

Chapter 5

Joseph's Journey

Joseph's Journey is an adventure through the life of Joseph that gives us an opportunity for some "hands-on" geography.

Materials

- ♦ NIV Bible
- ♦ Paper and color pencils or markers
- ♦ Topographical map of Israel, Jordan, and Egypt (optional)

Map locations in Genesis specified by verse

Canaan-37:1	Dothan-37:17	Egypt-37:25, et al
Gilead-37:25	Shechem-37:12	Valley of Hebron-37:14

Other major geographical features

Dead Sea	Gulf of Aqaba	Heliopolis (On)
Gulf of Suez	Jordan River	Mediterranean Sea
Nile River	Red Sea	Sea of Galilee
Sinai Desert		

Bible references

Genesis 16, 25, 37
Judges 8

Overview

Study the story of Joseph, his being sold into slavery, life in Egypt, appointment by Pharaoh, and eventual reunion with his family. By tracing his travels, the student will identify on the map the location of each city and area. By reviewing a physical topography map, your student can also identify important features such as mountains, rivers, valleys, deserts, plains, etc.

This Bible study centers on Genesis 37, from the time Joseph was 17 until he was sold to Potiphar. Interwoven in the study are short and simple map activities. The student map and answer map are at the end of the study, along with a teacher answer key. By the end of this short study, students will have a strong grasp of the geography of this area.

Bible studies become deeper and richer by looking more closely at the geography. Familiar stories take on new life as the geography is unveiled. Use this study as an example for future Bible studies.



Questions

1. In what land did Joseph and his family live?

ACTIVITY: Shade the area on your map in green to show the land in which Joseph and his family lived. (Joseph's family lived in the territory west of the areas known as the Sea of Galilee, the River Jordan, and the Dead Sea.)

2. What animals were raised in this area?

3. Why did Jacob love Joseph more than his other sons?

4. How did he show his love?

5. How did Joseph's brothers react?

6. What was Joseph's first dream?

7. What was Joseph's second dream?

8. What did his father understand this dream to mean?

9. In Genesis 37:12, where did Joseph's brothers take their flocks to graze?

ACTIVITY: On your map, locate and label this city. This city is west of the River Jordan, mid-way between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea.

10. According to Genesis 37:14, from where did Joseph leave to go to his brothers?

ACTIVITY: On your map locate and label this area. This city is about 15 miles west of the mid-point of the Dead Sea.

11. When Joseph arrived in Shechem, where was he told he might find his brothers?

ACTIVITY: On your map locate and label this area. This city is about 20 miles north of Shechem.

12. Is Dothan cool, green and fertile, or dry and sandy?

ACTIVITY: Color the area around Dothan a sandy color.

13. What is a cistern?

14. Why would there be a cistern in the desert?

15. Why did Joseph's brothers plot to kill him?

16. Who secretly planned to save him?

17. Use a dictionary to define “caravan.”

18. Who were the Ismaelites?

ACTIVITY: On your map, label the area known as Midian and shade it in yellow. Midian is an area occupying the eastern shore of the Gulf of Aqaba.

19. Where was Gilead?

ACTIVITY: On your map, locate and label this area. Gilead is the area east of the River Jordan extending from north of the Dead Sea to south of the Sea of Galilee.

20. Where were the Ishmaelites heading?

ACTIVITY: On your map, locate and label this country and shade it in blue. This country occupies the lands bordering the Nile River and Delta.

21. Why were the Ishmaelites going there?

22. What business transactions did Joseph’s brothers make with the Ishmaelites/Midians?

23. What was Reuben's reaction when he learned what his brothers had done to Joseph?

24. How did Joseph's brothers try to cover up their treacherous deed?

25. What did Jacob do when he saw the red robe?

26. Where did the Ishmaelites/Midians take Joseph?

27. Who bought him?

ACTIVITY:

- a. In black, trace the route of Joseph from the Valley of Hebron to Shechem, Dothan and then to Egypt.
- b. In red, trace the route of the Ishmaelites from their homeland in Midian, up to Gilead, across the River Jordan, to Dothan, along the coast to the Egyptian city of Heliopolis. (On.)

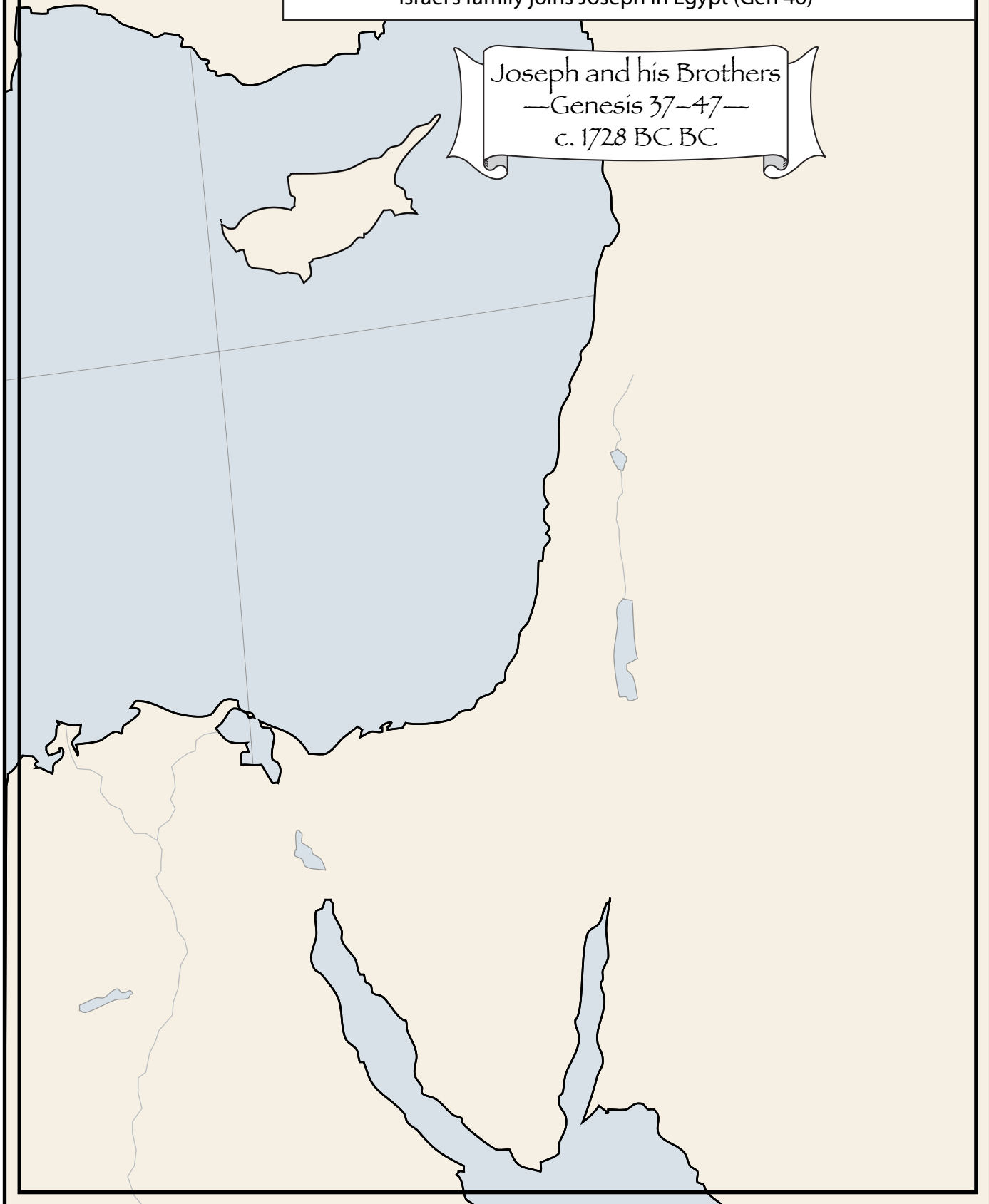
Answer Sheet (according to NIV references)

1. In what land did Joseph and his family live?
Canaan (Genesis 37:1)
2. What animals were raised in this area?
Flocks of animals including sheep and goats. (Genesis 37:2, 31)
3. Why did Jacob love Joseph more than his other sons?
Because he had been born to him in his old age. (Genesis 37:3)
4. How did he show his love?
He gave him a special richly ornamented robe. (Genesis 37:3)
5. How did Joseph's brothers react?
They hated him and could not speak a kind word to him. (Genesis 37:4)
6. What was Joseph's first dream?
The binding of sheaves of grain (see full account in Genesis 37:5-7)
7. What was Joseph's second dream?
Sun, moon, and seven stars (see full account in Genesis 37:9)
8. What did his father understand this dream to mean?
Joseph's father, mother, and brothers would come and bow down to the ground before Joseph. (Genesis 37:10)
9. In Genesis 37:12, where did Joseph's brothers take their flocks to graze?
Near Shechem. (Genesis 37:12)
10. According to Genesis 37:14, from where did Joseph leave to go to his brothers?
The Valley of Hebron. (Genesis 37:14)
11. When Joseph arrived in Shechem, where was he told he might find his brothers?
Dothan, about 20 miles north of Shechem. (Genesis 37:17)
12. Is Dothan cool, green and fertile, or dry and sandy?
Dry and sandy (a desert). (Genesis 37:22)
13. What is a cistern?
A reservoir or tank for storing water or other liquid.
14. Why would there be a cistern in the desert?
To hold and store scarce and precious water.
15. Why did Joseph's brothers plot to kill him?
They hated him because he was their father's favorite. (Genesis 37:3-4)

16. Who secretly planned to save him?
His brother Reuben. (Genesis 37:22)
17. Use a dictionary to define "caravan."
A group of travelers, as merchants or pilgrims, banded together for safety in journeying through deserts, hostile territory, etc.
18. Who were the Ishmaelites?
Ishmaelite and Midianite merchants: both of these groups of desert-dwellers were descended from Abraham. The names are interchangeable. (From Eerdmans Handbook to the Bible, 1992, page 146.) Also see Genesis 37:28 & 36, Genesis 16:15, Genesis 25:2 and 18, Judges 8:24. (Location taken from The Route of the Exodus, 1986, The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
19. Where was Gilead?
Gilead is an area east of the River Jordan extending from north of the Dead Sea to south of the Sea of Galilee. (From Palestine: Political Regions, 1986, The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
20. Where were the Ishmaelites heading?
Egypt. (Genesis 37:25)
21. Why were the Ishmaelites going there?
They planned to sell or trade their load of spices, balm, and myrrh. (Genesis 37:25)
22. What business transactions did Joseph's brothers make with the Ishmaelites/Midians?
They sold Joseph to the merchants for 20 shekels of silver. (Genesis 37:28)
23. What was Reuben's reaction when he learned what his brothers had done to Joseph?
He tore his clothes, went back to his brothers and said, "The boy isn't there! Where can I turn now?" (Genesis 37:29)
24. How did Joseph's brothers try to cover up their treacherous deed?
They took Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in blood. They presented the robe to Jacob who recognized it as Joseph's. Jacob thought that some ferocious animal had devoured Joseph and that Joseph had surely been torn to pieces. (Genesis 37:31-33)
25. What did Jacob do when he saw the red robe?
Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. (Genesis 37:34)
26. Where did the Ishmaelites/Midians take Joseph?
Egypt. (Genesis 37:25)
27. Who bought him?
Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard. (Genesis 37:36)

- Joseph (Gen 37)
- Joseph's brothers (sell Joseph at Dothan) (Gen 37)
- - - Joseph's brothers go to Egypt, leave Simeon (Gen. 42)
- Joseph's brothers return with Benjamin (round trip) (Gen 43)
- Israel's family joins Joseph in Egypt (Gen 46)

Joseph and his Brothers
—Genesis 37–47—
c. 1728 BC BC



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