



## Joseph and his Brothers-2

Genesis 45:1-28

Welcome to 'Together Apart', free intergenerational resources to help us be church together while we are apart.

All the sections explore the same Bible passage in a range of creative ways. Choose whichever parts work best for you, and remember that 'All Age' does not mean 'only for the kiddies'!

You can find lots more free resources like this at [www.reflectionary.org](http://www.reflectionary.org)

Here is what you will find in each resource pack:



### A Word in Your Ear

A Bible passage that we can all learn from together, whatever our age.



### Food for Thought

Aimed at adults and teens, some thoughts and questions on the passage. Occasionally there might even be some Greek or Hebrew!



### Inner Space

A blank space for you to record your thoughts, whether that is worries, dreams or a shopping list.



### Looking Closer

A creative and interactive look at the Bible passage. Great for older children and anyone who likes a creative approach.



### I Wonder...

An imaginative style of Bible study, perfect for younger children and those who like to immerse themselves in the Bible world. Based on Lectio Divina and Godly Play wondering.



### Take a Break

A chill-out zone, with meditative colouring for adults and children, and links to audio recordings of the passage so that you can listen while resting your eyes.



### Creation Station

A craft for children (or young-at-heart adults!) to help us think about the passage. Glue sticks at the ready!



### High 5

Some creative prayer ideas for helping us to spend time with God. Five minutes, or as long as you want.



## A Word in Your Ear

Take your time reading this extract from our Bible passage. Ask God to help you hear. You can decorate the space around the words if you like.

### Genesis 45:4-8

"Come closer to me," Joseph said to his brothers.  
They came closer.

"I am Joseph your brother whom you sold into  
Egypt. But don't feel badly, don't blame  
yourselves for selling me. God was behind it.  
God sent me here ahead of you to save lives.

There has been a famine in the land now for two  
years; the famine will continue for five more  
years—neither plowing nor harvesting. God sent  
me on ahead to pave the way and make sure there  
was a remnant in the land, to save your lives in an  
amazing act of deliverance.

So you see, it wasn't you who sent me here but  
God. He set me in place as a father to Pharaoh, put  
me in charge of his personal affairs, and made me  
ruler of all Egypt.

(The Message)



## Food for Thought

Hindsight is a wonderful thing. As are rose-tinted spectacles and a conveniently selective memory.

We all know the story. We've seen the show: rags to riches in a couple of hours. So it's easy to forget that more than twenty years pass between the opening lines and the finale. And most of the time Joseph is a slave. The show may end with an all-singing, all-dancing 'Any Dream Will Do', but the half-time curtains come down on a gloomy figure, alone on stage, singing 'Close Every Door to Me'.

**Q: There are many examples in the Bible of people being in dead-end situations: Moses being a shepherd, Paul in prison, Gideon hiding in the winepress. Which others can you think of, and what happened next? How does that help us to think about our situations?**

Having revealed his identity to his bewildered brothers, Joseph confidently explains that "you sold me ... but God sent me". This is a great example of seeing the bigger picture in the events of one's life, but I don't imagine it looked like that at the time!

I wonder when Joseph worked it out, and how many years he spent chuntering to himself about the unfairness of it all, and how he'd like to see his brothers get their comeuppance. Eventually, perhaps when the raw pain of injustice and resentment had mellowed, Joseph could think through the past with an ear to God's voice, and see things from an additional perspective.

The events that placed him here were still real, and still (humanly speaking) due to the vagaries of the Midianite slave market, the Egyptian judicial system, unusual weather systems and delicate political fortunes. But in God's hands, they gain purpose and meaning, just as the petals of a flower are still (chemically speaking) cellulose and anthocyanins, but in the hands of lover, a red rose gains purpose and meaning.

Although we will not understand everything fully this side of glory (Paul puts as 'seeing in a mirror dimly'), attempting to stand back a little from troubling situations, especially when they threaten to overwhelm, can help us keep a healthy perspective and see beyond the immediate.

**Q: What practical steps could you take to help you 'think through the past with an ear to God's voice'? What looks confusing at the moment, that you would like to gain God's perspective on? When do you think that might happen?**

Joseph put his theology into practice. It's all very well saying I believe something, but if there is no *doing* as a result, it's only lip-service. If Joseph really believed that this was God at work, then he had to forgive his murderous brothers. He had tested them to see if they would as easily sell Benjamin into slavery as they had him, and they passed. Were they truly reformed, or just trying to give a good impression? Joseph didn't enquire. And he never brought it up again (although it weighed on the brother's minds for many years, see ch 50).

**Q: What conscious decisions do you make because you are a Christian? Who might you need to forgive or accept forgiveness from?**



## Inner Space

What's going round your head? Here is a space for you to put your thoughts on paper. You can write, draw ... whatever you like. What will you put here?



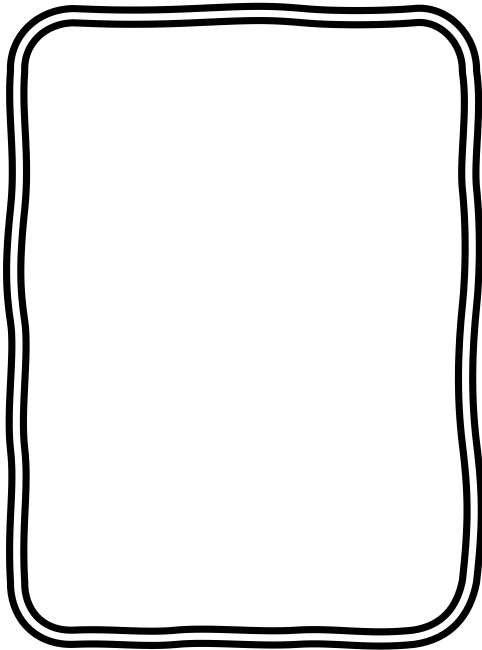
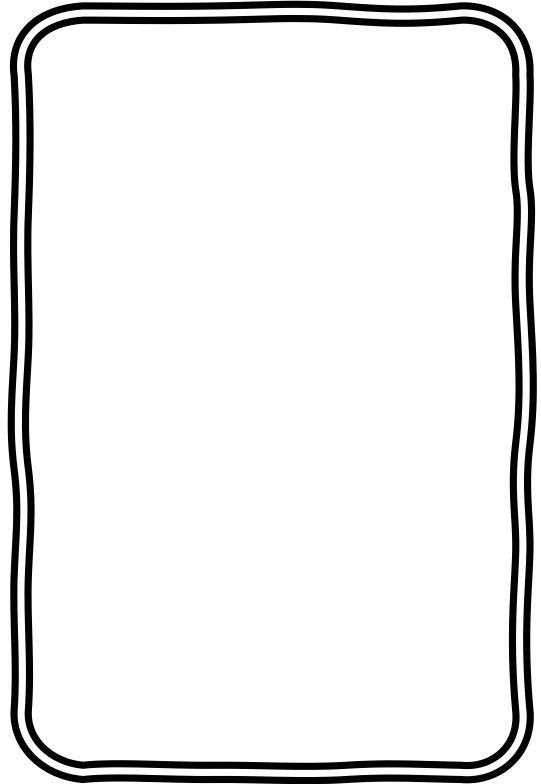
## Looking Closer

In Aladdin, the 'baddie' is the Jafar, Grand Vizier, complete with twirly beard and wise-cracking parrot sidekick. But Grand Vizier was a real job in ancient Egypt, and that's what Joseph was.

The nearest thing today would be prime minister (second to the king or queen) or vice-president, (second to the president).

Egypt was the superpower of the day, so ex-slave Joseph was now a Big Deal. He was headline news wherever he went. He dressed like an Egyptian and spoke their language, so when Jacob's sons came to buy grain, they did not recognise this Egyptian ruler as their kid brother.

**Imagine that you are Joseph. 22 years ago, your brothers sold you as a slave. How do you feel when you see them kneeling on the floor in front of you?**



In fact, Joseph had already met his brothers when they came to Egypt buying grain the first time, back in chapter 42. Joseph didn't tell them who he was, but tested his brothers to see if they could be trusted. He sold them grain and said they must bring Benjamin, Joseph's younger brother, back with them next time.

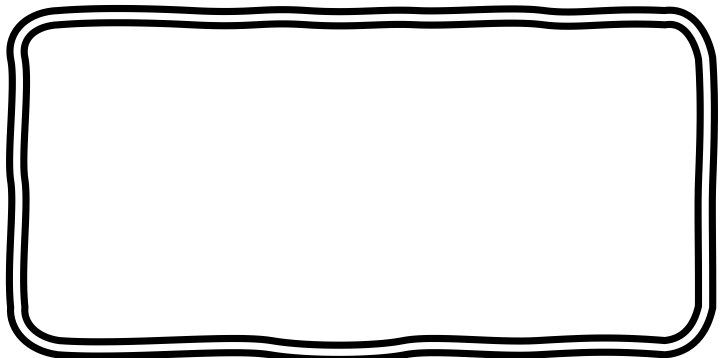
When they came the second time, Joseph tricked them by planting a silver cup in Benjamin's luggage, and then accusing him of stealing. The brother's leapt to Benjamin's defence and even offered to become Joseph's slaves to buy Benjamin's freedom.

What a lot had changed since they sold Joseph into slavery all those years ago!

**What do you think about Joseph's trick? Was it fair to test them like that? What would you have done?**

Joseph then says something very surprising. After finding out that his brothers were sorry for what they did to him, Joseph said "You sold me ... but God sent me." (Look at verses 4 and 5.)

**What do you think Joseph meant by that? How long do you think it took Joseph to work it out?**





## I Wonder...

Read or listen to the passage a few times and let it sit in your mind.

Which words, phrases or ideas do you notice? Does anything stand out for you? Hold that in your heart and listen to what God might be saying.

**I wonder who you think you are like in the story.**

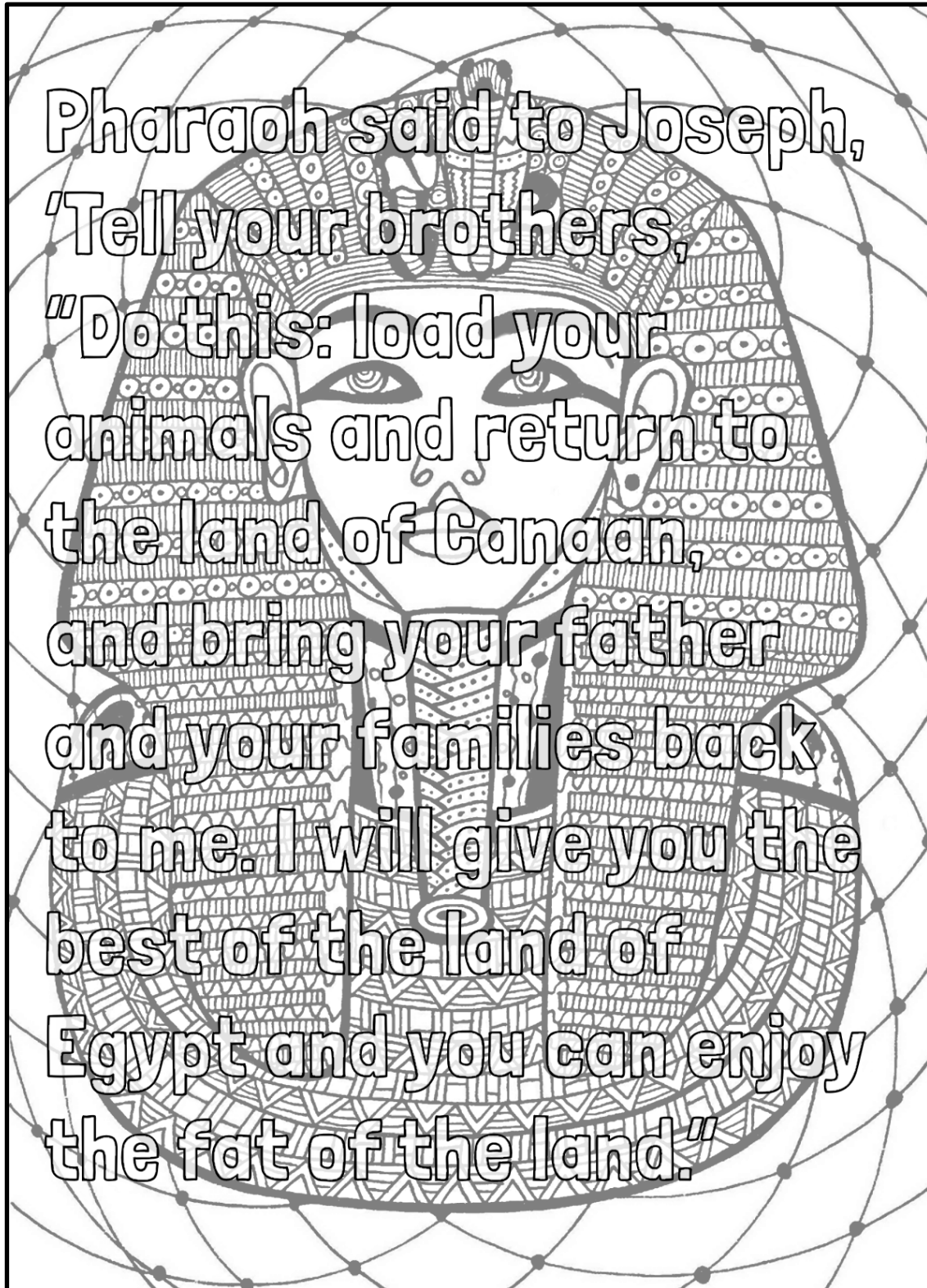
**I wonder what else happened that we don't read about.**



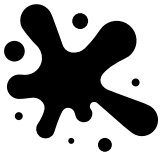
## Take a Break

Put on some music, or listen to the passage being read out while you simply sit and be. You can colour the picture below, or fill it with zentangles, or you can just spend the time breathing.

Genesis 45 on Bible Gateway audio [ESV](#) – [Message](#) – [NIV \(Dramatised\)](#) – [NIV \(Suchet\)](#)







## Creation Station – Mummy!

Joseph lived in Egypt for the rest of his life, and the very last verse of Genesis tells us about what happened next. "So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt." Oh yes! One of the mummies in Egypt is Joseph, so let's make a mummy!

### You will need:

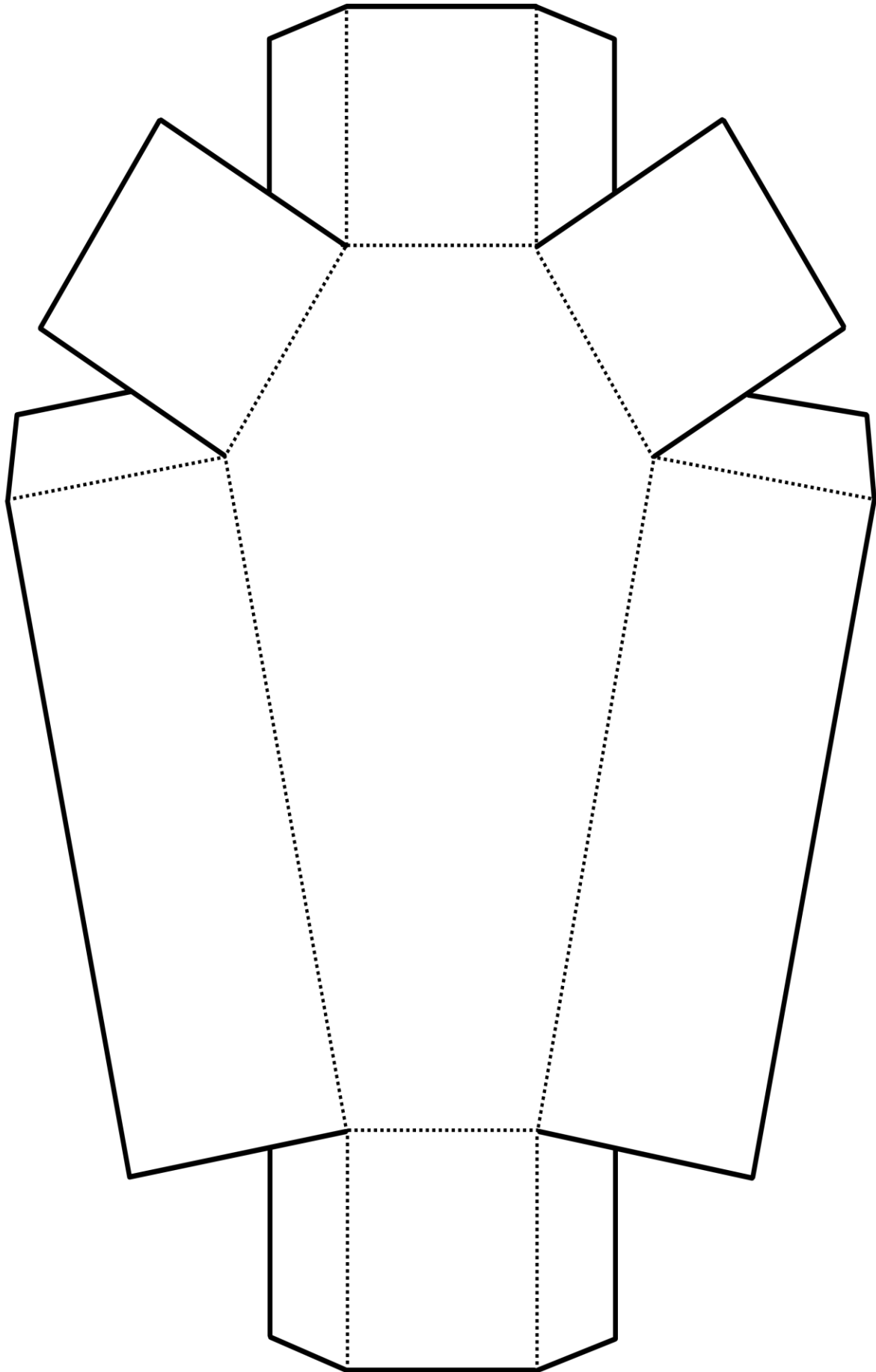
- 'Joseph', an action figure or doll - does not have to be a boy, (could even be a Barbie doll!), it's best to remove the clothes.
- Cling film
- PVA glue mixed with water 50-50
- Kitchen towel
- Dried herbs (these are for the embalming spices and herbs)
- Paint brush
- Small scissors
- Paints and metallic pens
- String



### What to Do

1. Cross the figure's arms across its chest, and place the feet together. Then wrap it tightly in several layers of cling film. Try to keep the shape distinct by pushing the cling film into all the nooks and crannies.
2. Tear the kitchen towel into thin strips and wrap them snugly around the body. Paint the kitchen towel with water/PVA and use the end of the brush to push the paper into all the nooks and crannies.
3. Sprinkle the mummy with some dried herbs and add another layer of paper. Allow this to dry and repeat with more paper until the casing is stiff enough to hold its own shape.
4. If you want, you can make a sarcophagus too (that's another name for person-shaped coffins). Mummies of important people often had several, one inside another. Make sure the underneath shell is thoroughly dry, then wrap it all in cling film and start again.
5. When you have made as many layers as you want, use small scissors to cut through all the layers of paper and cling film. Cut across the feet from side to side, then up the side, across the head and back down to the feet. Separate the front from the back and use the string to tie the halves back together. (Egyptians wrapped up their mummies like parcels!)
6. Decorate your mummy and the sarcophagi with paints and metallic pens. (Outer layers were really fancy.) If you want an outer coffin, enlarge and print the template on the next page twice. Make one big enough for your mummy and one a *smidge* bigger. Fold on the dotted lines and glue the tabs to make a coffin and lid.







## High 5

Spend five minutes talking and listening with God. Here is one way:

### Joseph Prayers

Father God,

Joseph cried when he saw his brothers. Please help us to be brave enough to admit when we are hurting, especially about .....  
..... Amen.

Father God,

Joseph forgave his brothers even though they had been very mean to him. Please help us to forgive other people, and help us to say sorry when we have done wrong, especially about .....  
..... Amen.

Father God,

Joseph saw that what had happen to him was part of your good plan to rescue his family. Please help us to trust you when we cannot see the future, and help us not to worry about things we cannot change, especially about .....  
..... Amen.

Father God,

Joseph provided food and clothes for his family when they needed them. Please help us to be generous in looking after people who need clothes, water, food, shelter or any other good thing that we take for granted, especially for .....  
..... Amen.

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