

LESSON 23

Joseph Is Attacked by His Brothers

GENESIS 37:12-36



BIBLE TRUTH

GOD SAVED JOSEPH SO THAT HE MIGHT ONE DAY SAVE US

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. **OPENING REVIEW** **5 MIN**
Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
2. **BIBLE STORY** **10 MIN**
Read Genesis 37:12–36 from the Scriptures or read story 23, “Joseph Is Attacked by His Brothers,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** **10 MIN**
One Sin Leads to Another
SUPPLIES:
✓ a brand new twenty-dollar bill
4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** **10 MIN**
5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** **10 MIN**
List the Lies
SUPPLIES:
✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker
6. **WORD BIBLE MEMORY** **5 MIN**
7. **ACTIVITY TIME** **10 MIN**
Coloring Activity
SUPPLIES:
✓ coloring page 23—one copy for each child
8. **CLOSING PRAYER** **5 MIN**
9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** **10 MIN**
Jealous Sin Leads to Broken Relationships
SUPPLIES:
✓ pretzel rods (enough to give one to each member of the class plus extras)
✓ a roll of tape
✓ juice
✓ cups (enough for the class)

TOTAL 75 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Joseph’s brothers plotted against him—In their jealousy, Joseph’s brothers plan to murder him. They have certainly heard how their own father stole the birthright of his older brother, Esau. Now it appears that the same thing is happening to them. The older brothers are going to bow down to the younger! They resent Joseph’s dreams and the special treatment their father gives him. They despise that Joseph, in his manager’s coat, is checking up on their work as if he were the oldest brother. In their sinful judging, the brothers sentence Joseph to death.

(Later, in Egypt, Joseph’s strong abilities as a manager and leader became obvious. Clearly, Jacob saw something special in his son and was not simply “playing favorites.”)

Not all the brothers are equally guilty, but all are guilty—Not all the brothers are equally guilty in the plot against Joseph. At the same time, none of the brothers tries as hard as he can to save him. Reuben suggests that they simply throw Joseph into a pit without killing him. Reuben’s hope is to come back later and rescue Joseph. While Reuben is off somewhere else, Judah suggests that the brothers sell Joseph as a slave. Judah seems genuinely concerned for Joseph. But he also seems willing to share in the profit the brothers will make if they sell him.

As often happens, one sin leads to another. After selling off their brother, Joseph’s brothers must lie to their father to conceal their wicked actions. Even Reuben and Judah were part of the lying. When the sons try to comfort their father in his mourning for Joseph, they undoubtedly tell additional lies. Sin just produces more sin.

WHERE IS JESUS?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read Matthew 27:17–23.

Joseph was treated unfairly by his brothers because of the brothers' resentment and jealousy. This is one of many Old Testament stories that look forward to the life of Jesus.

Joseph was betrayed, bound, and sold into slavery by his jealous brothers. But later God would use Joseph to save his brothers. Like Joseph, Jesus was unjustly turned over to Pilate out of envy, which is very similar to jealousy. And later, Jesus would make a way of salvation.

When we look at the life of Joseph, we see a picture of Jesus who was betrayed, bound, and crucified by his own people because they were jealous of him and resented him.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Genesis 37:12–36 from the Scriptures or read story 23, "Joseph Is Attacked by His Brothers," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

One Sin Leads to Another

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a brand new twenty-dollar bill

Tell the children that you are going to tell them a secret and they must promise not to tell anyone. Show them the twenty-dollar bill. Let them pass it around, and when they are finished looking at it, ask them if they know what it is. They will say a twenty-dollar bill, but you tell them they are wrong.

Tell them it is a counterfeit twenty and that earlier this morning you met a world-famous forger who gave it to you. As objections rise, expand on the tale any way you would like to.

The point of the story is to help the class see that in order to not have sin exposed, you must continue sinning. Allow the story to get ridiculous and then tell them the truth. Then ask the class the following questions:

- **When you sin or deceive someone, what do you need to do to keep them from discovering your sin?**
(You need to continue lying or adding more sins to the ones you have already committed. If Reuben had threatened to tell his father what the others had done to Joseph, he may have been killed to cover up their sin.)

- **Can you think of a time when you had to lie to cover up your sin?**
(Be prepared to direct the children to their parents if any recent or serious sin is confessed.)

- **What does our repeated sin reveal about our need for the gospel and salvation?**
(We might want to believe we don't need God and that we can be righteous by obeying the law and that we are not really so bad. That is shown to be a false assumption when we sin and then sin again attempting to cover up the first sin.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION **10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 **10 MIN**

List the Lies

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

Have the children read through the passage and list where the brothers sinned against Joseph and where they lied. Be sure to include where they must have lied again and again to their grieving father. To truly comfort Jacob in his grief would have been to tell him that Joseph was still alive.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- Which character in the story do you most identify with and why?
(Help the children see that they are sinners like the brothers, rather than a victim like Joseph.)
- Why is it important that we see ourselves as sinners like Joseph's brothers?
(In seeing that we are sinners like Joseph's brothers, it helps us appreciate our need of a Savior to save us from our sinful state.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY **5 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME **10 MIN**

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page 23—one copy for each child

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- How do Joseph's brothers explain to their father what happened to Joseph?
(The brothers told Jacob that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal.)
- Did Joseph's brothers tell their father the truth?
(No, they lied to him.)
- Why did they lie?
(They were afraid to tell their father the truth because they would be punished and they might have to go to Egypt to find him.)

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON **10 MIN**

Jealous Sin Leads to Broken Relationships

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ pretzel rods (enough to give one to each member of the class plus extras)
- ✓ a roll of tape
- ✓ juice
- ✓ cups (enough for the class)

The object of this exercise is to show how our greed and jealousy can drive us.

Place a desk or table in the front of the room and mark with tape on the floor five feet on either side of the table. Ask for two volunteers. Place two pretzel rods on the table and explain that when you say go they may run to the table and take the pretzel rods.

Explain to the class that you will give a glass of juice to anyone who gets a pretzel. (Be careful that you don't say anything that would suggest they fight over the pretzels.) The reality is that the children will want to have pretzels and will likely break them in the process. If a round results in one person cleanly getting both pretzels, allow the other person a second turn. Be sure to observe their sinful behaviors; e.g., boasting, fighting, and whining.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **Why didn't one or more of you give up the pretzels to each other and share?**
(Our desires to have the pretzels and keep them for ourselves overpowered any thoughts of sharing.)
- **What happened to the pretzels when you fought over them?**
(When the pretzels broke, it was because you would rather break the pretzel than give it to the other person.)
- **How were the broken pretzels like the broken relationships between Joseph and his brothers?**
(Joseph's brothers were jealous of what he had and plotted his murder. They were willing to sacrifice their relationship to get what they wanted. Often our desires crush the very things we might love. Sin destroys relationships.)

- How did Jesus reverse the destruction of sin?

(Jesus came to die on the cross and take away the penalty of sin. When he lives inside us, he writes his law on our hearts and causes us to desire not to sin.)

LESSON 23 - JOSEPH IS ATTACKED BY HIS BROTHERS

