

LESSON 25

# God Provides for the Israelites in Famine

GENESIS 41:46 – 44:34



BIBLE TRUTH

GOD'S PROMISE IS PRESERVED IN DROUGHT AND SIN

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 42 from the Scriptures or read story 25, "God Provides for the Israelites in Famine," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

**3. OBJECT LESSON 1 . . . . . 10 MIN**

*Predicting the Future*

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ pencil
- ✓ balloon
- ✓ pin

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

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

*Reaping What You Sow*

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ paper and pencils for each child
- ✓ a small prize
- ✓ ten different kinds of dried seeds (Sunflower seeds, corn and other familiar seeds can be obtained from bird seed; also, fruit seeds are easy to come by.)

**6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5 MIN**

**7. ACTIVITY TIME . . . . . 10 MIN**

*Sack of Grain*

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ crayons, colored pencils, and paper

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

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

*Retell the Story*

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ silver cup
- ✓ burlap sack
- ✓ large bag of rice
- ✓ simple costume (An earth-toned cloth with a hole cut in the middle and a rope belt would work fine.)

**TOTAL 75 MIN**

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

**Joseph had faith in God's plan**—As we saw last week, Pharaoh was so impressed with Joseph's wisdom that he put Joseph in charge of all Egypt. Pharaoh even said that the wisdom of Joseph's plan and his ability to interpret dreams came from God (Genesis 41:38–39). Joseph didn't trust himself, he trusted God.

Because he believed and trusted God, Joseph was able to plan wisely for the famine and diligently carried out the plan. Every city in Egypt stored away a huge amount of grain. Then, when the famine came, Egypt was the only country that was prepared; it was the only country that had food to spare for others, including the Israelites. Everything happened just as God said it would.

**Joseph's brothers won't repent**—There is much to see in this long but fascinating passage. Joseph's dreams of many years earlier—dreams that his brothers would bow down to him—literally come true. The brothers spend three days in jail, and guilt over selling Joseph rises up in them. They clearly see that their betrayal of Joseph is the worst thing they have ever done. They can admit that to each other. They can even see that God has been the author of the events involving Joseph. But when they go home they still hide from their father that they had sold Joseph. Because of their fear, they still do not repent to God of their past sin against Joseph or confess it to their father.

**Joseph's brothers keep on lying**—When their food runs low in Canaan, Joseph's brothers return to Egypt to buy more grain. This time they bring their brother Benjamin. As they prepare to depart for home with their grain, Joseph has a silver cup stashed in Benjamin's grain sack.

Once they sold their brother as a slave Joseph's brothers started a pattern of lying to keep out of trouble. They were afraid to tell the truth then and that sin has grown. The brothers are brought back to Joseph and accused of stealing. Even then, they keep telling the lie about how their missing brother was killed by an animal. Though they sense they are being judged by God (Genesis 42:22), they still do not admit their guilt. When we are trapped by our sin, we can be tempted to act as if telling a lie over and over again actually makes it true!

## WHERE IS JESUS?

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

Read Acts 7:9–10.

The story of Joseph's kidnapping, slavery, and imprisonment is tragic. But in it all, God was at work saving his people. Because of Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph knew Egypt needed to store grain for the coming famine. This is the grain that Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to purchase, so that Abraham's descendants would not die off. That way, one day Jesus could be born as one of Abraham's far-off great-grandchildren.

Story after story points to God as a God who saves. Through Jesus, God would ultimately save his people from spiritual hunger and death. Jesus offered himself as the "bread of life" (John 6:35) to all who are spiritually hungry.

## 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 42 from the Scriptures or read story 25, "God Provides for the Israelites in Famine," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

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

#### Predicting the Future

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ pencil
- ✓ balloon
- ✓ pin

Tell the children that you can predict the future. Make it a big deal like you have a special gift. Once you convince them, pick up the pencil and hold it out. Tell them that you are going to

drop the pencil and it is going to fall. Then drop the pencil. When it falls, take your bows and ham it up.

Repeat the demonstration, only this time, blow up a balloon and tell them that when you push the pin into the balloon it is going to pop. Again, take your bows. Use this illustration to talk about how your ability to predict the future and Joseph knowing the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams are different.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **Did Joseph just take a lucky guess when it came to Pharaoh's dreams?**  
*(No, God gave Joseph the knowledge of what the dreams represented.)*
  
- **How did Joseph demonstrate humility in using his gift of interpreting dreams?**  
*(In Genesis 41:16, Joseph told Pharaoh that God would give the interpretation as though Joseph were not even part of the process.)*

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

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

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

**Reaping What You Sow**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ paper and pencils for each child
- ✓ a small prize
- ✓ ten different kinds of dried seeds (Sunflower seeds, corn, and other familiar seeds can be obtained from bird seed; also, fruit seeds are easy to come by.)

Lay the seeds out on individual numbered sheets of paper. Have the children file by them and list on their paper by number what plant would grow from each seed if it were planted. (Certain seeds like corn are more obvious.)

Give the class the answers one by one and see who guessed the most correct and award a prize.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **If we sow sin in our lives what will we reap?**  
*(Galatians 6:8 tells us we will reap destruction.)*
  
- **What will we reap if we sow righteousness?**  
*(Galatians 6:8 also says the one who sows to please the Spirit will reap eternal life.)*
  
- **What did Joseph's brothers sow? What did they reap?**  
*(Joseph's brothers sowed sin in their jealousy and evil toward Joseph. They reaped destruction in that now in the midst of the famine they had to ask the one they sinned against for food. Joseph was then used by God to teach his sinful brothers a lesson. In Genesis 42:21–23 they even sensed they were being disciplined by God for their sin.)*
  
- **What can we learn from this?**  
*(Galatians 6:8 tells us we will reap what we sow. If we want to be free of bad consequences, we should live according to God's law. The reality is that we will all fail. Notice in this story that God's salvation comes to undeserving brothers through Joseph. Joseph gives them grain even though they do not deserve it; he could have had them all thrown into prison. Similarly, although we should all receive destruction for our sin, we instead receive grace through Jesus' death on the cross.)*

**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**

**Sack of Grain**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ crayons, colored pencils, and paper

Have the children draw a picture of a sack of grain with a silver cup in the mouth of the sack.

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

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

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

*Retell the Story*

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ silver cup
- ✓ burlap sack
- ✓ large bag of rice
- ✓ simple costume (An earth-toned cloth with a hole cut in the middle and a rope belt would work fine.)

Retell the story using the props as though you were one of the soldiers. The class is your family and you have just come home from serving Joseph. Play the role of the person whom Joseph asked to put the cup in the sack. Stay in character, and invite the children to ask you questions about the story and the lesson.

