

LESSON 24

# Joseph Interprets the Dreams

GENESIS 39–41



BIBLE TRUTH

GOD WORKS ALL THINGS TOGETHER FOR OUR GOOD

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 41:1–43 from the Scriptures or read story 24, “Joseph Interprets the Dreams,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
- 3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** ..... **10 MIN**  
**A Travelogue of Egypt**  
**SUPPLIES:**  
✓ picture books of Egypt and a Bible atlas showing ruins of ancient cities
- 4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** ..... **10 MIN**
- 5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** ..... **10 MIN**  
**The Effects of a Famine**  
**SUPPLIES:**  
✓ two identical potted plants
- 6. **SWORD BIBLE MEMORY** ..... **5 MIN**
- 7. **ACTIVITY TIME** ..... **10 MIN**  
**Coloring Activity**  
**SUPPLIES:**  
✓ coloring page 24—one copy for each child
- 8. **CLOSING PRAYER** ..... **5 MIN**
- 9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** ..... **10 MIN**  
**Interpret the Dream**

**TOTAL 75 MIN**



PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

**Note to the teacher:** Although Potiphar’s wife tells Joseph to “come to bed with me” [NIV] or “lie with me” [ESV], younger children are generally satisfied with the explanation that Potiphar’s wife was dishonoring her husband.

**Joseph is in the Lord’s hand**—In Egypt, Joseph enjoys God’s favor and rises to a position of great prominence. But then he is falsely accused and thrown into prison. Still, God’s favor is upon Joseph. He again rises to a very important position within the prison. We can trust God even in difficult circumstances. God is always in control. Nothing, not even imprisonment, can hinder his plan.

**Joseph does not forget the Lord**—Think back and remember how, in Genesis 37, God gave Joseph dreams that his brothers and even his parents would bow down to him. Now, Joseph has not only been sold as a slave, he has been thrown into Pharaoh’s prison. It’s easy to imagine how Joseph might be wondering if his dreams would ever come true.

But here in this story we see Joseph’s strong faith. When Joseph hears that the baker and cupbearer had dreams, he does not say, “Oh forget those dreams, they are meaningless.” He declares that interpretations belong to God. Joseph’s faith in God remains strong. Two years later, God honors Joseph’s faith and brings him out of prison.

**Joseph directs Pharaoh to God**—Here we see God powerfully at work. He is setting Joseph in place so he can preserve the people of Israel through a famine that will not begin for at least eight more years.

Joseph’s humility and faith in God are obvious in this passage. Joseph could have boasted and taken credit for his ability to interpret dreams. Instead, Joseph boasts in God by telling Pharaoh that God is the one who gives him interpretations. Joseph also displays wisdom. After interpreting the dream, Joseph gives Pharaoh good advice about how to prepare for the famine. The advice is so good that Pharaoh places Joseph in charge of all Egypt!



## WHERE IS JESUS?

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

Read Genesis 41:1–14.

Can you imagine staying in prison for two whole years for something you didn't do? That's what happened to Joseph. But God had a plan to get Joseph out of prison because God had something very important for Joseph to do. He planned to use Joseph to save Israel from a terrible famine. Saving Israel was important because Jesus would one day be born into the family of Israel.

To get Joseph out of prison, God gave Pharaoh a dream that only Joseph could interpret. In a flash Joseph was out of prison, told Pharaoh the meaning of the dream, and before you know it, Joseph was freed from prison and put in charge of Egypt. Through Joseph, God saved Israel from the terrible famine. This allowed Jesus to be born so that one day we too could be saved.

## 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 41:1–43 from the Scriptures or read story 24, "Joseph Interprets the Dreams," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

### OBJECT LESSON 1 ..... 10 MIN

#### A Travelogue of Egypt

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ picture books of Egypt and a Bible atlas showing ruins of ancient cities

Review some of the architectural wonders of Egypt. Help the children realize that the Egypt of the Bible was a real place. Remind them that we get a glimpse of the day-to-day history in the



Bible. Many of the wonders of Egypt were likely created after the life of Joseph and perhaps by the Hebrew slaves later held in bondage.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **When we read about places in the Bible, are they always real or are they made up?**

*(When the Bible refers to a country or city, it is a city that actually existed. Some countries no longer exist, like Babylon [modern day Iraq], but we can often still locate places mentioned in the Bible.)*

- **If we can't find any evidence that a city mentioned in the Bible existed, should we believe it existed just because the Bible tells us?**

*(Yes, the Bible is an accurate record of the history of God's people. Archaeologists have doubted the existence of many biblical cities, claiming the Bible to be wrong, but have later discovered them, finding the Bible to be exactly correct. In fact, the Bible has never been proven wrong!)*

**TEACHING/DISCUSSION** ..... **10 MIN**

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

**OBJECT LESSON 2** ..... **10 MIN**

**The Effects of a Famine**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ two identical potted plants

Note: If you are preparing last minute, you can put the plant in an oven at the lowest temperature setting for a few hours to dry out the soil. Just make sure it is in a clay or ceramic pot.

Weeks in advance, purchase two small flowering plants such as African violets. Water one but leave the second to perish for lack of water.

Bring the two plants in for a poignant illustration of how a drought will produce famine. This will help the children to realize what must have happened to the food crops and even the livestock during the seven-year drought in today's story.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **What would have happened to the people if they didn't have food to eat during the seven-year drought?**

*(Eventually, all the grain and flour would have been used up. Without new food being produced, many of the animals and even the people would have died.)*

- **How did God use the trials of Joseph's life to save his people?**

*(God used Joseph to bring wisdom and truth to Pharaoh; thus, Pharaoh appointed him to be in charge so that food could be stored for God's people. If he had never been sold by his brothers into slavery or been falsely accused and sent to prison, Joseph would never have been brought before Pharaoh.)*

**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 24—one copy for each child

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

- **Which person in the picture is Joseph? Which one is Pharaoh?**
- **Who can remember Pharaoh's dream?**  
*(See Genesis 41:17–24.)*
- **What is the seat called that Pharaoh, King of Egypt, is sitting on?**  
*(A king's chair is called a throne.)*

Have the children color the throne gold.

- **What country did Pharaoh rule?**  
*(Egypt)*



**CLOSING PRAYER** ..... **5 MIN**

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

**BONUS OBJECT LESSON** ..... **10 MIN**

**Interpret the Dream**

Tell the class the following:

There is a man who dreams he becomes a famous baseball player even though he is not very good at sports. Every time it is his turn to bat, he hits a home run. When the man wakes up, he wonders what the dream means. Can you help him interpret the dream?

Ask the class if they know what the dream means. After they answer, ask them to tell you who helped Joseph interpret Pharaoh's dream. Explain that only God can give the interpretation of a dream to someone. We can only guess what a dream means, but God knows all things.

