

Open Bible Stories — God Saves Joseph and His Family

Introduction

Key Idea

The story of God saving Joseph and his family teaches us that God rescued Joseph and his family from death.

Core Belief Verse

"And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him and rescued him out of all his afflictions and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him ruler over Egypt and over all his household." — Acts 7:9-11

God's Big Story

The eternal God created all things in six days.

He made a good and perfect world.

He made humans in his image to fill the earth and rule over creation.

But humans rebelled against God and ruined God's creation.

God set to restore his world through his promise.

God made a covenant with Abraham.

He promised to bless all nations through Abraham.

God kept his promises across the generations.

God provided Abraham with a promised child, Isaac.

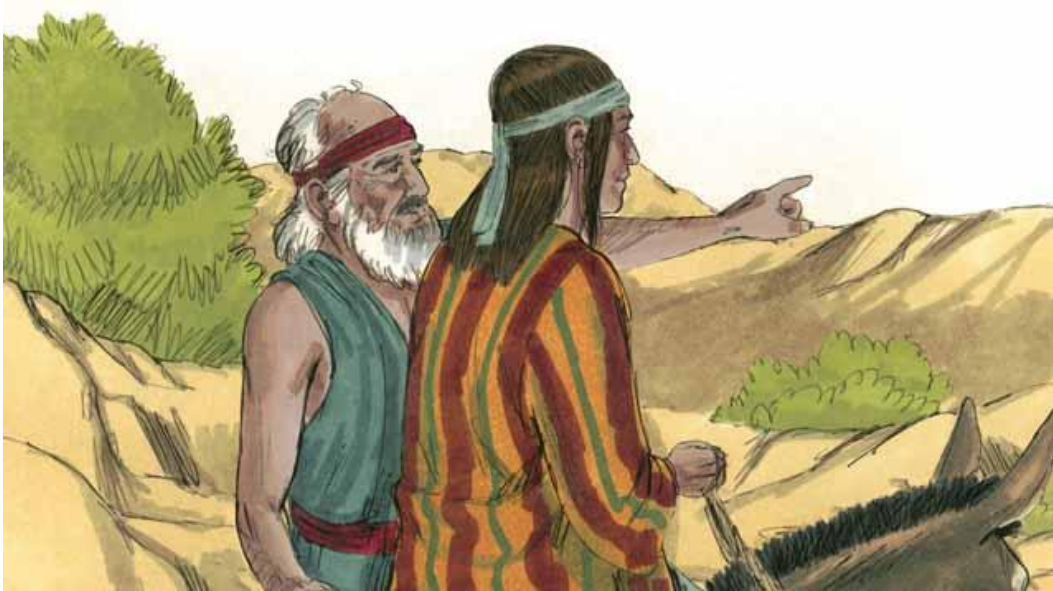
God gave Isaac a wife and she bore twins, Jacob and Esau.

God blessed Jacob and his sons, and the blessing continued to the next generation.

God rescued Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, and used him to rescue his family.

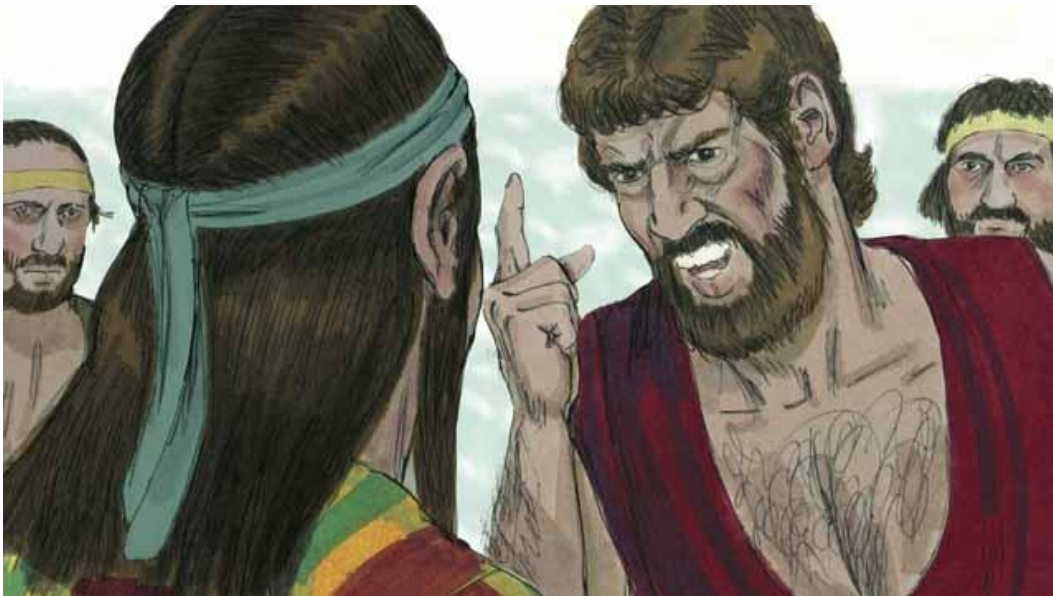
The Story: God Saves Joseph and His Family

08-01



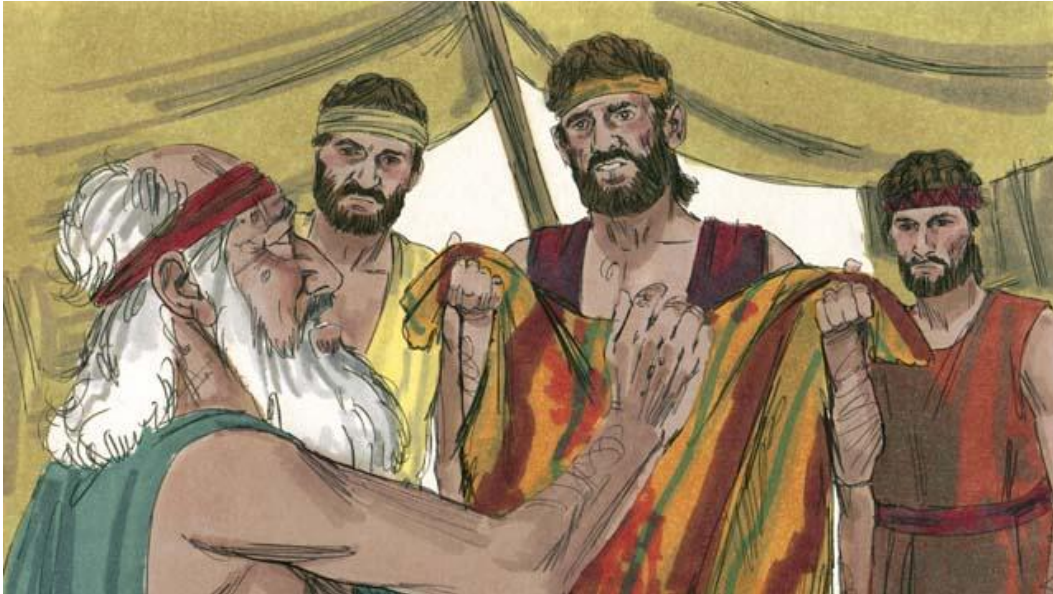
Many years later, when Jacob was an old man, he sent his favorite son, Joseph, to check on his brothers who were taking care of the flocks.

08-02



Joseph's brothers hated him because their father loved him most, and because Joseph had dreamed that he would be their ruler. When Joseph came to his brothers, they took him captive and sold him to some slave traders.

08-03



Before Joseph's brothers returned home, they tore Joseph's robe and dipped it in goat's blood. Then they showed the robe to their father so he would think that a wild animal had killed Joseph. Jacob was very sad.

08-04



The slave traders took Joseph to Egypt. Egypt was a large, powerful country located along the Nile River. The slave traders sold Joseph as a slave to a wealthy government official. Joseph served his master well, and God blessed Joseph.

08-05



His master's wife tried to sleep with Joseph, but Joseph refused to sin against God in this way. She became angry and falsely accused Joseph so that he was arrested and sent to prison. Even in prison, Joseph remained faithful to God, and God blessed him.

08-06



After two years, Joseph was still in prison even though he was innocent. One night the Pharaoh, which is what the Egyptians called their kings, had two dreams that disturbed him greatly. None of his advisors could tell him the meaning of the dreams.

08-07



God had given Joseph the ability to interpret dreams, so Pharaoh had Joseph brought to him from the prison. Joseph interpreted the dreams for him and said, "God is going to send seven years of plentiful harvests followed by seven years of famine."

08-08



Pharaoh was so impressed with Joseph that he appointed him to be the second most powerful man in all of Egypt!

08-09



Joseph told the people to store up large amounts of food during the seven years of good harvests. When the seven years of famine came, Joseph sold the food to the people so they would have enough to eat.

08-10



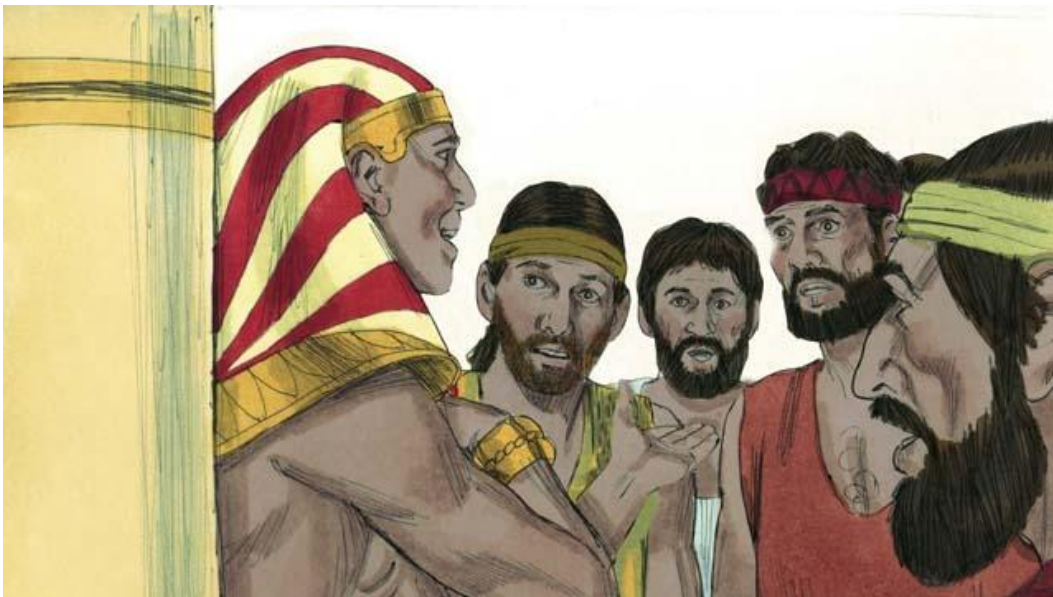
The famine was severe not only in Egypt, but also in Canaan where Jacob and his family lived.

08-11



So, Jacob sent his older sons to Egypt to buy food. The brothers did not recognize Joseph when they stood before him to buy food. But Joseph recognized them.

08-12



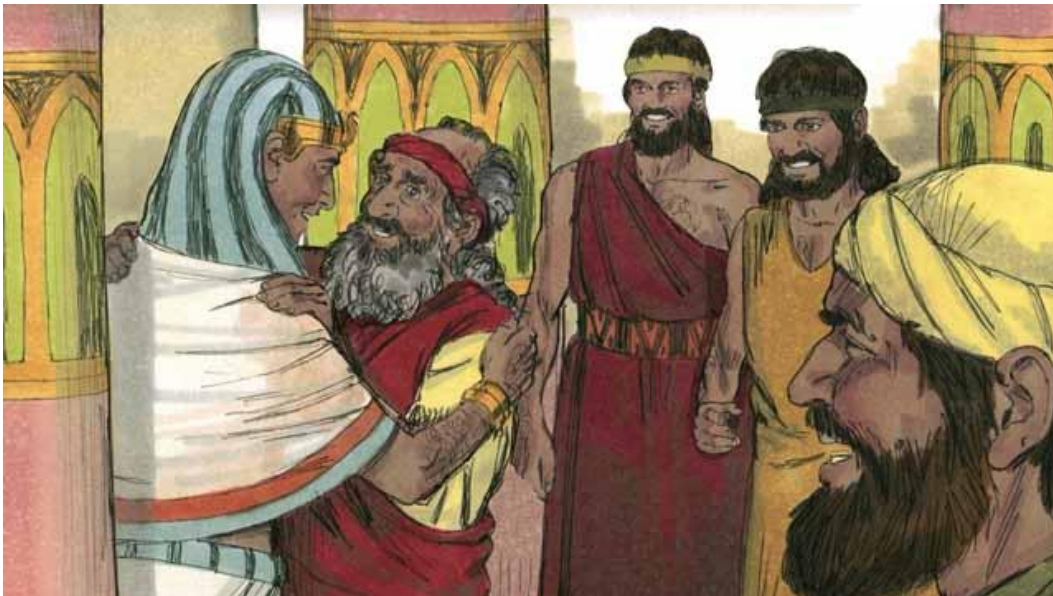
After testing his brothers to see if they had changed, Joseph said to them, "I am your brother, Joseph! Do not be afraid. You tried to do evil when you sold me as a slave, but God used the evil for good! Come and live in Egypt so I can provide for you and your families."

08-13



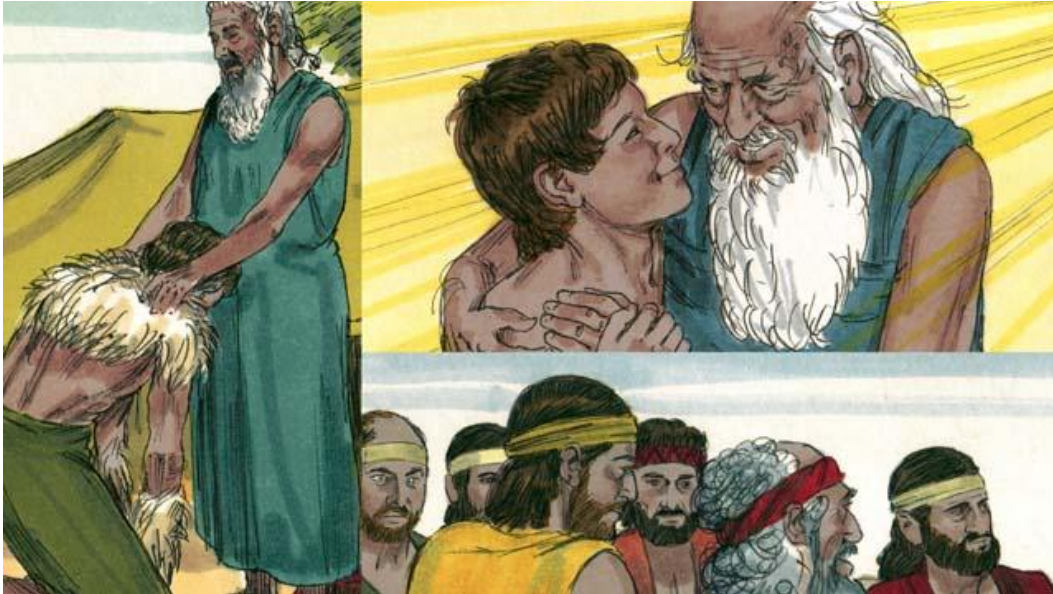
When Joseph's brothers returned home and told their father, Jacob, that Joseph was still alive, he was very happy.

08-14



Even though Jacob was an old man, he moved to Egypt with all of his family, and they all lived there. Before Jacob died, he blessed each of his sons.

08-15



The covenant promises that God gave to Abraham were passed on to Isaac, then to Jacob, and then to Jacob's 12 sons and their families. The descendants of the 12 sons became the 12 tribes of Israel.

A Bible story from: Genesis 37–50

Importance of Love — Making Love Central to Christian Relationships

- **Key Idea:** Treating one another with love
- **Key Passage:** 1 Corinthians 13:1-8
- **Main Session:** OBS 8 (God Saves Joseph and His Family)

Sing to God (3–5 minutes)

Choose a song to sing to praise God and encourage one another.

Recite the Core Belief Verse (3–5 minutes)

The verse below summarizes the teaching of the current passage. Read the verse out loud as a community. Read it again several times as a group until the whole community can recite it from memory.

"Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him into Egypt; but God was with him and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who had made him governor over Egypt and over all his household. Acts 7:9-10"

Think Together (5 minutes)

One of the most important ways we can relate to one another is to love one another. We can only love one another if we have received God's love in our own lives. Think together as a community for common ways (both right and wrong) that people, in general, think about love. Many people think that love is...

Read the Passage (5 minutes)

God tells us to love one another. Loving others is not an easy thing to do, but it is an important way to relate to each other. When Christians love each other, their work together and life together honors God. In order to understand God's design of Christian community, read the passage below.

"13:1 Suppose that I speak with the tongues of men and of angels. But if I do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 Suppose that I have the gift of prophecy and understand all hidden truths and knowledge, and that I have all faith so as to remove mountains. But if I do not have love, I am nothing. 3 Suppose that I give all I own to feed the poor, and that I give my body to be burned. But if I do not have love, I gain nothing. 4 Love is patient and kind. Love does not envy or boast. It is not arrogant 5 or rude. It is not self-serving. It is not easily angered, nor does it keep a count of wrongs. 6 It does not rejoice in unrighteousness. Instead, it rejoices in the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. 8 Love never ends. — 1 Corinthians 13:1-8"

Explore the Idea (10–15 minutes)

Christian community is maintained by Christians loving one another. Use the following questions to explore what it means to be a part of a loving Christian community.

1. Why is love such an important way for Christians to relate to one another?
2. How does this passage help us understand what it means to love?
3. How is this description of love different from the ways other people (who are not believers) treat each other?

4. Why is it hard to love other Christians the way this passage tells us to?

5. How can your community grow in showing one another love?

Pick One Description (5 minutes)

Reflect on the passage and discussion above. Identify one of the descriptions of love that most surprised you or that most challenged you. Explain why you found this description of love so surprising. I was most surprised/challenged to learn that love is [fill in one description from 1 Corinthians 13:1-8] because...

Pray to God (5 minutes)

Pray as a whole community that God would help each of you develop in love for one another. Also, thank God for the great love he has shown to people.

Movement 1: Understand the Story

Read each question aloud. Give the group time to answer before sharing the answer.

Observation Questions

08-01

What did Jacob think of his son Joseph?

Jacob considered Joseph his favorite son.

When Jacob was an old man, what did he send his son, Joseph, to do?

When Jacob was an old man, he sent Joseph to check on his sons who were taking care of the flocks.

08-02

Why did Joseph's brothers hate him?

Because Joseph was Jacob's favorite son, and because Joseph had dreamed he would be their ruler.

What evil thing did Joseph's brothers do to him?

They took him captive and sold him to some slave traders.

08-03

How did Joseph's brothers explain his disappearance to Jacob?

They tore Joseph's robe and put goat's blood on it so that Jacob would think a wild animal had killed him.

How did Jacob feel about what his sons' said about Joseph?

When Jacob heard what his sons said about Joseph, Jacob was very sad.

08-04

Where did the slave traders take Jacob?

The slave traders took Joseph to Egypt.

What kind of place was Egypt?

Egypt was a large, powerful country located along the Nile River.

What did Joseph do in Egypt?

Joseph served as a slave to a wealthy government official. Joseph served his master well.

Did God abandon Joseph in Egypt?

No, in everything Joseph did, God blessed him.

08-05

What did the wife of Joseph's master do to Joseph?

The wife of Joseph's master tried to sleep with Joseph.

Why was Joseph sent to prison in Egypt?

Joseph refused to sleep with his master's wife, so she falsely accused him.

What was Joseph's faith like in prison?

Even in prison, Joseph remained faithful to God. God blessed him.

08-06

How long was Joseph in prison?

Even though he was innocent, Joseph was in prison for two years.

While Joseph was in prison, what happened to Pharaoh?

One night Pharaoh had two dreams. No one was able to tell the meaning of the dreams.

08-07

What ability had God given Joseph?

God gave him the ability to interpret dreams.

Who did Pharaoh use to interpret his dreams?

Pharaoh brought Joseph out of prison to interpret his dreams.

What was the meaning of Pharaoh's dream?

God was going to send seven years of plentiful harvests followed by seven years of famine.

08-08

How did Pharaoh reward Joseph after Joseph interpreted his dream?

Pharaoh made Joseph the second most powerful man in Egypt.

08-09

How did Joseph prepare for the famine?

Joseph told the Egyptians to store up large amounts of food during the seven good years, and then he sold the food to the people during the seven years of famine.

08-10

How severe was the famine?

The famine was very severe. It affected not only Egypt but the place where Joseph was from, Canaan.

08-11

Where did Jacob send his older sons?

Jacob sent his older sons to Egypt to buy food.

Why did Joseph's brothers come to Egypt?

They came to buy food because the famine was severe in Canaan also.

What happened when the brothers met Joseph again?

The brothers did not recognize Joseph. Joseph did recognize his brothers.

08-12

Before Joseph told his brothers who he was, why did he test them?

Joseph tested them to see if they had changed.

What did Joseph tell his brothers?

Joseph told them not to be afraid of him. Joseph explained that what they meant for evil, God used for good. Joseph also told them to come to live in Egypt so he could provide food for them and their families.

How did God cause good to come from Joseph's brothers selling him as a slave?

Joseph became a powerful ruler in Egypt, and God used him to provide food for his family and many other people during the famine.

08-13

After the brothers returned home and told their father Joseph was still alive, how did Jacob respond?

Jacob was very happy when he heard that his son Joseph was still alive.

08-14

What did Jacob do after he found out that Joseph was alive?

Jacob moved his whole family to Egypt.

What did Jacob do before he died?

Jacob blessed each of his sons before he died.

08-15

After Jacob died, who received the promises that God gave to Abraham?

The 12 sons of Jacob received them.

What did the descendants of the 12 sons of Jacob become?

They became the 12 tribes of Israel.

Movement 2: Theological Questions

What Does This Story Teach Us?

1. What are some of the causes of suffering and hardship? How does the story of Joseph teach us about suffering and hardship in the world?
2. What does it look like to trust God and live faithfully in hardship? How does Joseph provide an example of faithful living before God?
3. How does God use evil things to bring about good things? How does the story of Joseph show us God brings good things out of hard circumstances?

Movement 3: Live It Out

Personal Implications & Applications From The Story

Guide the group to discuss practical obedience from this story and name concrete next steps.

1. What kind of suffering have you experienced in life? How can you relate to Joseph's experiences?
2. How might you have responded if you were in Joseph's situation? How does his faithful example show areas of your life in which you need to grow?

3. What broken relationships are in your life? How can Joseph's story teach you how to reconcile (be at peace) with those who have wronged you?
4. Think about this week. Where does "God Saves Joseph and His Family" challenge you to obey God in a practical way?
5. How does this key idea shape one decision you need to make right now: The story of God saving Joseph and his family teaches us that God rescued Joseph and his family from death.

Movement 4: Retell the Story

Invite the group to retell the story several times until they can tell it clearly and faithfully.

1. Can someone retell "God Saves Joseph and His Family" from beginning to end in their own words?
2. Retell this story again, but focus on what God did at each key moment.
3. Retell the story in three parts: beginning, middle, and ending. What changed in each part?
4. If you were teaching this story to your family tonight, how would you tell it simply and clearly?

Church Ministry

Reflect on how this story can edify and mature the Christian community. Design a way to minister this story to your church community.

Ministry Preparation: Take time to consider how you could minister this story to others. What setting, audience, or approach would you use? Record your ideas below.

Ministry Implementation: Minister this story to a group of believers as you had planned. Use the information in this study to help develop a teaching or lead a discussion. Record your ministry plan below.

Ministry Reflection: Think about what you learned from ministering this story to other believers. What went well? What would you do differently? Reflect on your experience below.

Movement 5: Share It

Help each person plan how they will share this story with others before the next gathering.

1. Who is one specific person you will share "God Saves Joseph and His Family" with this week?
2. When and where will you share this story with them?
3. What is the one main truth from this story you want them to remember?

Report-back next meeting: Who did you share with, and what happened?

Mission Engagement

Consider how you will witness this story to unbelievers. Design a way to share this story and engage them in what it teaches about Christianity and the gospel.

Witness Preparation: Take time to consider how you will witness this narrative to unbelievers. What context, relationship, or opportunity will you use? Record your ideas below.

Witness Implementation: Share this story with an unbeliever. Use the information in this study to help develop a natural conversation or teaching. Record your plan below.

Witness Reflection: Think about what you learned from sharing this story with unbelievers. What did they respond to? What questions did they ask? Reflect on your experience below.