

LESSON 22

Joseph's Dreams

GENESIS 35:1, 6, 9-12; 37:1-11



BIBLE TRUTH

A MAN PLANS HIS COURSE, BUT THE LORD DETERMINES HIS STEPS
(PROVERBS 16:9 NIV)

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 37:1–11 from the Scriptures or read story 22, “Joseph’s Dreams,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** **10 MIN**
The One in Charge
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ long-sleeved dress shirt
 - ✓ a broom and dustpan
 - ✓ a bag of confetti (from a party store)
4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** **10 MIN**
5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** **10 MIN**
Saving through Dreams
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ pencils
 - ✓ paper
6. **WORD BIBLE MEMORY** **5 MIN**
7. **ACTIVITY TIME** **15 MIN**
Making Sheaves
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ wild oats or other grasses with blooming heads
 - ✓ ball of twine
 - ✓ scissors
8. **CLOSING PRAYER** **5 MIN**
9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** **20 MIN**
They Are Eating the Cookies
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ a colorful baseball cap
 - ✓ a box full of cookies

TOTAL 90 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

God fulfilled his promise to Jacob—Once again God reaches out to Jacob. God repeats the promise given to Abraham and gives Jacob a new name, Israel (Genesis 35:9–10). God commands Jacob to be fruitful and multiply and increase in number. Through Jacob, God will make a whole nation by the same name, Israel, and out of that nation will come kings.

Because Jacob favored Joseph, Joseph’s brothers hated him—Jacob’s favorite son is Joseph. He decides to give Joseph a special coat. Although most English translations describe the coat Jacob gave Joseph as multicolored, the more important issue was that it was a long coat with long sleeves; it was the type of coat worn only by managers or officials.

The coat sets Joseph apart from his brothers, making it obvious to everyone that he is his father’s favorite son. Joseph’s brothers react with jealousy. They hate Joseph so much they will not speak a kind word to him.

God gave Joseph two dreams—God gives Joseph two dreams. Joseph tells his brothers about these dreams, perhaps with pride. This is unwise because it tempts Joseph’s brothers to be even more jealous of him. The brothers respond with hatred.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Hatred

Hatred, as an expression of sin, is an intense anger for a fellow person. Paul, in Galatians 5:20 NIV, calls hate an obvious act of the sinful nature. He says that those who act with hatred “will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:21).

On the other hand, we are commanded to have righteous anger when we “hate what is evil” according to Romans 12:9 NIV. Jesus said that the world will hate us because of him if we follow him (Mark 13:13). When Joseph’s brothers hated him, they were sinning against Joseph and against God.

WHERE IS JESUS?

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

Read Psalm 105:1–19.

Psalm 105 briefly tells the story of God's wonderful works and of his covenant promise to Abraham, the promise to send a Savior. It speaks of God's promise to Abraham lasting forever. It also tells the history of God's work among the Israelites.

We haven't read about this yet, but Joseph is about to find himself alone in Egypt after his brothers sell him as a slave. Verse 17, speaking of the Israelites, says that God "sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave." How did God "send" Joseph? He did it by arranging all the elements of Joseph's life. Every event, every day, was part of God's plan.

The most important part of God's plan was completed when Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead. But God's plan still continues today, in every event and every moment. Because of what Jesus did on the cross, even today God is continuing to bless all nations through the spiritual offspring of Abraham, who are now called Christians.

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 37:1–11 from the Scriptures or read story 22, "Joseph's Dreams," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

The One in Charge**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ long-sleeved dress shirt
- ✓ a broom and dustpan
- ✓ a bag of confetti (from a party store)

Some Bibles describe Joseph's coat as multicolored, others describe it as richly ornamented. The actual Hebrew only tells us that it had long sleeves. James Boice, in his commentary on Genesis, suggests that the coat represented authority because a manager not a laborer would have worn long sleeves. At the beginning of the chapter, Joseph is in the field with his brothers. After receiving the coat, Joseph remains behind, only going to check on them for his father. In any case, the coat was a special gift to Joseph alone that made his brothers jealous.

Prior to the start of class, sprinkle confetti around the room. Once class begins, ask for a volunteer. Give the long-sleeved shirt to the volunteer to wear over their clothes. Then explain to the class that the confetti on the floor and furniture is going to need to be cleaned up. Tell them that everyone has to help except the person wearing the shirt. That person's job is to tell the rest of the class when they have missed a piece of confetti and to let you, the teacher, know when someone is not doing their job.

Tell the volunteer to go around the room and do the following:

- Say, "Everyone clean up the area around their chair."
- Hand the dustpan and broom to two children and have them clean up the common area.
- Give certain children breaks, instructing someone else to clean their area.
- Report any poor attitudes or complaints to the teacher.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **How did you feel not being chosen as the "manager"? How did you feel when {manager's name} didn't have to work and you did?**
(Elicit that the children felt jealous.)

■ **How is this situation similar to our Bible story today?**

{Manager's name} was put in charge of the rest of the children. Joseph was given special attention by his father just as {manager's name} was given special attention. Also, Joseph reported his brothers' misbehavior to his father in much the same way that {manager's name} reported infractions of the rest of the class to the teacher.

■ **How did God use the sin of Joseph's brothers for good?**

(Joseph's brothers' sin of jealousy propelled them to take revenge selling Joseph into slavery. This, however, was all a part of God's plan to preserve his people through a later famine.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION **10 MIN**

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

OBJECT LESSON 2 **10 MIN**

Saving through Dreams

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ pencils
- ✓ paper

Divide the class into groups of five. Have the groups compare the dreams in Genesis 37:5–11 with their fulfillment in Genesis 42—43. Ask the groups to write down the chapters and verses where Joseph's early dreams were fulfilled. Then come back together and discuss the fulfillment of these dreams as a class.

Ask the following questions:

■ **How did God bring salvation to Israel through the fulfillment of Joseph's dreams?**

(Joseph was brought to a place of authority in Egypt. He had food set aside during years of plenty. Later, Jacob and his family would be preserved and move to Goshen.)

■ **How was this salvation critical to our salvation?**

(God had purposed that Jesus would be born into the line of Israel. Had all of Israel died of starvation in the famine, Jesus would never have been born. God preserved his people and in so doing, preserved us.)

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 **15 MIN**

Making Sheaves

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ wild oats or other grasses with blooming heads
- ✓ ball of twine
- ✓ scissors

Have the children make a small bundle of grasses to remind them of the story. Cut the stems so they are a manageable length. Give each child three stems and a piece of twine.

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

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

BONUS OBJECT LESSON **20 MIN**

They Are Eating the Cookies

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a colorful baseball cap
- ✓ a box full of cookies

Explain to the class that they are going to act out a modern-day Joseph story. In this modern version, a family has twelve children (use fewer if your class is smaller). One day their mother is making cookies and sets them on a rack to cool. She tells the children that she has to take the youngest son, Joseph, out for a few minutes and not to eat any of the cookies. However, when she leaves, the remaining siblings plan to take only one cookie, reasoning that their mother will never miss just one. But eventually they each take a cookie. Joseph walks in on them all eating cookies and calls for their mother.

Mother comes in, catches the children in their act of disobedience and then gives Joseph a colorful hat to wear, saying she can always count on him to do the right thing. End the skit with the siblings plotting behind Joseph's back to ruin his new hat.

You will need to serve as an acting coach and once the skit is finished have them perform it for one of the younger classes. Then discuss how their skit was similar to the Bible story for today, and ask the children how they would feel to have a brother or sister “tattle” on them.