

# Joseph's journey

Leader Manual

Groups  
**EGYPT**  
Joseph's Journey  
from prison to palace





# JOSEPH'S JOURNEY

Leader Manual



Loveland, Colorado  
[group.com/vbs](http://group.com/vbs)



## Group resources really work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's:



### Relational

Person-to-person interaction enhances spiritual growth and builds Christian friendships.

### Experiential

What we experience through action and discussion sticks with us up to 9 times longer than what we simply hear or read.

### Applicable

The aim of ministry is to equip people to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

### Lifelong

Experiences transform the heart, moving faith beyond the walls of church and into everyday life for years to come.



### Group's Holy Land Adventure®

#### Egypt: Joseph's Journey From Prison to Palace

#### Joseph's Journey Leader Manual

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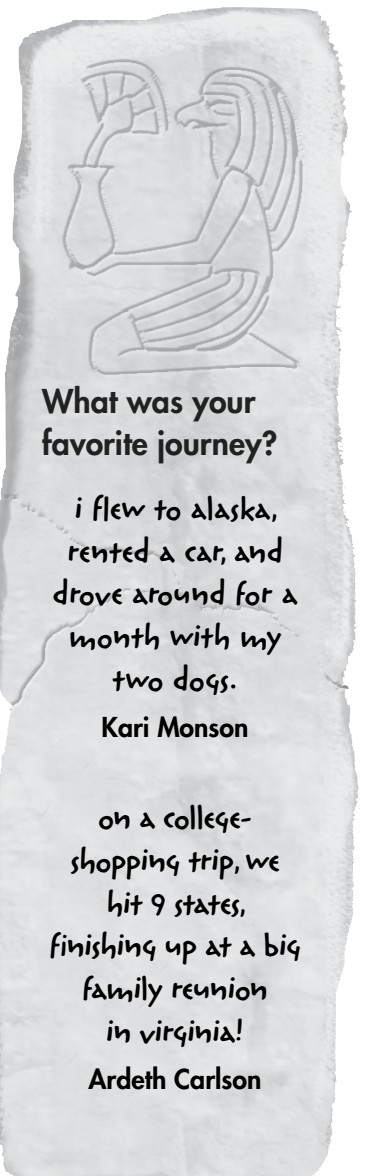
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27 26 25



### What was your favorite journey?

i flew to alaska,  
rented a car, and  
drove around for a  
month with my  
two dogs.

Kari Monson

on a college-  
shopping trip, we  
hit 9 states,  
finishing up at a big  
family reunion  
in virginia!

Ardeth Carlson

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# Groups EGYPT™

You'll reinforce Bible learning in a big way because the daily Bible Point is carefully integrated into each activity. That's why each center is so important to the overall learning experience.

## Bible Point, Story & Verse

## Family Time (small group time)



### Day 1

**Bible point:** God gives us hope.

**Bible story:** Joseph interprets dreams in prison.  
(Genesis 40:1-23)

**Bible verse:** " 'For I know the plans I have for you,' says the Lord. 'They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.' " (Jeremiah 29:11)



Inflate a ball to explore how hope fills their hearts.



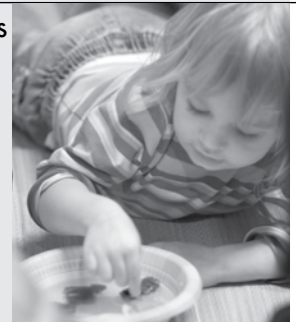
### Day 2

**Bible point:** God gives us special abilities.

**Bible story:** Pharaoh puts Joseph in charge.  
(Genesis 41:1-40)

**Bible verse:** "In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well."  
(Romans 12:6)

Watch colorful capsules transform into cute critters...just like their special gifts "bloom"!



### Day 3

**Bible point:** God gives us wisdom.

**Bible story:** Joseph leads Egypt through famine.  
(Genesis 41:41-42:5)

**Bible verse:** "If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you."  
(James 1:5)



Rely on a friend's wisdom to guide them through a maze.



### Day 4

**Bible point:** God gives us forgiveness.

**Bible story:** Joseph forgives his brothers.  
(Genesis 42:6-45:15)

**Bible verse:** "But you are a God of forgiveness, gracious and merciful, slow to become angry, and rich in unfailing love."  
(Nehemiah 9:17)

Compare God's forgiveness to an ink stain that vanishes!



### Day 5

**Bible point:** God gives us a family.

**Bible story:** Joseph settles his family in Egypt.  
(Genesis 45:16-47:27)

**Bible verse:** "For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus."  
(Galatians 3:26)



Connect paper people to explore how they're part of God's family.



Explore the entire program at a glance. Refer to the chart to see how each center's activities supplement other activities to make the story of Joseph come to life at your church!

## Joseph's Journey

## Pyramid Playground

## Marketplace Shops



Meet Joseph in prison, and use a flickery light to explore how God gave Joseph hope.



Wrap up a few crazy mummy games.



Visit a variety of shops every day:

Barbershop & Salon

Get a surprise as they find Joseph living in the palace.



"Hunt" with lassos and hula hoops, and catch a few watermelon "fish."



Toy Shop

Brickmaking



Learn about Joseph's important job, and see how God has given him wisdom.



Relay a wet sponge, untangle a web of arms, and follow the Pharaoh.



Embalmer's Workshop

Jewelry Shop

Meet with an upset Joseph, and explore what anger and forgiveness feel like.



Tag a toe and tug of war...goofy, giggly, low-tech games!



Operation Kid-to-Kid™ Tent



Hieroglyphic Artist's Shop

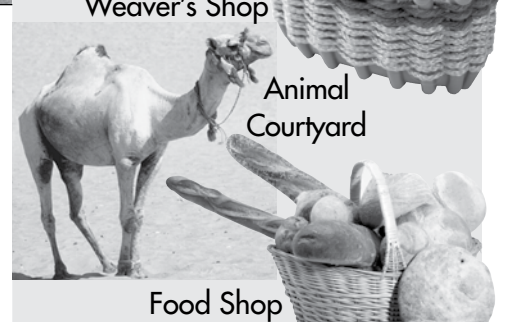
Basket Weaver's Shop



Celebrate with Joseph as he anticipates his family's journey to Egypt.



Travel like ancient Egyptians on foot, on water, and in carts.



Animal Courtyard

Food Shop

# SAMPLE

## Daily Schedule and Announcements

# day 1

Bible Point: God gives us hope.

Time	Group A Families:	Group B Families:	Group C Families:	Group D Families:
	AMARNA	per-bastet	GIZA	Sais
	ZOAN	medinet el-fayum	asyut	pithom
<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.</i>				
9:00-9:15	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration
<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.</i>				
9:20-9:35	Family Time	Family Time	Family Time	Family Time
<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.</i>				
9:40-9:55	Joseph	Pyramid Playground	Visit Marketplace	
<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.</i>				
10:00-10:15	Pyramid Playground	Joseph		
<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.</i>				
10:20-10:35	Visit Marketplace		Joseph	Pyramid Playground
			<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.</i>	
10:40-10:55			Pyramid Playground	Joseph
<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.</i>				
11:00-11:15	Family Time	Family Time	Family Time	Family Time
<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to the next station.</i>				
11:20-11:35	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration

today's announcements:



# Joseph's Journey

We're glad you've joined the staff of this exciting Holy Land Adventure! During this event, families explore the culture of ancient Egypt before the Israelites even became a nation. You'll help children and adults understand that God is with us through good *and* bad times as they explore the extraordinary way God used Joseph to save a nation and reunite a family.

Families spend 15 minutes visiting with Joseph (that's you), who's first Pharaoh's prisoner...and later Pharaoh's right-hand man!

## Make Each Visit Count

**Smile!** Joseph should make families feel welcomed and safe...even in the presence of a gruff and grumpy guard. Engage families in conversation, as if they're truly your guests.

**Dig into your role.** In Egypt, Joseph was likely one of the only followers of God. Yet he maintained his faith and continually credited God with his success. Through Joseph's trials and challenges, he knew that God was in control. In fact, Joseph told his brothers, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people" (Genesis 50:20).

**Be prepared.** It's important for you to know and understand what you'll cover, since it connects to what is said and done in other areas of the program. Practice your script with the guard several times so you feel comfortable with your lines.

**Be consistent.** Since you represent Joseph, it's pretty important that you're there for every day of your Egypt VBS!



From prison...



...to palace!



## Mummy Musings

One-quarter of the Egyptian Families (groups of about 10 people) will visit with you at a time. For example, if you have 120 people at your Egypt event, 30 of them will come to visit at one time. Check with your Director to see how many people you should prepare for.







# Creating the Environment

## Costumes

When participants meet Joseph for the first time, he's in Pharaoh's prison. Scripture tells us that Joseph had found favor with the prison warden and was in charge of the other prisoners. So you don't need to be in chains but should definitely be wearing a tattered or simple Bible-times robe.

Starting on Day 2, Joseph has become a high-ranking official—second *only* to Pharaoh! Scripture tells us that Joseph was shaved before he met with Pharaoh, so (if you're brave) a haircut or shave will make a *big* impression! (In ancient Egypt, most people—even women—shaved their heads.) Put on a white robe and plenty of gold "bling" and you'll look like you're a member of Pharaoh's court. You may want to call local churches and see about borrowing several good-quality Bible-times or Egyptian costumes.

The guard, Rameses, can wear a standard Egyptian costume—white tunic with golden collar—and a simple leather-looking breastplate. Give your guard a toy shield and spear, and kids will get the idea that he means business!



Your guard, Rameses



## From Prison...

Find a smaller room that will accommodate one-quarter of the total Egyptian Families. The easiest way to decorate is to hang black cloth or plastic tarps from the ceiling to create plain black walls. If at all possible, keep the overhead lights off. The shadows in the room add atmosphere, and if the only light source is next to Joseph, it draws attention to him. You may want to use battery-powered flicker lights\* or hide smaller spotlights behind a large pot or baskets to give less-direct lighting. If possible, find a place that's quiet and removed from the bustle and noise of the Marketplace and Pyramid Playground areas.

### mummy musings

Be sure the prison room isn't too dark. While shadows and dim lighting add a great amount of suspense and intrigue, be sure to provide enough light so younger kids feel safe.



## ...to the Palace!

Beginning on Day 2, Joseph lives in “the palace” (or someplace nearby). While we don’t know that Joseph actually lived *in* the palace, this setting conveys the idea that Joseph now has a life of wealth and responsibility. You don’t need a huge room—just large enough to comfortably accommodate one-quarter of the Egyptian Families at one time.

Cover furniture with rich-colored sheets or even gold sheets of Mylar. Stack pillows around the room, drape colorful sashes on the walls, and place large palm leaves or feather fans in tall baskets. Bring in a comfy chair and cover it with gold fabric. You may want to ask around for a large area rug to make the floor feel special and “royal.” Have fun making Joseph’s new digs dazzling!



### field test findings

At our field test, we used a portion of an upstairs Sunday school classroom for the prison. Although we opened the windows ahead of time, it was ridiculously hot and stuffy. But adults thought we’d done it on purpose, showing how hot Egypt was and how uncomfortable Joseph was in prison! You’ve got to love the kind of mistakes that make the experience better.



### field test findings

Although you *can* simply transform the prison room into the palace area, we found that it really added a sense of story and adventure to have a new room to visit. Kids went to the prison expecting to meet Joseph again, only to be turned away by a different guard and sent to find Joseph in the palace. Kids (and adults) loved the surprise!







## Supplies

### Costumes

- tattered or simple Bible-times robe for Joseph for Day 1
- 2 Egyptian guard costumes (such as a white tunic, toy spear, and shield)
- regal Egyptian costume for Joseph for Days 2-5
- gold chain, fancy ring (like a class ring), other jewelry for Joseph for Days 3-5

### Decorating

- black plastic (to cover the walls in the prison)
- a few spotlights, lamps, or other light source
- simple wooden chair
- photocopy of "Palace" sign (found on p. 23 and on the *Egypt Clip Art & Resources* CD in Starter Kit)
- comfy chair
- a variety of accessories to dress up the palace (ferns and greenery, rich-colored cloth, gold plates and cups)
- gold fabric covering for Joseph's chair (optional) for Days 3-5
- handful of wheat or corn kernels to sprinkle on the floor (optional) for Day 3

### Activity Supplies

- battery-powered flicker lights\* (1 per Egyptian Family per rotation) for Day 1
- small baskets, such as a bread basket (1 per Egyptian Family per rotation) for Day 1
- 5 burlap sacks stuffed with pillows or fabric (to look like they're full of grain) for Days 3-5
- container of dark-colored mud for Day 3
- photocopy of "Joseph's Family" (found on p. 29 and on the *Egypt Clip Art & Resources* CD in Starter Kit) for Day 3
- 8" x 10" piece of cardboard to mount the "family photo"
- small bowls of raisins (1 per Egyptian Family per rotation) for Day 4
- CD or media player for Day 5
- *Celebration Music* CD or music download\* for Day 5



\*available from Group or your Group VBS supplier



# DAY 1

Bible Point:

 **God gives us hope.**

Bible Story:

**Joseph interprets dreams in prison.** (Genesis 40:1-23)

Bible Verse:

**“For I know the plans I have for you,’ says the Lord.  
‘They are plans for good and not for disaster,  
to give you a future and a hope.’”** (Jeremiah 29:11)

Joseph lived a life filled with dramatic highs and disheartening lows. The favored son of Jacob, Joseph sported an elaborate robe and had prophetic dreams. These dreams, however, made him hugely unpopular with his already-jealous brothers. Filled with hatred, Joseph’s brothers threw him in a well, then sold him to a caravan of Ishmaelite traders who were headed to Egypt.

As a slave in Egypt, Joseph gained favor and prosperity with his master... for a while. Then he was wrongly accused and shipped off to Pharaoh’s prison. Even in the hopeless depths of an Egyptian prison, things started looking up for Joseph. The warden put Joseph in charge, and “the Lord was with him and caused everything he did to succeed” (Genesis 39:23). When two prisoners had strange dreams, Joseph offered to tell them what the dreams meant. All he asked was this: “Please remember me and do me a favor when things go well for you. Mention me to Pharaoh, so he might let me out of this place.” The man whose dream foretold great success *did* get out of prison and gain favor with Pharaoh. But he promptly forgot about Joseph. For two long years, Joseph sat in the same prison cell, forgotten.

Has it ever felt like you’re always facing a new disappointment, setback, or failure? Others get ahead, and you’re still sitting in the Egyptian prison. There’s hope, my friend! God is pouring out blessings daily. He’s *promised* us “a future and a hope.” And while you may not succeed in all you do, you can rely on a faithful God who loves you more than you can imagine. Today, help the kids and adults at your VBS realize that no matter how despairing life seems, we have the promise of hope from our Heavenly Father.

## Did You Know...

Joseph is the first prisoner mentioned in the Bible.



# JOSEPH IN JAIL

## Getting Ready

Choose a room to be the Egyptian prison. (This can be the same room that will be the palace on Day 2, although it *does* add fun to have a new room on the second day.) Drape black plastic from the ceiling to the floor to create a dark setting. You may want to set a simple wooden chair against one wall for Joseph. Place the baskets and battery-powered flicker lights (turned on) near Joseph's chair.

Station the guard, Rameses, outside the closed door.

## Getting Past the Guard

*(Children and adults will approach the doorway to the prison. Rameses, the guard, should wait until all Egyptian Families have arrived before he begins.)*

**Rameses:** *(Gruffly)* Halt in the name of Pharaoh! *(Looks closely at participants.)* You certainly *look* a lot cleaner than the average prisoner. *(Sniffs at a child or two.)* You *smell* a lot better, too! You must be visiting one of Pharaoh's prisoners. Who are you here to see?

*(Children and adults will explain that they've come to see Joseph.)*

**Rameses:** Joseph, huh? *(Nodding thoughtfully)* I've heard of him. Actually, the warden thinks pretty highly of Joseph—even put him in charge of the other prisoners. Why would you put a prisoner in charge of other prisoners?

Well, I guess he can have a few visitors...for a little while. *(Points to a child.)* You're not bringing him any weapons, are you? *(Points to another child or an adult.)* How about you? Nothing up your sleeves? I'd *like* to trust you, but it's *my* neck on the line if any of these prisoners escape. *(Scratching chin thoughtfully)* But there are an awful lot of you. Here's what I'll do.

*(Rameses directs kids and adults to hold their arms out in front of them. He "deputizes" a few kids to pat people's arms to be sure they're not carrying any weapons.)*

**Rameses:** *(Suspiciously)* Well, I guess it's OK.

*(Opens the door and calls inside)* Joseph! You've got some...*(grins)* guests.

*(Rameses motions everyone into the room, then shuts the door loudly.)*



## supplies for today

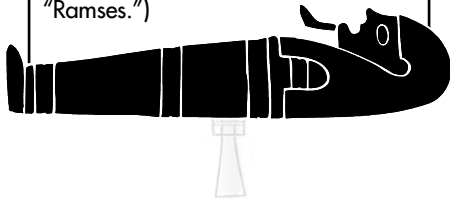
- battery-powered flicker lights\* (1 per Egyptian Family per rotation)
- small baskets, such as a bread basket (1 per Egyptian Family per rotation)
- a few spotlights, lamps, or other light source
- simple wooden chair

\*available from Group or your Group VBS supplier



## mummy musings

Rameses is pronounced "RAM-seez." (This name can be spelled in various ways, including "Ramesses" and "Ramses.")



## field test findings

Our Egyptian guard shut the door *really* loudly each time, making kids jump in surprise. It was an easy way to feel "locked in" without locking the door.




# God-Followers

**Joseph:** Come in, come in! I don't get many visitors...well, at least visitors who aren't other prisoners. And I've *never* had this many at once! (*Looks closely at kids and adults.*) All my family is back in Canaan, so *no one* ever comes to see me.

Hmmm, there's something different about you all. You *kind of* look like Egyptians...but they've all got shaved heads—even the women! (*Pointing to his hair*) Most of you have hair. There's just something "non-Egyptian" about you.

(*Lowers voice a little.*) Do you worship the one true God like I do? (*Reacts to answers, which will most likely be "yes."*) Do you? That's pretty rare here! In case you haven't noticed, Egyptians worship *many* gods. And they're all just fake statues! Why do you think they do that?

(*Families might call out various answers.*)

**Joseph:** (*Shaking head*) Egypt can be a strange place. But I know that God is with me and that  **God gives us hope.** God has always given me hope—even through some really crummy times. I'll show you what I mean.

(*Joseph directs the Egyptian Families to each gather together in a circle and gives each Family a light and a small basket; participants should put these items in the center of their circle.*)





# Sold Into Slavery

## Mummy Musings

You may not need to guide or direct Families to interact with the light and basket. But since every group is different, we've given you some prompts in case participants need a little "nudge" or reminder. Even a slight pause (or using a basket and light yourself) can help keep everyone on track.



**Joseph:** As I tell you about my life, if you think it was a good thing—something good happening—let your light shine. *(Holds up a flicker light.)* If it was a hard time, cover the light—like this.

*(Joseph demonstrates how to place the overturned basket over the light, then takes the basket off to begin the story.)*



**Joseph:** Back in Canaan—that's where I *used* to live—I had 11 brothers. *(Placing a hand on chest, proudly)* But I was Dad's favorite. He gave me a special coat and let everyone know he loved me most. That made my brothers pretty mad.


*(Turning to Families)*

- **Do you have brothers or sisters?**
- **Think of something you did that made someone in your family really mad. Find a couple of friends sitting nearby, and tell them about it.**

*(Joseph pauses while participants talk. He might walk around and listen to some groups. After a minute, he draws attention back to himself.)*

**Joseph:** Well, my brothers hated me. I had weird dreams where my brothers and I were tying up wheat and my bundle of wheat stood up and their bundles of wheat bowed down to mine. Another time I dreamed the sun, moon, and 11 stars bowed down to me. My brothers were *really* mad! So mad that they threw me in a deep, dark well and then sold me to be someone's slave! That was a terrible, terrible time.

*(If necessary, Joseph can guide Families to put the basket over the light.)*

**Joseph:** *(Continuing)* Curl up in a ball, tuck your head down, and close your eyes. *(Pauses.)* I was so alone. I mean, my brothers hadn't been nice to me, but they were still my brothers. *(Pauses.)* Now I had no one. *(Pauses.)* But God was still with me...and  **God gives us hope.**

Go ahead and open your eyes.

## Life in Potiphar's House

**Joseph:** I ended up here in Egypt, as the slave of a man named Potiphar. He saw that God was with me. *(If necessary, directs Families to take the basket off of their light.)* So even though I was a slave, Potiphar put me in charge of his whole household—and everything he owned. With God's help, I was pretty good at my job!

*(Joseph asks Families to share with each other:)*

- Tell the people in your circle about a time you did a good job. How did it make you feel?

*(Joseph will allow about a minute for kids and adults to share, then draws attention back to himself. He will have a few people tell how they felt when they did a good job.)*

**Joseph:** I felt that way, too. But then, things got bad...really fast. Potiphar's wife wanted me to be her boyfriend. That's not OK. When I said no, she told a lie about me, and they threw me in prison—right here.

*(Joseph guides Families to put the basket over the light.)*

## Life in Prison

**Joseph:** Even in here, God keeps giving me hope. God made me a favorite of the warden. The warden put me in charge of other prisoners. So things have been looking up.

*(Joseph guides Families in removing the basket.)*

**Joseph:** *(Leaning in conspiratorially, as if sharing a secret)* A while ago another prisoner had a weird dream that he didn't understand. With God's help, I told him what his dream meant and what would happen. Then I asked him to remember me when he got out of here and went back to serving Pharaoh. The things I said would happen *did* happen, and the other prisoner *did* get out, and he *is* back to serving Pharaoh. *(Sadly)* But I think he forgot about me.

*(Joseph directs Families to put the basket back over the light.)*

**Joseph:** Think of a sad or scary time in your life—a time you didn't feel very hopeful. *(Pauses.)* Now look at the basket.

*(Joseph asks Families to share with each other:)*

- Describe what you see.
- How does that little bit of light remind you of God?



**ḥḥḥḥ ḥḥḥḥḥḥ**  
Potiphar is pronounced "POT-iff-er."






## field test findings

We found out the hard way that Rameses the guard needs to knock before coming back into the prison at the end of this drama. A few people had settled in near the door and got bumped with the door when he opened it. Ouch!



*(Joseph gives Families a couple of minutes to discuss.)*

**Joseph:** *(Continuing)* I've had hard times—times I didn't know what would happen next. But I do know that no matter what,  **God gives us hope.** Even when things seem sad or scary or hard, he's still with us. *(Thoughtfully)* It's kind of like these lights that shine in the dark. Just like the light, God is always there—in dark or hard times and in good times.

*(Rameses knocks loudly, then bursts in.)*

**Rameses:** Joseph! I'm not sure what you've done now, but they're calling for you in the palace! That means your visitors have to leave...now! Unless you want to stay here *forever!*

**Joseph:** Sorry, friends, can't keep Pharaoh waiting. Come back tomorrow to see if this is a good thing—or a bad one. I just hope Pharaoh's in a good mood.

*(Families exit.)*



# congratulations!

You're about to  
change a child's life.

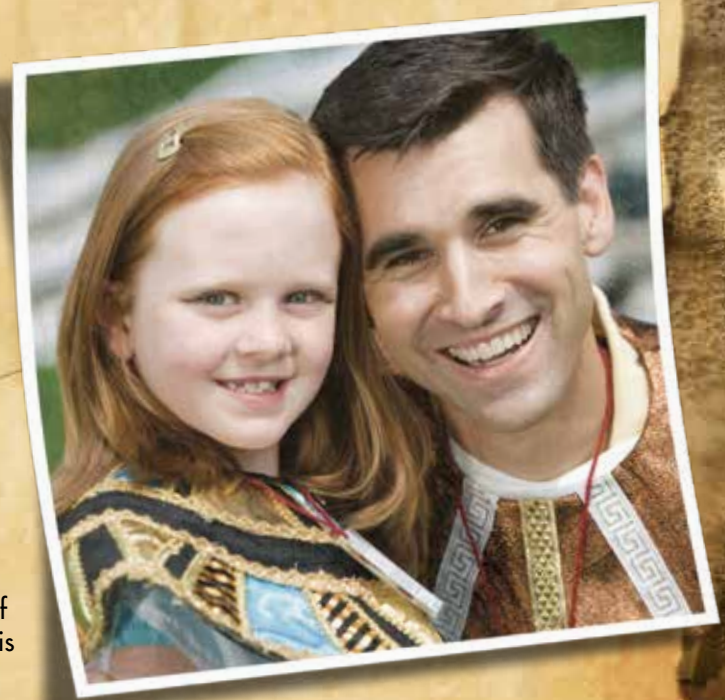


## This leader manual will show you how!

You're Joseph in the Egypt VBS...so what do you do—and how do you do it?

As Joseph, you'll help kids experience firsthand the biblical story of Joseph's life. In the process, you'll also help children understand that *God is with us through good and bad times.*

Everything you need to succeed as Joseph is right in this manual! Full scripts for each day...costuming and staging ideas...practical, field-tested tips...biblical backgrounds...discussion starters...and more!



### Questions? Here's how to get answers:

- ▷ **First, check carefully through this book.** There's a LOT of helpful information tucked into these pages. The answer is probably already in your hands!
- ▷ **Connect with your VBS Director and leadership team.** Remember, you're not alone! You're part of a dynamic ministry team—so don't be afraid to take advantage of the people resources that surround you.
- ▷ **Expand your network with Group's social media platforms.** Connect with other Egypt leaders nationwide. Share ideas, ask questions, brainstorm...the sky's the limit! Just head to [facebook.com/groups/holylandadventure](https://facebook.com/groups/holylandadventure)

**And don't forget to pray! God put you in this VBS leadership role for a reason—and he wants you to succeed.**

Ready to change a kid's life? Open up this Leader Manual and get started!

Group's  
**Holy Land ADVENTURE™**



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know?

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# **THIS IS A SAMPLE**

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