

God's Plan for Joseph

Lesson 13a — Joseph's Dreams

Lesson 13b — Sold Into Egypt

Lesson 13c — Joseph in Prison

Lesson 13d — Ruler in Egypt

OVERVIEW

This unit will be a factual account of the life of Joseph, one of the most beautiful stories in all Scripture. Although it is a story of a man who is pure in character, it is more importantly a story of God's providence. Approximately 175 years before Joseph's birth, God had promised Abraham that his descendants would become a great nation that would possess the land of Canaan and be a blessing to all people (Genesis 12:2,3). Now, God was going to use the jealousy of Jacob's ten older sons and the suffering of this innocent young man to bring about the fulfillment of His promise.

Jacob's actions toward his favorite son and Joseph's words about his brothers, as well as his dreams (Genesis 37:2,6,9), aroused their jealousy to the point that they wanted to kill Joseph. However, when the ten brothers saw the opportunity to do it, God in His sovereignty overruled their plan and replaced it with His own. God found in Joseph a man He could use in spite of extremely difficult circumstances.

One may wonder what God had in mind when He allowed all these events to transpire. In Genesis 15:13 God told Abraham, "Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their's, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years." This was God's way of getting the descendants of Abraham into that place. Also God was interested in preserving lives during the coming famine. As Joseph told his brothers, "God did send me before you to preserve life" (Genesis 45:5). But perhaps more importantly, this was God's means of working repentance in the hearts of these founders of the nation of Israel.

Throughout this unit, teachers will want to stress that God was always with Joseph, and that He had a plan for Joseph's life that was being worked out even through all the trying circumstances he went through. Your students should understand that God has a plan for the life of each one of them too. That plan will come to pass if they trust in God and keep themselves submitted to Him.

GAMES FOR REVIEW

Divide the students into two groups. Prepare several sets of five key words taken from each lesson in this unit. Have each group select two players to work as a team. As in the game of "Password," one player is given a key word and gives one-word clues to his partner who tries to guess what that key word is. Keep score of the total time it takes to determine the answer. Then the next team does a set. At the end, the team with the lowest time-score wins.

Scramble a set of the lesson cards and symbols for each student (see Patterns). Have them match up the correct cards with the symbols and put them in order. Have a prize or a little treat for the first one who finishes correctly.

Print on 3x5 inch cards all the memory verses for the unit — one word per card. Make two sets. Divide the

students into two teams. Give each team a set of cards and tell them to assemble the verses correctly. Have a special sticker or other prize for those on the winning team.

Write questions on the backs of paper "sheaves" (see Patterns). Examples: Who did Joseph's father love most? How old was Joseph? What kind of special garment did Joseph's father make for him? Divide your group into teams. Have the teams take turns drawing a "sheaf" from a basket. If they answer the question correctly, they may paste the sheaf on a large sheet of construction paper. The team answering the most questions wins a prize.

CONTEST IDEAS

Prepare a small box with windows and a door cut into it large enough to accommodate a child's hand. Inside the box place as many small drawstring bags as you

have questions. Fill each bag with wheat, rice, popcorn, etc., and include a small gift (coin, miniature toy, etc.). These would represent food that was stored, then given to the people during the famine. Each child who answers a question correctly gets a bag from the box. This idea would also adapt as an in-class activity.

“A Journey With Joseph” could be the theme for a month-long contest. The journey could begin with the pit Joseph was cast into (a picture or sketch) and end with a scepter or crown, designating the authority given him. The pathway from one point to the other could be illustrated with some of the events in Joseph’s life. (See pattern for bulletin board for this unit.) Give the children points for bringing their Bible, knowing their memory verse, and attending. Each Sunday advance the children accordingly on their journey. The pathway would need to be marked off into as many sections as there would be possible points to gain in the four lessons. Colored map pins, adhesive markers, etc., could be used to indicate the different students.

BULLETIN BOARDS

Make a mural with a long, winding path and use the title, JOSEPH’S LIFE. On the sides of the path have pictures depicting events in Joseph’s life (see Patterns). This could also be done as a flannelgraph. In an envelope have the outcome of Joseph’s life. Seal it and put it on the board to be opened during the last lesson of the month.

Make traffic signs — stop, arrows, etc. (see Patterns), and mount on wall with the heading: “Are You Following God’s Direction for Your Life?”

Spell Joseph in large bubble-type letters (see Patterns), using a different color for each letter. In each letter list an event, or events, and then use them as teaching aids.

CHART IDEAS

Provide each student with a copy of the puzzle showing Jesus in the center and the events of Joseph’s life around the edges (see Patterns). Give them one piece

each week. When the total puzzle is completed, you will need to point out that Jesus was always with Joseph.

Make a copy of the “God’s Plan” finger-play book for each of your students (see Patterns). Have them cut it out and fold it to make a book. Help them to learn the poem and finger play.

Give each child a copy of the FEAR NOT, FOR I AM WITH THEE chart (see Patterns). Each week let the children color the picture which depicts the lesson for that week. They may color the large figure of Joseph during any of the class sessions.

Give each child a copy of the pull-through strip showing the four scenes from the life of Joseph covered in our lessons this month (see Patterns). Each week let them color (using colored pencils or felt tip markers) the picture representing that week’s lesson. On the final Sunday, help your students thread the strip through the base. Then use the completed chart to review the unit lessons.

UNIT SONGS

“Trust and Obey” (chorus)
“Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God”
— C.E.F. Salvation Songs — 1,2,3,4
“God’s Power”
“There’s Victory for Me”
“I’ll Do It All for Jesus”
“One Step at a Time”
“Anywhere With Jesus” — Praises for Children
“Never Say No to God” — Lively Choruses 3

UNIT SUPPORT MATERIAL

Joseph: The Forgiver — by Jester Summers, BibLearn Book, Broadman Press
Stories About Joseph — Pict-o-graph, Standard Publishing
The Boy Who Saved His Family — Arch Book, Concordia
Joseph and His Brothers — Lindvall/Molan, Moody Press

TEXT Genesis 37:1-11

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to relate the dreams Joseph had, and will understand that God showed these to Joseph as an indication of His future plan for Joseph's life.

MEMORY VERSE I the Lord . . . will speak unto him in a dream.
— Numbers 12:6

Joseph's Dreams

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

I THE LORD — Make an L with thumb and first finger of the right hand. Touch thumb to left shoulder, bring across in front of body touching right waist.

WILL SPEAK — Hold right index finger in front of mouth, then roll it forward in a circular movement.

UNTO HIM — Point to someone.

IN A DREAM — Touch the forehead with the index finger and draw it away, crooking and uncrooking finger several times, palm facing you.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

Our memory verse for this week is illustrated by a man who is dreaming as the Lord speaks to him. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut apart the three sections on the heavy black lines. Reassemble the picture with your group as each portion of the verse is learned.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Open your session by asking your class if they ever have dreams. Draw a dream (cloud) shape on a chalkboard. As the children discuss their dreams, illustrate them in the dream shape. Explain that we all have dreams, but Joseph's dreams were special.

1. Joseph's father loved him very much, and so he made him a special coat of many colors. This made his brothers angry.

2. Joseph dreamed that he and his brothers were binding sheaves in the field, and all of his brothers' sheaves bowed over to his.

3. He dreamed again that the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to him.

Climax: When Joseph told his dreams to his brothers, they were more angry than ever, and very jealous of him.

Conclusion: Joseph's dreams were sent from God and showed him part of God's plan for his life, but this made his brothers very unhappy.

Response: Your students will be able to describe the dreams that Joseph had and tell why they were impor-

tant. They will be able to describe his brothers' reaction to these dreams.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

After Jacob returned to Canaan with his family, he first settled at Succoth, then moved near Shechem for a time and finally migrated southward. It was near Bethlehem that Rachel died while giving birth to Benjamin. Finally, returning to Mamre, near Hebron, Jacob settled down near his father Isaac. It was here, as shepherds, that the sons of Jacob showed their resentment toward Joseph to whom their father showed favoritism. His giving Joseph the coat of many colors added to the brothers' envy.

Joseph's dreams indicating his exalted or superior position, told perhaps unwisely to his brothers, further antagonized them. Dreams in Bible times were highly regarded and thought to be warnings or predictions of the future. Dream interpreters were always in demand, especially by kings and people in authority. If the interpretations were accurate or seemingly favorable, they secured a place of honor and prestige for the interpreter.

One principle of interpretation seems quite evident: when the symbol is in the natural realm, the interpretation is in the human realm; e.g., when Joseph dreamed of the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing to him, his brothers immediately knew the meaning as referring to his father, mother, and themselves. Joseph, too, must have understood this to be an indication of God's plan for his life, at least a part of it.

God's revelations to man were often given through His servants in dreams and visions. Also He gave warnings and admonition through dreams to persons outside His chosen people. Oftentimes these were clear enough to be understood but at other times an interpreter was needed, such as Joseph's interpretation for Pharaoh and Daniel's for Nebuchadnezzar.

God can, and perhaps sometimes does, reveal His will in dreams today, but for the most part that is unnecessary because He has provided us with His written Word and the Holy Spirit as a Guide and Teacher.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Let your class use the finger puppets of the sun, moon, and stars; also of sheaves (see Patterns) as you tell the story.

Make a hand puppet to use for this lesson and the following one (see Patterns). The body of the puppet can be made from fabric, Pellon-type fabric, or felt. The face and hands may be traced and colored, using non-fusible Pellon which will color nicely and last for a long time. (This is also a good material to use for homemade flannel board characters — trace, color, and cut out. They stick to the flannel board and are suitable for many Bible lessons.) Attach a face and the hands to the body. If the faces are attached with Velcro they can be easily replaced with others and used with several lessons.

Use cornstalks and bind them together with strings to make sheaves. Illustrate the brothers' sheaves bowing down to Joseph's sheaf. Also show pictures of the sun, moon, and stars depicting his brothers and parents also bowing down to him. Use a boy doll as Joseph. Bring a colorful coat to class also.

Do a chalk talk with simple stick figures illustrating Joseph's dreams (see Patterns).

Give each child two copies of the "dream" shape (see Patterns). As you talk about the dream with the sheaves, have them glue into one of the dream shapes some bundles of paper strips which you have tied together with thread. When you describe the dream about the stars, give them eleven stars and a sun and moon to glue onto the other dream shape.

QUESTIONS

Why did Jacob make a coat of many colors for Joseph but not for his other sons?

Joseph's brothers were jealous of their father's love for Joseph. How would you feel if you were in the same situation as Joseph? as his brothers?

What was special about Joseph that made Jacob love him so much? Why do you think God chose Joseph?

Why is being "special" or "chosen" sometimes hard?

Joseph's brothers hated Joseph more because of his dreams. Do you think he should have told them? Why or why not?

How do you feel when your brothers, sisters, or friends are mad at you? How do you think Joseph felt?

What was different about Joseph's dreams?

What did his dream mean?

Have you ever had a special dream that you continued to think about?

Do dreams always come true?

What are some other ways God has talked to people?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Show your little ones a series of pictures which illustrate different things mentioned in the lesson; i.e., coat of many colors, head on pillow with dream balloon above, wheat sheaf, sun, moon, stars — along with unrelated items not in the story (see Patterns). Have children pick out those things that are mentioned in the lesson.

Give each child a cutout of Joseph in a plain coat (see Patterns), to which the children may add the many colors, using colored adhesive strips, stickers, or even coloring in a design.

Illustrate different ways people give us a message: person-to-person talk, telephone, letter, sign language. God spoke to Joseph in dreams. Hold up a cloud-shape cut from construction paper. Draw in the two dreams.

REVIEW IDEAS

Make a big puzzle — each piece represents a part of the dreams (see Patterns). Enlarge and copy the pattern onto posterboard. Use an X-acto knife to cut around the heavy lines of the five puzzle pieces so they can be removed. Attach the posterboard over a second sheet. Write the five names in the correct open spaces (as shown on pattern), then put the puzzle pieces back into place. During your review tell about each of Joseph's dreams and then go back and talk about the meanings of each one. Remove one piece of the puzzle at a time to reveal who each part of the dreams represented. Tell the children that God knew what was ahead for Joseph's life and that Joseph trusted God.

Bring a large cutout of the word WHY with question mark following (see Patterns). Punch holes in the bottom of the letters and tie long pieces of yarn through the holes. Put the word at the top of the display board. Discuss some of the things that might happen to a person about which they could ask, "Why?" Some examples might be: sickness, loss of someone they love, car

accident, poverty, etc. Attach cards with each of these ideas to the strands of yarn coming down from the WHY? Conclude your review by stressing the verse in Romans 8:28, "All things work together for good to them that love God."

Use some students to act out Joseph and his dreams. Have one sleeping on the floor with a blanket, and eleven students holding large cardboard sheaves. Let these students bow down to Joseph as he dreams. Repeat the scene, replacing the eleven sheaves with ele-

ven cardboard stars and a cardboard sun and moon.

SUPPORT MATERIAL

Bible Children — Classroom Story and Activity Book — 8 each of 6 pictures, Standard Publishing

Joseph — My Bible Story Card — (3"x4½" card) has picture of Joseph in coat of many colors with Scripture reference on the back, Concordia

Joseph the Dreamer — Palm Tree Bible Series, Concordia

MEMORY VERSE SONG

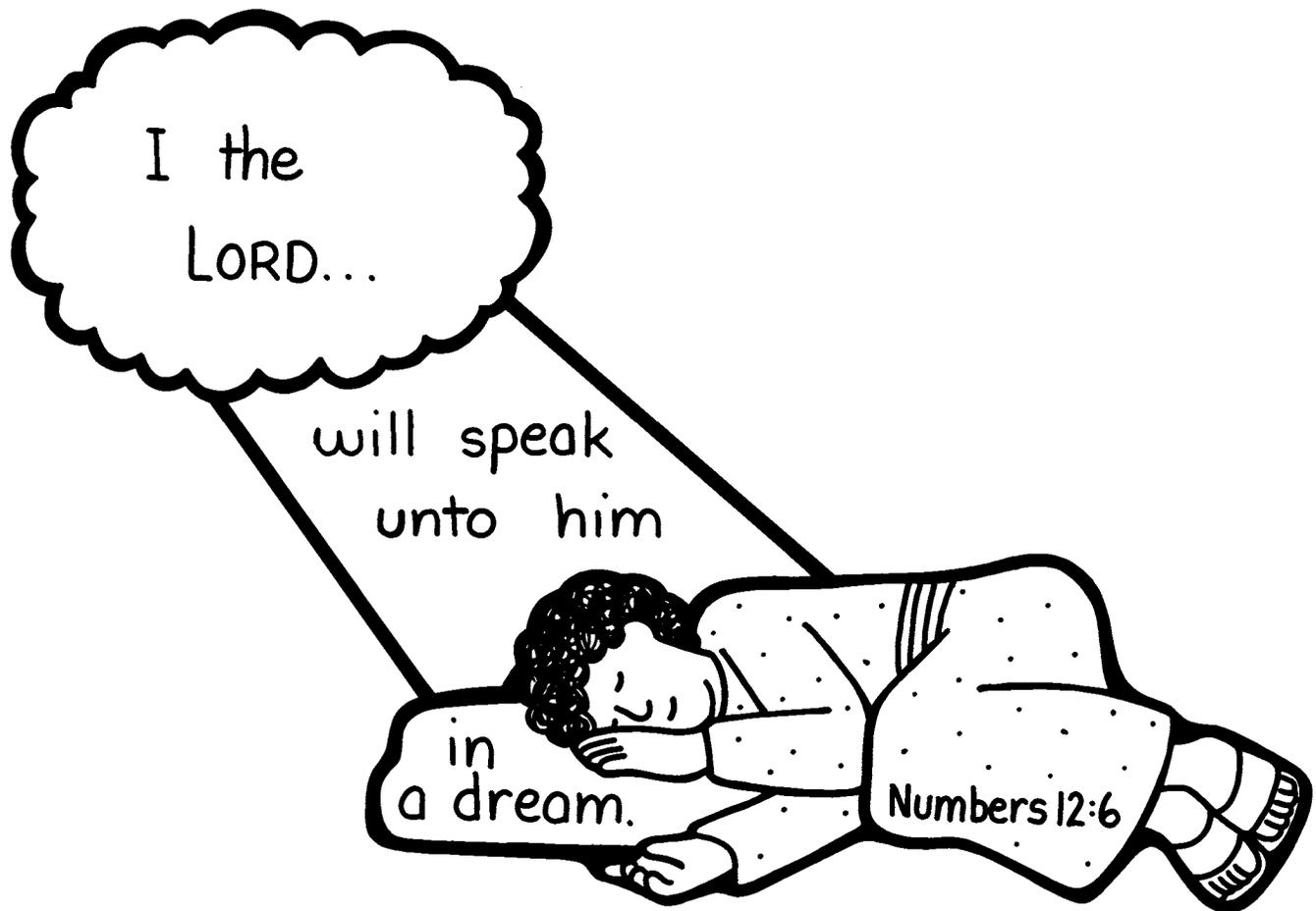


I the LORD, I the LORD, I the LORD will speak unto him in a dream.



I the LORD, I the LORD, I the LORD will speak unto him in a dream.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED



TEXT Genesis 37:12-35

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to describe how Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. They will understand that God spared Joseph's life and that He had a plan for Joseph.

MEMORY VERSE The Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy.
— Genesis 39:21

Sold Into Egypt

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

THE LORD — Make an L with thumb and first finger of the right hand. Touch thumb to left shoulder, bring across in front of body touching right waist.

WAS WITH — Fists touching at chest, palm to palm.

JOSEPH — Draw a large J with right hand.

AND SHEWED HIM MERCY — With both open palms touching chest, roll both hands up and away from body. Then move palms down as though stroking an imaginary person in front of you.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

The visual representation of our memory verse for this week is a graphic design of Joseph's name. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut apart the three sections as indicated by the heavy black lines. Arrange the sections on your display board, one at a time, as your students learn the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Blindfold one of your students and have him put two fingers on the table in a "let your fingers do the walking" position. Tell him you have a plan to help his fingers move to a treat you have placed on the table, but he must follow your instructions in order to get it. Direct his movement until he reaches the reward. Help your students understand that Joseph didn't know what God's plan was for him, but he was willing to follow God and do what was right anyway.

1. Joseph's father sent him to Shechem, where his brothers were supposed to be tending the flocks, to find out how they were doing.
 2. When Joseph's brothers saw him coming, they plotted to kill him. They planned to say some wild animal had slain him.
 3. One brother, Reuben, suggested that instead of killing him, they should throw him into a pit in the wilderness.
 4. When Joseph came near, they seized him, took off his coat of many colors, and threw him into the pit.
- Climax: A group of traders passed by on their way to

Egypt, and Joseph's brothers decided to sell him as a slave.

Conclusion: God permitted these things to happen to Joseph as part of His divine plan for his life.

Response: Your students will be able to describe the events which led to Joseph's being taken into Egypt. They will understand that God allowed all of this because He could see what the final outcome would be.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Joseph's brothers, having been antagonized by the favoritism of the father, plotted to kill him and deceive their father into believing an animal had done it. The "pit" they cast him into was likely a cistern, a deep hole cut into rock or hard clay, and used to collect and hold rainwater for watering the flocks or quenching the thirst of traveling caravans.

Cisterns were used also as dungeons when they held no water. The opening was small enough to put a cover on top, with the bottom of the cistern much wider. This shape made it virtually impossible for a person to escape once he was dropped into the cistern. Centuries after the time of Joseph, the prophet Jeremiah was put into a cistern in a prison courtyard.

Dothan, the area where Joseph finally found his brothers tending the flocks, was situated on a major trade route between Syria and Egypt so it wasn't unusual for caravans to be moving through this area. By God's providence a group of Ishmeelite traders came by while Joseph's brothers were still in the area. Instead of his being left to die in the pit, as some of them intended, he was brought forth and sold as a slave to be taken into Egypt. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery thinking to get rid of him forever, not knowing that this was the very means God planned to use to spare his life and eventually their very own lives and the lives of their families. The brothers maybe thought they could prevent Joseph's dreams from being fulfilled. It is good to remember in times of adversity that others cannot prevent God's working in our life or ful-

filling His plans for us. Only we can separate ourselves from the love of Christ and His will or plan for our life.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Make paper chains and have the students wear them as you tell how Joseph was sold by his brothers and led away into captivity in Egypt.

Bring a large shoe box in which you have cut an opening in the lid. In the box, place small pictures of things pertaining to the lesson — one for each student (see Patterns). Attach each picture to one end of a long piece of yarn. On the other end of the yarn tape a number. Keep the numbers and pictures in the correct order according to when that event happened in the story. Assign a number to each child. Have them pull their picture from the box when it is time to add that numbered picture in the story's sequence.

Have twenty pieces of foil or foil-wrapped candy to represent the price for which Joseph was sold.

Use the desert scene and stick puppet of Joseph to describe the lesson (see Patterns). When you tell how the brothers put Joseph into the pit, lower the puppet into the cutout of the scene.

Make a pit from construction paper to put Joseph in.

Give each child a copy of the dot-to-dot picture of Joseph and his brothers (see Patterns). When the children have completed them, they will see where Joseph was going to spend the rest of his life — Egypt.

QUESTIONS

Why did Jacob send Joseph to his brothers?

Why did Joseph's brothers wish to do him evil?

Reuben did not want to kill Joseph. What was his suggestion? What did Reuben himself plan to do with Joseph?

Whose idea was it to sell Joseph to the Ishmeelites?

How much did the Ishmeelites pay for Joseph? Do you know who was sold for thirty pieces of silver?

By getting rid of Joseph, did his brothers rid themselves of all the hate and bitterness in their hearts? How do you think they felt as they returned home to tell their father that an animal had killed Joseph?

How do you think Joseph felt, knowing he was sold by his own brothers?

Why do you suppose the brothers took Joseph's coat of many colors away from him?

In what way could Joseph's being sold and taken to Egypt be a part of God's plan for him?

Is it possible for things that seem bad at the time to work out for good and actually be a part of God's plan for your life? Explain.

God has a plan for each person. Name some people you know who have followed God's plan. Tell about them.

Do you believe God has a plan for your life? How do you know?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Use twelve cone figures made from construction paper and glue on round circles for the faces (see Patterns). The angry faces represent the brothers. A smiling face represents Joseph. Use these to act out the story.

Make a pouch and put some money into it. As you discuss how Joseph's brothers traded him for some money, help the children to see that, though money could buy things, it couldn't take the place of a brother. Talk about all the things a brother can do with you: play ball, tell secrets, share a sandwich, build something with blocks, etc.

Give each child a copy of the figure of Joseph with the circle of feet attached by a paper fastener (see Patterns). Let them help Joseph "walk" to find his brothers.

REVIEW IDEAS

Plan your presentation along the lines of Paul Harvey's, "The Rest of the Story." Using large pictures or an overhead, talk about other Bible characters who could have said, "Why did this happen to me?" Some possible examples: Job, the blind man, Samuel, three Hebrew children, Daniel. Explain how the end result was good in each case: God had a plan, just as He did for Joseph.

Sister Edna Crawford's testimony could be used effectively for this lesson. [Tract No. 33 - Teenager Rewarded for Faithful Stand] It tells how her parents persecuted her and told her to leave home. She came to live with Sister Florence L. Crawford and eventually, one by one, her family was saved — because she continued to love them, pray for them, and was true to the Lord.

Bring a beautiful tapestry or something else handmade and show the children the reverse side first. Compare it with how we don't know why we go through some things here, but later on in life or when we reach Heaven, we will see the full pattern worked out. Turn the tapestry over to show the finished work.

MEMORY VERSE SONG



The Lord was with Joseph, the Lord was with Joseph, the Lord was with



Joseph and shewed him mercy. The Lord was with Joseph, the Lord was with



Joseph, and shewed him mer - cy.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

The LORD was
with

JOSPH, and
shewed him mercy. Genesis 39:21

The word "JOSPH" is rendered in large, stylized, bubbly letters. Each letter is filled with a different pattern: 'J' has diagonal lines, 'O' has a grid, 'S' has dots, 'P' has 'x' marks, and 'H' has vertical lines. The text is enclosed in a thick black border.

TEXT Genesis 39:1-6,19-23

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to recount how Potiphar's wife lied about Joseph and caused him to be put into prison. They will understand that God was always with Joseph, even in times of trouble.

MEMORY VERSE Fear not: for I am with thee. — Isaiah 43:5

Joseph in Prison

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

FEAR NOT — Place hands in front of face, move back (afraid).

FOR I — Point up.

AM WITH — Fists touching chest, palm to palm.

THEE — Point to others.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

A stone prison is the visual representation of this week's memory verse. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut apart the three pieces on the heavy black lines. Put the arrangement back together, one section at a time, as your students learn the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Use the prison provided as a Memory Verse Visualized pattern at the end of the lesson as your opener for this class session. Ask the students to identify what the picture is, and then imagine how they might feel if they were put into prison. Briefly review the events of the past two lessons, helping the students see several occasions where Joseph might have been frightened. Bring out how God was with Joseph in each situation.

1. Joseph was sold to a man named Potiphar in Egypt, and he served his master faithfully and well.
2. Potiphar's wife told a lie about Joseph.
3. When Potiphar heard this lie, he became very angry with Joseph.

Climax: Joseph was put into prison because of the lie. But even there he did what was good and right in God's sight.

Conclusion: Even though this seemed like another hard situation for Joseph, God was still with him.

Response: The students will be able to relate the fact that God was with Joseph in prison to the fact that He will also be with us in every time of need, if we are doing what is right in His sight.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Joseph, having been sold into slavery by his brothers, was bought in the slave market by an officer of

Pharaoh, an Egyptian named Potiphar. The word "slavery" does not occur at all in the King James Version because both the Hebrew and the Greek words involved are more often rendered "servant."

A slave's life in Egypt was usually lived in hopelessness and despair. Few ever had days off or any vacations. They expected only that their days would be filled with endless chores and probably difficult, exhausting work, often made worse by beatings and privations. Joseph, however, proved to be so intelligent and trustworthy that his master, in time, put him in charge over all his household. God was with Joseph, and Potiphar's affairs prospered under Joseph's administration.

Because of false accusations brought against Joseph by Potiphar's wife, Joseph was cast into prison. *Justice* in ancient times often meant "guilty until proven innocent." The person suspected or accused of a crime was thrown into prison to await a trial which usually was slow in coming or maybe never took place. The accused often languished in prison for years in the company of robbers, murderers, and the insane. The dungeons were dark and clammy, no toilets, and the stench unbearable. Sickness and disease was rampant, often claiming the lives of the prisoners before they ever came to trial. Many prisons offered no food or water to prisoners and they would survive only if family or friends brought them food.

Even as God had kept and blessed Joseph before, and had given him favor with Potiphar, He brought him to the favorable attention of the prison keeper. This man, finding that he could have complete confidence in Joseph, put into his charge all the other prisoners. God is able to provide and care for His children no matter what the outward circumstances of their life may be.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Use the picture of a man (see Patterns). Let the children paste strips of paper vertically in front of him to look like prison bars.

Make a set of prison bars and figures of Jesus and Joseph from construction paper (see Patterns). Cut out and fold the prison bars as shown. Cut out the figures of Joseph and Jesus which are attached to the paper strip. Put both figures "in prison." The Jesus figure should be kept hidden from sight as the story is told. At the appropriate point in the story, pull the tab and bring the figure of Jesus into view to show that He was with Joseph. Tell your class that Jesus is with us wherever we are and will help us if we trust Him.

Make a set of puzzle squares for each child in your class (see Patterns). Copy each puzzle onto heavy paper, cover it with clear contact paper, cut it into squares, and store it in a Ziploc bag. The puzzle contains pairs of key words from this lesson. As the children match each word, have them tell you what part of the lesson the word reminds them of.

Use the picture of Joseph in prison (see Patterns). In the upper right part of the picture cut the flap on three sides, leaving the top intact as a hinge. Behind this flap paste a picture of Jesus. Lift the flap to show God's presence was with Joseph even in time of trouble.

QUESTIONS

Do you ever feel that things are not fair? Do you think Joseph felt this way? How do you react? How did Joseph react?

Has anyone ever told a lie about you? How did you feel?

How do you know God is with you when you have to face difficult times? Tell about a time that God was with you.

How did the prison keeper show that he trusted Joseph? What can we do so that people will trust us?

Would prison be the place you would choose to put Joseph? Why or why not?

Why do you think God allowed Joseph to be put into prison?

In talking about Joseph the Bible says, ". . . that which he did was made to prosper." Explain what that means.

Why do people who love God sometimes have hard times?

What does it mean to trust God to take us through difficult times?

How does God turn one's bad times into good times?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Give each child a copy of the prison and two finger puppets representing Joseph and Jesus (see Patterns). Fold the prison on the dotted lines and glue the tabs together at the sides. Tape the tabs of the finger puppets together to fit the children's fingers. As they put Joseph into the prison, explain that Jesus was also there with him, even though Joseph couldn't see him.

Give each of your students a copy of the Joseph in prison lacing-card (see Patterns). Also give them a length of black yarn that can be laced through the holes to make prison bars for Joseph. (Don't worry if the bars end up a little crooked!)

As you talk about how Joseph may have been lonely and afraid while in prison, mention times when little children might feel afraid. Ask the children if they have any fears. Emphasize that God is always with us. The "Jesus Watches Over Me," Cut and Color Book by Standard Publishing, is an excellent illustration source for this thought.

Make a prison guard out of a short cardboard tube (see Patterns). Tell how the main jailer learned to trust Joseph so much that he didn't need any guards. He put Joseph in charge of the other prisoners!

REVIEW IDEAS

Use verse 23 of the text to explain Joseph's character. "The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his [Joseph's] hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper." Even though Joseph was in prison, the jailer knew he was a good person. He put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners. And he didn't even check up on what Joseph did! Joseph could have used this opportunity to escape or to get all kinds of favors for himself, but he only did what was right. He did what God wanted him to do. Present optional endings to Joseph's situation; such as, using the jailer's trust in him to escape, to get extra food or privileges, or to charge the other prisoners money for favors. Would God have blessed Joseph in these cases?

Emphasize how in all ages of life we feel a need for comfort and security. Bring in a toddler holding a teddy bear. Talk about how that child really wants to have the bear in bed with him at night. Bring in two older children, arm in arm, and talk about how friends can offer security. Then bring out that even a teddy bear or the best of friends cannot always be with us or really help us in the time of trial. But God can! He was with Joseph throughout all of his trials, and He has promised to be with us too.

SUPPORT MATERIAL

Jesus Watches Over Me — Cut and Color Book,
Standard Publishing
I'm Not Afraid — Standard Publishing 2873 (a book)

MEMORY VERSE SONG

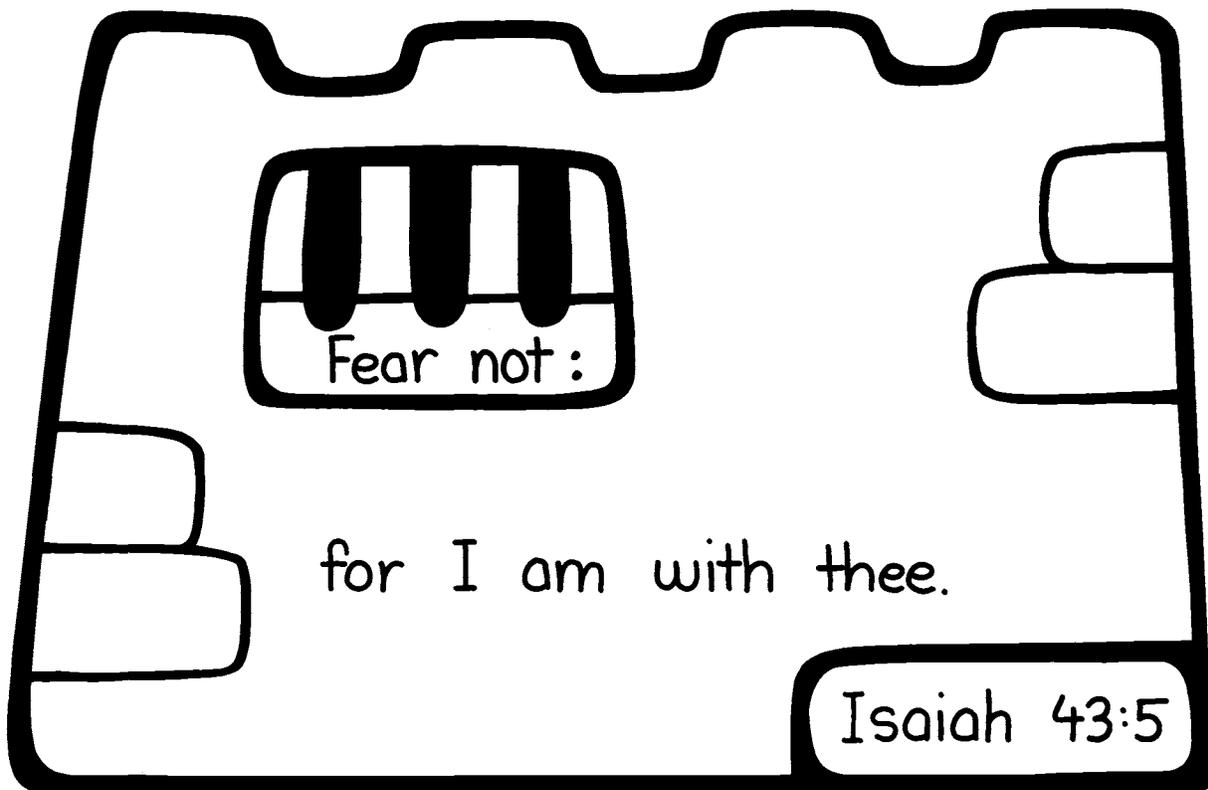


Fear not, fear not: for I am with thee: Fear not for I am with thee.



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MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED



TEXT Genesis 41:9-16, 28-43; 42:5,6; 45:4-10

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to tell how Joseph's God-given ability to interpret dreams caused him to be released from prison and made ruler over the land of Egypt.

MEMORY VERSE See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.
— Genesis 41:41

Ruler in Egypt

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

SEE I — Point up.

HAVE SET — Strike fists together, one on top of the other.

THEE — Point to others.

OVER ALL — With right hand flat, palm down, make a large circle horizontally and clockwise.

THE LAND OF EGYPT — Make a C with the index finger and thumb. Put it on forehead, palm forward.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

A palm tree and two pyramids are in the visual display of our memory verse this week. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut apart the pieces as indicated by the heavy black lines. Arrange them in order, a piece at a time, as your students recite each section of the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Open your session by showing your class a book with a bookmark about halfway through. Explain to your class that you haven't finished the book yet, but that it is a very exciting adventure story. Outline the plot briefly, building up the suspense. Then set the book down. When they wonder what happened next, explain that you haven't read the last chapters yet. Compare this to Joseph's life — it unfolded chapter by chapter. He didn't know what the end would be, but God did!

1. Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, dreamed two dreams and needed to understand the meaning of them.
2. He was told that Joseph could interpret dreams, so he had him brought out of the prison.
3. Joseph told him that his ability to interpret dreams came from God.
4. He explained that the meaning of the king's dreams was that there would be seven years of plenty in Egypt, followed by seven years of famine, and advised Pharaoh how to plan for this situation.

Climax: Pharaoh set Joseph as ruler over all of Egypt, second only to himself.

Conclusion: God rewarded Joseph for his faithfulness and his integrity. All of his family came to live in Egypt

and were saved from the famine.

Response: Your students will be able to describe why Joseph was released from prison and set up as ruler over Egypt.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

While in prison Joseph was used of God to interpret the dreams of two other men in prison, Pharaoh's baker and his cupbearer. As the dreams indicated, the baker was hanged and the cupbearer was restored to his former position with Pharaoh.

Besides talking directly to people, God used dreams to tell of some future event or to give a warning. There are many occasions mentioned in the Bible where dreams are spoken of specifically. Godly men who interpreted were definite about the power's being of God and not of themselves. Dreams may lead men astray. If the content of the dream and its interpretation is not in harmony with the Word of God, one can be sure it is not from God. God's Spirit will witness to the truth, or the fulfillment of the prophecy will confirm the Word. Jeremiah 23:28 says, "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD."

When Pharaoh desperately wanted his dreams interpreted, the Lord, through Joseph, revealed the meaning of the dreams when all the magicians and wise men of Egypt could not. Pharaoh immediately set Joseph over his house and over all the land of Egypt; only in the throne would Pharaoh be greater.

When Pharaoh took his ring of authority and placed it on Joseph's finger, all the people of Egypt knew that Joseph had been given enormous power in the land. The signet ring symbolized great authority and was also used to sign documents. Impressing a signet ring into clay or wax was like signing one's signature today and all kings as well as other men of authority had their own special mark or symbol engraved in their ring.

Using the power or gifts that God had given him, even while still a slave in a foreign land, Joseph won the favor of God and man. Through his faithfulness and obedience to God, Joseph rose from the position of a slave to that of a ruler in the land. His father and family moved to Egypt and were subject to him. Looking back to Joseph's dreams we can see that nothing is impossible with God.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Have children make Joseph masks to wear as you talk about the fact that Joseph was made ruler over the land of Egypt (see Patterns). Copy the masks onto heavy paper, punch holes where indicated, and attach string.

Discuss with your group how God has a special plan for each individual's life. Prepare a series of pictures cut from a magazine which might illustrate a person's hypothetical progression from childhood to adulthood; for example, baby, child eating cereal, child going to school, new car, wedding, parent, grandparent. Let your students help to glue the pictures on a long strip of paper as you describe each event. Explain to your class that you know which pictures will be pasted on next, and in what order — but they don't know until they see it. In the same way, God knows what His plan is for our lives.

Give each child a copy of the picture of Pharaoh's dreams (see Patterns). Let them color the picture as you teach the story.

Bring to class a number of objects which could be used as a reward: a dollar bill, a toy, etc. Discuss how these might be offered as prizes if one does a job well, completes a task, etc. Joseph didn't know he would receive a reward from God in this life for staying faithful, but God did reward him by making him ruler over Egypt and reuniting him with his family.

Show the students one of your old report cards. Discuss the marks that were given for each area. Then present a "report card" you have made up for Joseph. Instead of subjects such as math, or reading, include traits; such as, truthful, obedient, faithful, upright. Leave the space for the grade blank and let your students help you fill in appropriate marks. Discuss why each mark suggested is appropriate.

QUESTIONS

Where did Pharaoh find Joseph when he wanted to know about his dreams?

Why was Joseph in prison?

Who did Joseph say would give the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams?

Why did God tell Joseph the meanings of dreams?

After telling the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams, what advice did Joseph give him?

What did Pharaoh do about the advice Joseph gave him? Why was Joseph given so much power?

God and Pharaoh trusted Joseph. Can God trust us today? How can we show God that He can trust us?

Joseph was in the right place at the right time to save Israel. Christ came at the right time to save the world. What can you do to help those around you?

Through all of Joseph's problems he stayed close to God. Why was this so important? What would have happened if Joseph had tried to fight his own battles?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

The point to be made with preschoolers for this lesson is that God sees when we do good things and it makes Him happy. Show pictures of little children doing good things (sharing, helping, obeying). After each picture ask your class, "Who sees Jeffy helping?" or "Who sees Susie obeying?" Hold up a picture of Jesus and encourage them to answer, "Jesus does." Tie to the lesson on Joseph by briefly telling how God watched Joseph and saw him doing good deeds. Joseph's reward was that he became ruler in Egypt and was reunited with his family.

Give each child a paper crown to color (see Patterns). Then tape the two pieces together and let them wear the crowns while you talk about Joseph's ending up as a ruler in Egypt. Be sure to explain that Joseph was like a king or president, not a ruler used for measuring.

REVIEW IDEAS

Use this review to wrap up the story of Joseph. Prepare the two number seven puzzles (see Patterns) by enlarging and drawing them on posterboard. Explain to the children that this lesson concerns the seven good and seven bad years during which Joseph was made second in command in Egypt. Tell what each piece represents as you put the puzzle together (in correct order). Here is a brief description of each piece.

1. Pharaoh took Joseph from prison.
2. Joseph explains Pharaoh's dreams.
3. Joseph was made second in command.
4. Joseph instructed the people to store food.
5. A famine came upon the land.
6. Many people looked to Egypt for food.

7. Joseph's brothers came to Egypt.
8. Joseph's own dreams finally came true — family reunion.

Compare life to a puzzle. God knows all the pieces will fit and what the picture will be. Make a large puzzle

which can be assembled with your group (see Patterns). On the back of each piece write a question which could puzzle a child: Why do I get sick? Why did my puppy die? etc. Give an answer as you place each piece in the puzzle. Explain that in some cases only God knows the answer.

MEMORY VERSE SONG



See, I have set thee over all the land, over all the land of E - gypt.



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MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

