

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**
All Gifts Are from God
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ newspaper
 - ✓ trash can
 - ✓ a little prize
4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** **10 MIN**
5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** **10 MIN**
God's Greater Plan
6. **WORD BIBLE MEMORY** **5 MIN**
7. **ACTIVITY TIME** **15 MIN**
Sack of Grain
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ crayons, colored pencils, and paper
8. **CLOSING PRAYER** **5 MIN**
9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** **15 MIN**
May the Best Drama Win
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ two silver cups (any cups will do)
 - ✓ two empty sacks
 - ✓ ten silver coins
 - ✓ prize for the winning team

TOTAL 85 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!

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Israel

God first gave Jacob the name Israel in Genesis 32:28; God later confirms this name change in Genesis 35:10. Between these two pronouncements of God, Israel became the name of the land in which the offspring of Israel (Jacob) settled (see Genesis 34:7). It was a common practice to name the land after the one who settled it.

The descendants of the twelve sons of Israel carried the name of their ancestor; their land was called by that name as well; i.e., the land of Judah. God calls his people Israel when speaking to Moses (see Exodus 3:9), and after this, the people of God are referred to as Israel.

In the New Testament, we learn that one doesn't have to be a descendant of Jacob to be a part of Israel. God's chosen people, both Gentiles and Jews, comprise the true Israel (see Romans 9:6–8).

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

All Gifts Are from God

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ newspaper
- ✓ trash can
- ✓ a little prize

Enlist the class in helping to crumple up the newspaper into balls. Give a ball to each person in the class. Explain to them that you are going to have a contest to see who is the most gifted shot in the group. Line up the students and have them toss the newspaper ball into the waste can from increasingly further distances. Declare the best thrower as the champion and give him or her a little prize.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- Ask the winner how it is that he or she did so well.
(See if they give God the credit for their ability.)
- Is God the giver of all gifts, even the ability to toss paper balls into trash cans?
(Yes, God is the giver of all of our gifts.)
- What is the purpose of our gifts?
(1 Corinthians 10:31 says that whatever we do we are to do to the glory of God).
- Do our gifts play a bigger role in the plan of God?
(Yes, Philippians 2:13 and Ephesians 1:11 teach us that all things work according to his plan.)

- **What was the greater plan of God served by Joseph's ability to interpret dreams?**

(God's plan to redeem Israel was the ultimate plan of which Joseph was a part. God used Joseph to preserve Israel, the people out of which the Savior would one day come.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

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

OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

God's Greater Plan

Have the children take turns reading aloud Acts chapter 7. Then have them write an answer to the following question:

- **How was Joseph used by God in his greater plan of salvation for all?**

(If it had not been for Joseph, Israel would have been lost. It was through Joseph that Israel came to Egypt and prospered. Later, when they were enslaved, Moses came as another picture of Christ to deliver Israel from bondage. This picture of redemption, which is so meaningful to us today, was possible because of the way God used Joseph.)

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

Sacks of Grain

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ crayons, colored pencils, and paper

Have the children draw a picture of the sacks being emptied with the money bags mixed in the grain. Take time to talk about why Joseph might have wanted to trick his brothers. (God used Joseph to bring judgment on his brothers for what they had done to him.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

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

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

May the Best Drama Win

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ two silver cups (any cups will do)
- ✓ two empty sacks
- ✓ ten silver coins
- ✓ prize for the winning team

Divide the class up into two teams. You can add additional teams if you are working with a larger group of students but you will need to also increase the supplies proportionately. Give each team a cup, a sack, and five silver coins. Read Genesis 44 and instruct the groups to act out the events of the chapter using the props. After the skit have each group appoint a spokesperson to tell the class one important thing we learn from this story.

Set the children to work planning the skits and go back and forth between groups coaching them. If you have another teacher or helper, each of you can take a group. Give the children about ten minutes to plan, and then flip a coin to see who goes first.

Judge the performances, and then pass out the prizes to the winning team.