

November 9, 2025

1ST–3RD Grade Sunday School

Upward Week 2: Forward

Video Game:

Race for Gold

It is the video hearted in the photos app.

Game:

Items Needed:

Shaker Eggs

Tape to mark floor

Instructions:

Mark off a long starting line and a long finish line on the floor about 15 feet apart. Choose as many kids as you can for the game. Set eggs on the starting line, evenly spaced out. The kids will race to see who can be first to roll their egg from start to finish using only their nose to propel the egg.

What's the Point?

God will help us move forward, even in hard times.

Lesson: God is with us even in hard times.

Imagine going to see the movie *Onward* with your family. Imagine that the movie begins with Barley and Ian's mom giving him their father's gift, a magic wand. Imagine Barley and Ian performing the spell to bring their father back and it works perfectly. Barley and Ian get to enjoy a wonderful day with their father. Dad imparts some life lessons to his sons, tells him he loves them, and then, he is gone. The boys are richer for the experience, and dear old dad gets a chance to see his boys once more. Sounds like a wonderful story, right?

Let's be honest: if that's how the movie went, the movie would be a bore. I know it's frustrating when things don't go right for the heroes in a story, but if Barley and Ian don't mess up the spell, there's no story, and there's no movie! A good story has obstacles and problems. In order to fulfill their quest, our heroes must overcome those obstacles. In the process, our heroes learn about themselves. They are changed by the experience. They may get frustrated and even want to give up, but they keep moving forward.

Every good story is full of challenges and obstacles. Rey overcomes a number of challenges in her quest to become a Jedi and defeat the first order. The Avengers lose half the heroes in the galaxy before they can defeat Thanos and his Infinity Gauntlet. As frustrating as setbacks and hard times may be our heroes come out better and stronger having faced those challenges. They turn out to be blessings in disguise.

No one understood this better than Joseph. His story began with being betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery. He started his journey upward by going downward! Nevertheless he was still moving forward. Joseph trusted God was with him. God was with Joseph on the journey to Egypt. He was with him when he worked as a slave. God blessed Joseph as he served his new master Potiphar, and when life took another unexpected turn, God was still moving Joseph forward.

READ GENESIS 39:1-6, & 17-23

Joseph could have been a bitter young man, but he made the best of his situation. He served Potiphar so well, he was put in charge of the entire household. But just when things seemed to be moving up, Joseph fell down hard. He was accused of a crime he did not commit, and he was thrown in jail.

Even in jail Joseph looked for God's blessings. Just as he had become a trusted slave, he was a trusted prisoner. He was tasked with taking care of the other prisoners. He was still moving forward, even in those dark times. If Joseph can find God's blessings in a lonely prison cell, we can find God's blessings in the hard times of our lives.

I'm sure some of you are questioning the logic behind that statement. How was Joseph blessed? His brothers sold him out! He was a slave! Then he was a prisoner! How could Joseph possibly keep his faith in those dark times?

God had a plan for Joseph, a plan that would not only lead him upward but help him save his family, even the brothers who betrayed him. That plan included slavery and imprisonment, but all along the way, God was moving Joseph forward. Joseph had to learn the Egyptian language to serve in Potiphar's house and in prison. He had to learn the Egyptian customs and ways. As head of the other prisoners, Joseph would meet two servants of Pharaoh who knew the king of Egypt personally. One of those men was put to death, but the other was restored to his position at Pharaoh's side where one day, he would tell the king about a prisoner who could interpret strange dreams.

Joseph may not have seen all these blessings, but he still held fast to his faith. He believed in the dreams God had given him. He knew God was always moving him forward.

The next time you or your family are facing a tough time, ask yourself, where are God's blessings? How is this setback a blessing in disguise? Is God teaching you something? Is He drawing you closer as a family? Is He making you stronger, preparing you for bigger challenges ahead? God uses hard

times to bless us in ways seen and unseen. He is with you in those times. He is always working on you. He is always moving you forward.

Hard times can be discouraging but take heart! God will never leave you, and He will make your hard times a blessing. Thank God for the challenges in your life and look for those blessings. You will see them, and you will know that God is always with you.

Discussion Questions:

1. Who was Potiphar?
2. What did Joseph do for Potiphar?
3. What bad thing happened when Joseph was working for Potiphar?
4. How was God moving Joseph forward while he was a slave?
5. Can you think of something good that happened during a hard time in your life?

Close in prayer.

Memory Verse:

THIS WEEK: "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." Romans 8:28a (NIRV)

If they memorize the verse, they can get a ping pong ball to put in the BLUE BOX in the hallway.