**Topic: Sibling Rivalry**

**Bible Passage: Genesis 37, 50:14-22**

**Activity: Civil War**

Divide students into groups and give each group a sheet of poster board or butcher paper. Instruct the groups to write the title “CIVIL WAR” across the top of the poster. Have students add words or pictures depicting their thoughts and feelings about sibling rivalry. The following are suggested ideas to get the students started:

• Phrases said during fights.

• Pictures of brother/sister disagreement.

• Words that depict your feelings during a fight with your sibling.

**Before the movie clip, say**: How many of your have brothers or sisters? For those of you that have siblings, do you always get along? Or do you tend to fight from time to time? Most siblings—including those that we see in the Bible—have had a tough time always getting along.

As hard as it may be, we need to find ways to practice patience and forgiveness when we’re battling with our siblings. The Biblical story of Joseph shows us an awesome example of sibling rivalry and forgiveness.

**Read Genesis 37**

Joseph’s older brothers despised him and so they tormented him daily. They kept feuding until the day that they tried to kill Joseph. Joseph’s life was spared only because his brothers chose to sell him into slavery. We have some problems with out siblings, but Joseph definitely has the worst story of all. The brothers even lie to their father about what has happened to Joseph. Joseph had every reason to hate his brothers. He had every right to get even with them if he was ever given the chance. But when Joseph was given the chance to take revenge on his brothers, he made a different decision.

Things got worse for Joseph before they got better, but eventually God led Joseph to a position of authority in Egypt. His journey included being left for dead, sold into slavery, falsely accused and imprisoned, and finally to a leader in the palace of Egypt! When a severe famine came over the land, Joseph’s brothers came to him in search of food and assistance. Joseph finally had the power and authority to get payback on his brothers for the way they treated him. Instead, Joseph cared for his brothers and was reunited with his family—including his father.

Joseph forgave his brothers for their actions, but they still feared that he would hold a grudge against them. They feared that Joseph would one day seek revenge for all the bad that they had done to him. We should all learn from Joseph and his example. He chose to love and forgive his siblings for their actions, and he saw that God was using his brothers’ actions to help him grow in his faith. Check out Joseph’s response to his brothers:

**Read Genesis 50: 14-22**

We should all search for ways to reach peace with our siblings. This is not easy, but it is the best decision. We need to practice patience and love—even when our siblings might not necessarily deserve it. Our actions will help to change their behavior and change our relationship with them.

**Break into small groups to discuss the following questions:**

* Once they returned to Egypt, what concern did Joseph’s brothers have? (v.15)
* How did Joseph react when his brothers approached him for forgiveness? (v.17) According to v.18, how did they think Joseph would react?
* Think about everything that Joseph’s brothers did to him. In spite of all this, Joseph forgave his brothers. If you were in Joseph’s place, do you think you could forgive? Why or why not?
* Why did Joseph choose to forgive his brothers? (v.19-20)
* Who do you fight with at home?
* What do you fight about?
* Who usually settles the argument? How?
* Why do you think you fight/quarrel with your brothers and sisters?
* What do the following scriptures teach us about handling conflict?

• Philippians 2: 3-4

• I Corinthians 13:4-7

• James 1:19 & 20

• Hebrews 12:14-15

• Ephesians 4:31-32

* What is one change you’re going to make with your brother or sister this week?