

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**  
*Guess the Meaning of My Dream*
4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** ..... **10 MIN**
5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** ..... **10 MIN**  
*God’s Bigger Purpose*  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ pencils
  - ✓ paper
6. **WORD BIBLE MEMORY** ..... **5 MIN**
7. **ACTIVITY TIME** ..... **15 MIN**  
*Dreams*  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ crayons, colored pencils, paper
8. **CLOSING PRAYER** ..... **5 MIN**
9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** ..... **20 MIN**  
*Cows and Corn*  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ modeling clay or dough

**TOTAL 90 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!



## A LITTLE BIT MORE

### *Blessing*

The story of Joseph demonstrates God's blessing on a person. God blessed Joseph together with those around him; e.g., Potiphar and Pharaoh.

The blessing of the Lord can also be called kindness (Genesis 39:21 NIV) or that the Lord is "with him" (Genesis 39:23). Blessing on an individual is a reflection of the gracious character of God. Man is never deserving of God's favor, but God, who is rich in mercy, gives us gifts that are undeserved and places his favor on us. Though we are blessed in many ways, there is no blessing that is greater than the blessing we receive from being united with Christ—saved through his sacrificial death on the cross.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:3–6)

## 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**

*Guess the Meaning of My Dream*

Have the children guess what the following fictitious dreams mean. Explain that if it is hard for them to guess the interpretations of these made-up dreams that coincide with real events in history, how much harder would it have been for Joseph to interpret dreams about unknown future events.

Orville Wright’s dream—I saw two birds sitting on the sand. One flew while the other looked up. When the first bird landed, the other bird jumped up and down. (The flying of the first airplane.)

Thomas Edison’s dream—I saw a terrible darkness followed by a great light that made the whole world bright. (The invention of the lightbulb.)

Tiger Woods’ dream—I saw in my dream a green monster eating hundreds of white eggs. Each time the monster ate a white egg, a man patted me on the back. (The green monster is the golf course, and the eggs are golf balls falling into the cups, bringing praise for the skill of the golfer who sinks the balls.)

Walt Disney’s dream—I saw in my dream a great castle invaded by animals, particularly black mice. (The creation of Disneyland and Mickey Mouse.)

Benjamin Franklin’s dream—I saw in my dream paper all over the world with my picture on it. People were worshiping my picture. (Benjamin Franklin’s picture is on the \$100 bill; people make an idol out of money.)

Make up a few of your own and use these as an introduction to talk to the children about how God is in control of all things and how he blessed Joseph with the interpretations of the dreams. Read the story and discuss it.

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

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

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

**God's Bigger Purpose**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ pencils
- ✓ paper

Have the children write their answer to the following question:

■ **How is the story of Joseph like the story of Jesus?**

*(Joseph was wrongly accused like Jesus; Joseph was arrested and thrown into prison, and Jesus was arrested; God would use Joseph to save his people by providing grain for bread in the years of drought, and Jesus saved us by dying on the cross. Jesus is called the bread of life [John 6:35].)*

Help the children as they write with hints and clues from the answer above.

**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**

**Dreams**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ Crayons, colored pencils, paper

Have the children draw a picture of either the dream about the cows or the ears of corn. Talk to them about how Joseph was able, with God's help, to interpret the dream.



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

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

**BONUS OBJECT LESSON** ..... **20 MIN**

**Cows and Corn**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ modeling clay or dough

Divide the class into two teams. Assign one team the task of making a clay depiction of the dream about the cows and the other team, the dream about the ears of corn. When the models are complete, have each team choose a spokesperson to explain the dream and then give the interpretation Joseph gave to Pharaoh.