children to find out what Joseph himself said in Genesis 50:20.

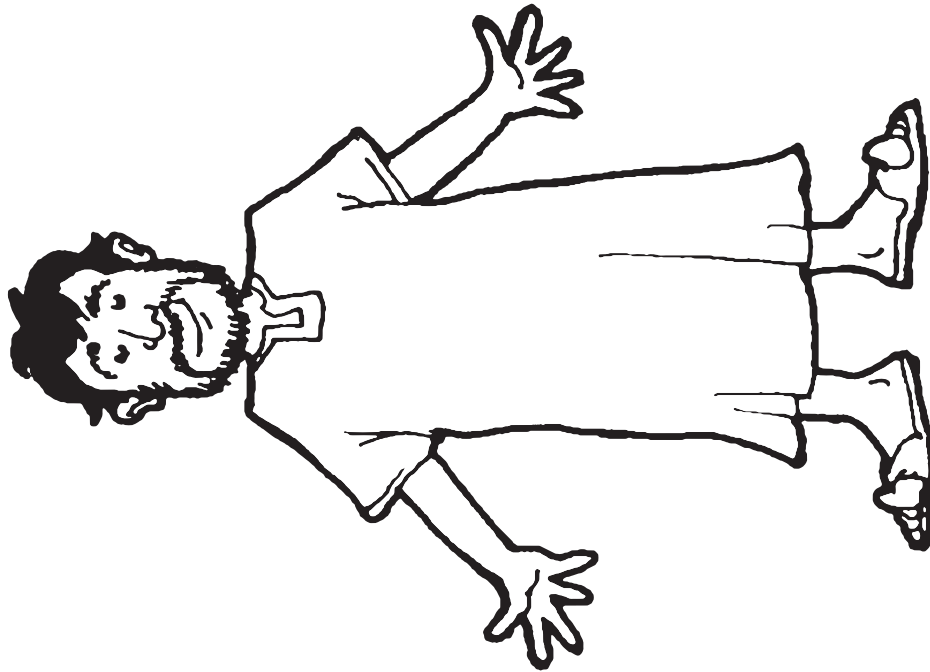
#### 6 Respond

Give the children a moment to think quietly about their own families and lives. (Be sensitive to any children who may be in the middle of difficult situations and who may express their feelings.) Use the following prayer:

**'Father God, thank you for bringing us here today. Thank you that you are always with us. We may not always be able to see what you are doing in our lives, but thank you that you have a plan. Amen.'**

Figures for use with **Family fortunes**

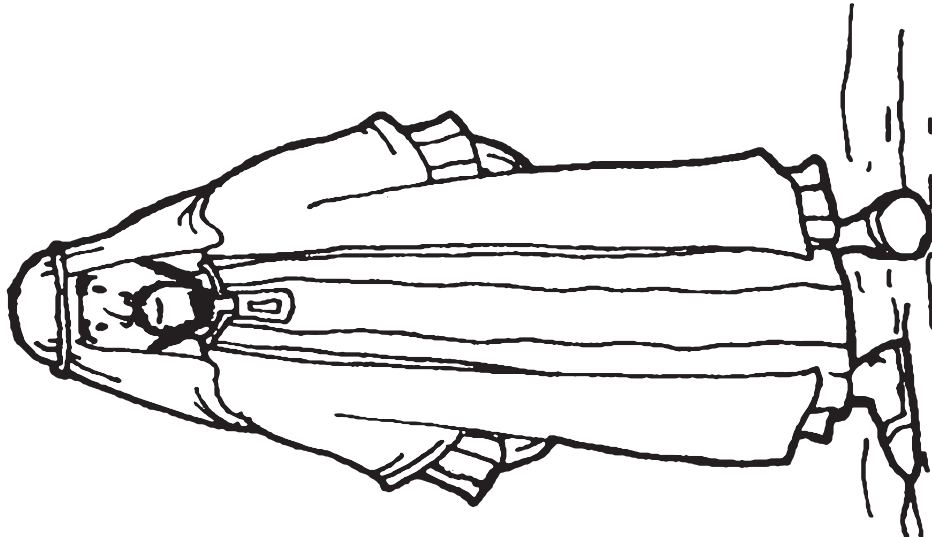
Brothers



Joseph



Jacob



SAMPLE

## CORE PROGRAMME CONTINUED

**Cheerleading praise****10 minutes****Why:** to thank God for his plans**With:** *SU Bible Timeline* or *The Big Bible Storybook Timeline* (optional)

- 1 Think together of the plans God had for different people in the Bible. If you have one, use the *Bible Timeline* to help.
- 2 Encourage the children to invent a praise or cheerleading shout with movement, such as: 'P-L-A-N, God had a plan!' to use as a refrain. (Tip: Use the sounds rather than names of the letters.)
- 3 Ask the children to shout out, one at a time, a person from the Bible and what God's plan for that person was (for example, God had a plan for Mary when...), with everyone joining in all together with the refrain.
- 4 Finish with: 'God has a plan for me. Hurray!'

**Craft prayers****5 - 10 minutes****Why:** to pray for our families**With:** template from page 13 (optional)

- 1 Before the session, cut several sheets of A4 paper in half lengthwise – enough to have one long strip for each child.
- 2 Give out the strips of paper and show the children how to make concertina folds and draw a person shape that touches the folds (they could use the template, if they wish).
- 3 Invite the children to draw and cut out their own person to make a chain of people. Encourage them to decorate these people to represent the people in their family. These could include grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, if they have spare people!
- 4 Invite them to write 'Thank you, God, that you have a plan for my family' on the back and to use it each day to pray for their family.

**God backdrop****10 - 15 minutes****Why:** to remember that God is always there, even in hard times**With:** large sheets of paper or canvas, paintbrushes or paint rollers, cover-up and clean-up gear, paints, masking tape

- 1 Lay out the large sheet(s) on the floor in the centre of your meeting space. Explain to the group that you are going to paint a backdrop for your meeting area that will be displayed over the next three sessions to remind everyone that God is always with us whatever happens and his plan cannot be thwarted. Tell them they can work individually or in pairs.
- 2 Challenge everyone to think of some tough situations people might be in, and to work out what colours, textures and shapes might best express the actions and emotions involved in these situations.
- 3 Before they start, outline the word 'God' in the centre of the sheet with masking tape, and ask everyone to avoid painting in this area. Then, allocate an area of the backdrop for each individual or pair to work on, but make sure everyone is contributing to an overall design.
- 4 When it's dry, remove the masking tape and paint the word 'God' in a vibrant colour. Say that God is always there, whatever is going on, and that nothing can thwart his plan.
- 5 Display the backdrop for the next three sessions, to reinforce the message of Joseph's story.

SAMPLE



## EXTENSION IDEAS

### Activities for younger children

#### Making Joseph

10 minutes

**Why:** to introduce the story of Joseph

**With:** the template of Joseph and his coat from page 14 copied or mounted on card, art materials, sticky tape, scissors

- 1 Give each child a copy of page 14. Explain that the figure is a man called Joseph. You are going to be hearing about him the next few times you meet. When the story starts he is a young man and his father gives him something new to wear.
- 2 Point to the coat. It is long and has long sleeves: it was given to Joseph because his father loved him very much. This one looks plain and dull though: can the children make the coat bright and colourful?
- 3 Help the children to cut out the figure of Joseph and his coat. (Write the child's name on the back of each and have sticky tape ready for emergency repairs!) Show them how to fold over the shoulder tabs and dress 'Joseph'.
- 4 You could use the Joseph figures during Bible time and let the children play with them afterwards. You will also be able to use them in Sessions 2-4, with more clothes available on page 28.

#### Bible story picture

5 - 10 minutes

**Why:** to feel sure that God knows about us

**With:** a copy of the picture from page 15 (printed on A4 paper) for each child, pens or crayons, coloured stickers

- 1 Use this activity before telling the Bible story to introduce Joseph and his family. Look together at one copy of the picture. Ask the children which one of the characters is different from all the others. Help them to see that Joseph is the only one smiling and he has a special coat to wear.
- 2 Invite the children to make the coat look even more special by making it colourful or adding stickers to it. The others can have plainer clothes.
- 3 Look at the other characters. They are some of Joseph's brothers. Talk to the children about their families. Is their family big like Joseph's or small? What do they like doing together? (Your interest in what matters to the children is very important in conveying God's interest.)
- 4 Say that God knew about Joseph and his family – and he knows about each one of us too.

#### For older children

#### Making plans

5 - 10 minutes

**Why:** to think all about making plans

- 1 Ask the children for any examples of when they last made plans to do something or go somewhere. Did the plans work out?
- 2 Choose a scenario (such as going on holiday abroad; preparing a party) and think together of all the things that might be needed for that situation.
- 3 Explain that we usually make plans for things in the near future, but God sees further ahead – a much bigger picture – as they will see over the next few sessions.

SAMPLE

## THE LEARN AND REMEMBER VERSE

**'All things are done according to God's plan and decision; and God chose us to be his own people.'**

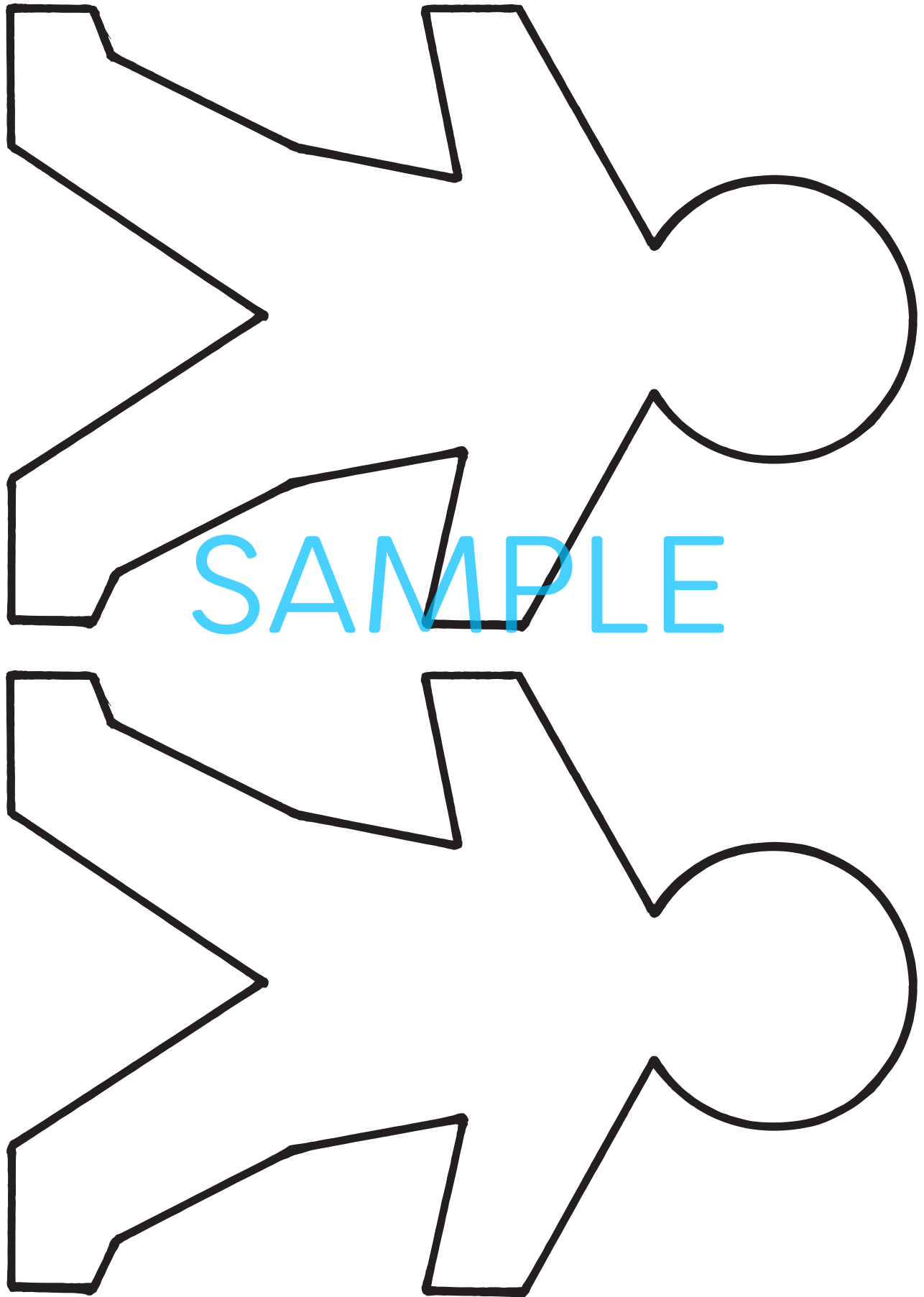
*Ephesians 1:11*

Write the words out separately onto cards – one set per pair of children. Shuffle each set and challenge the pairs to put the verse in order in the shortest possible time. Have another round, challenging them to do it more quickly.

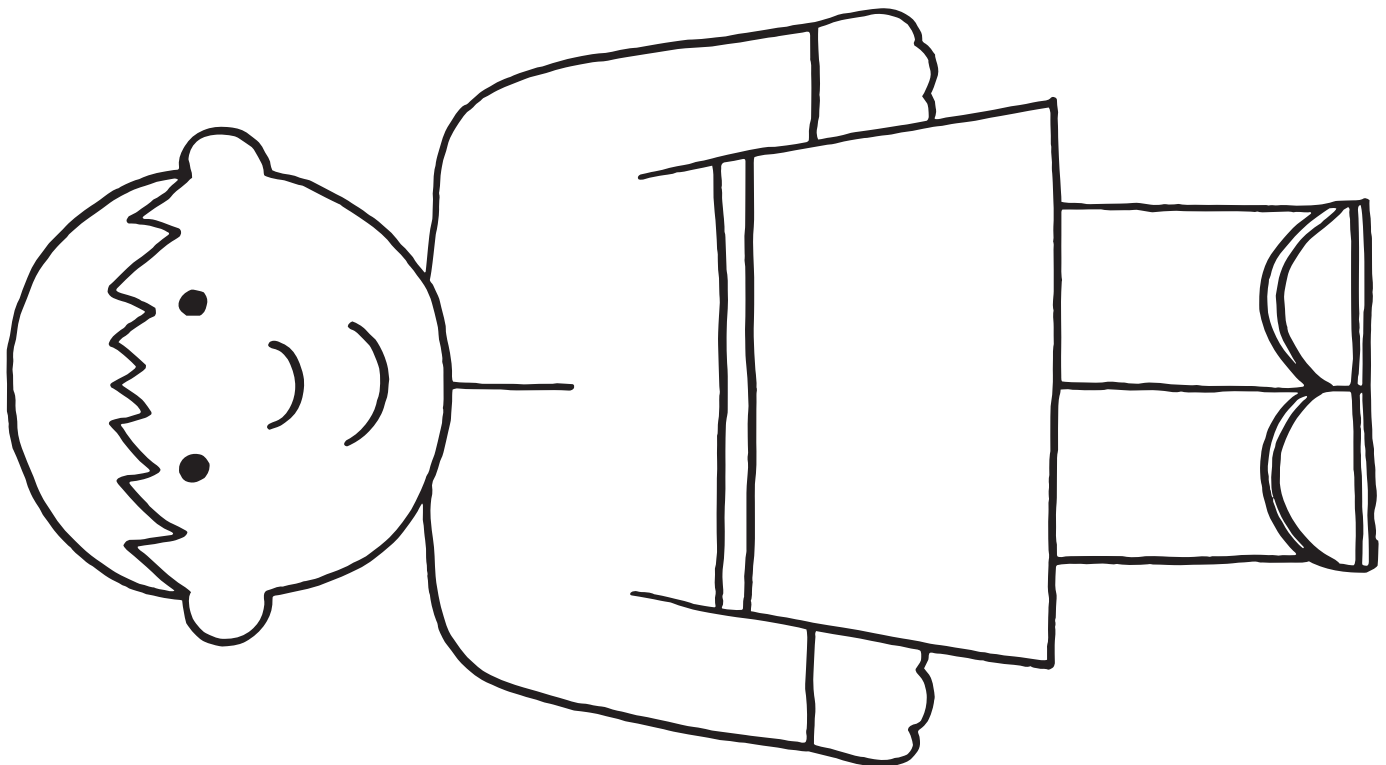
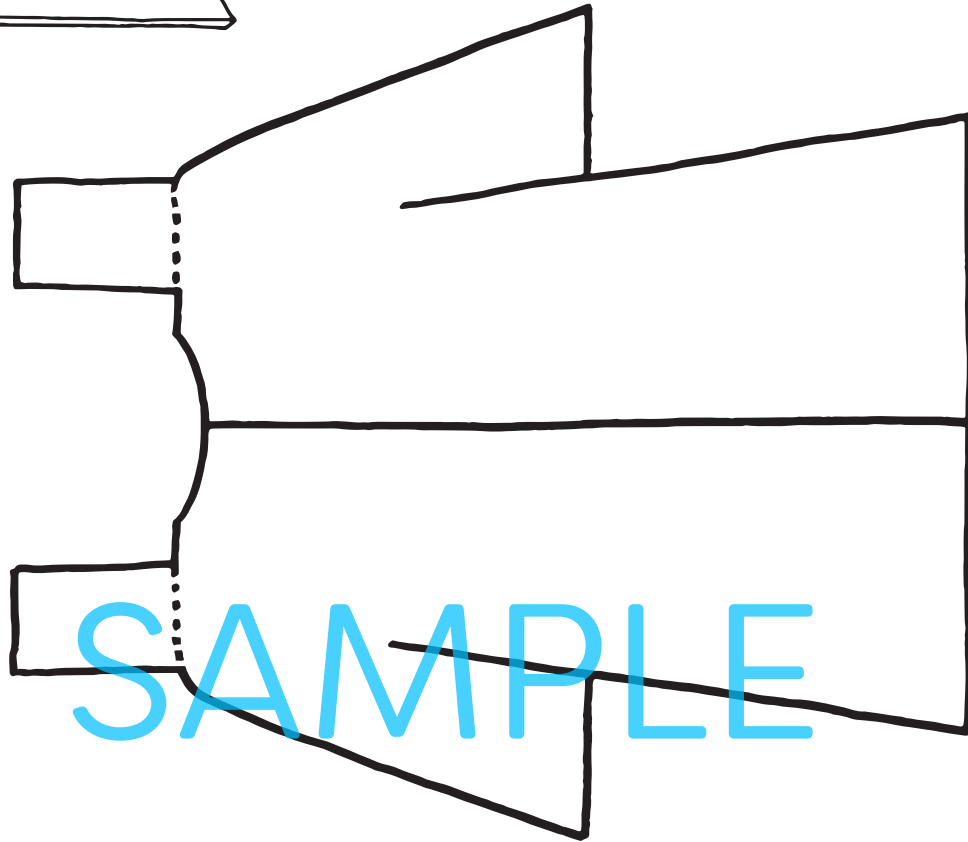
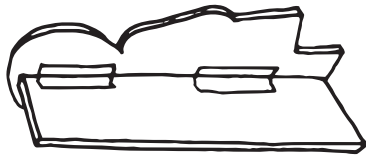
Find a poster for this Learn and remember verse on page 37.

You could also use the song 'All things', on the *Bitesize Bible Songs 2* CD, available from Scripture Union.

Figure templates for use with **Craft prayers**



Templates for use with **Making Joseph**







Use with **Bible story picture**  
**Joseph and his brothers** Genesis 37