

UNIT 3 | SESSION 5

GOD HAD A PLAN FOR JOSEPH

GENESIS 37-50

KEY PASSAGE:

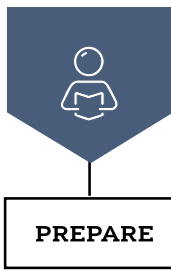
Psalm 135:5-6

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of God's good plan.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

God had a plan for Joseph's life. He allowed Joseph to suffer in order to rescue a whole nation. God planned for Jesus to suffer so that many—people from all nations—would be saved.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

The story of Joseph is packed full of moments that resonate with us. Maybe you were the favorite child or the favorite child’s sibling. Some people resonate with being cast away from family or being undeservingly welcomed into a new family. Some resonate with finding favor with an enemy or showing favor to an enemy. In Joseph’s story, we can see ourselves and our need for Jesus in so many ways.

On at least four occasions in Joseph’s journey, others gave him tremendous blessings. Though Joseph lost some of these earthly treasures, he remained faithful to the Lord. We normally focus on Joseph’s adversity, but we can’t miss that both the lows and highs of Joseph’s life were also marked by God’s blessing through others.

First, Joseph’s father blessed him with a beautiful multi-colored robe as a representation of his favored status. This tangible symbol was taken from him when his brothers sold him into slavery. Yet Joseph remained faithful.

Next, Potiphar blessed Joseph by making him overseer of his entire household. The role lent itself to all the tangible and monetary things anyone could want. But when Joseph fled from the advance of Potiphar’s wife, it was all taken from him. Yet

Joseph remained faithful.

Third, the prison warden blessed Joseph by making him overseer over the entire prison. Finally, Pharaoh blessed Joseph by placing him as second in command over all of Egypt, putting Joseph in a position to save his family from famine.

Joseph refused to let the evil actions of others steal his faith. When he had the chance to take away from others who had taken from him, Joseph showed generosity instead.

We experience various common grace blessings from the Lord every day. These blessings can tempt us to worship the gift rather than the Giver. Like Joseph, we must remain steadfast under trial and faithful to the Lord. In famine and in plenty, blessed be the name of the Lord. He is good and in control.

PEOPLE TO KNOW

Twelve Sons of Jacob (Israel):

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Reuben | 7. Simeon |
| 2. Levi | 8. Judah |
| 3. Issachar | 9. Zebulun |
| 4. Joseph | 10. Benjamin |
| 5. Dan | 11. Naphtali |
| 6. Gad | 12. Asher |



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “ Can you think of a time someone else had something you wanted? How did you feel about that person? Why? ”

2 SESSION STARTER

OPTION 1: BROTHER MATCH



Write the names of Israel's sons on separate index cards. Make two sets so each name has a match: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher.

Mix up each set of cards. Form two teams and give each team a set of cards. The teams should arrange the cards facedown on the floor or table. Team 1 will turn over one card. Then team 2 will turn over one card. If the cards match, team 2 keeps the cards. If not, both teams turn the cards facedown. Then team 2 will begin by turning over one card. Team 1 will turn over a card attempting to match team 2's card.

Continue back and forth, alternating which team begins. The team to collect the most cards wins.

SAY “ These are the names of brothers. Twelve brothers! Can you imagine? Today's Bible story focuses on one of these brothers: Joseph. ”

OPTION 2: WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Before the session, write various situations on separate index cards. Stack the cards and ask a volunteer to take a card. The volunteer should read the card silently and then act out a reaction.

Let the rest of the kids guess what caused the reaction. Allow several guesses and then reveal the answer. After each round, choose a new volunteer to play again.

Suggested situations: stung by a bee, thrown into a pit, stepped on a nail, put in jail, blamed for something you didn't do, earned a high score on a video game, received a beautiful new coat, visited by a loved one you haven't seen in a long time.

SAY “ Have any of these things actually happened to you? Some of these things actually happened to Joseph. We'll hear about that in today's Bible story. ”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Genesis 37–50. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “God Had a Plan for Joseph.” Use the bolded text to retell or review the story.

GOD HAD A PLAN FOR JOSEPH

“ Jacob had 12 sons, but Joseph was his favorite. Jacob’s other sons hated Joseph. One day, Jacob sent Joseph to check on his brothers, who were tending to the sheep. The brothers saw Joseph coming, and they made a plan to get rid of him. They sold Joseph as a servant to some travelers going to Egypt. Then they convinced Jacob that wild animals had killed his favorite son. Jacob was very sad.

Meanwhile, the travelers sold Joseph to an Egyptian officer named Potiphar. The Lord was with Joseph and made him successful at everything he did. Potiphar put Joseph in charge of many things, and Potiphar was happy with him. But Potiphar’s wife lied about Joseph, accusing him of doing something he didn’t do. Potiphar was angry, and he put Joseph in prison.

God was still with Joseph and blessed him, even in prison. God gave Joseph the ability to understand the meaning of dreams. Years passed, and Joseph was forgotten in prison until Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had two dreams. He sent for Joseph. Joseph explained the dreams: Egypt was going to have seven good years with plenty of food followed by seven bad years of no food. Joseph told Pharaoh to save food during the good years to use during the bad years.

Pharaoh realized that God was with Joseph, so he made Joseph second in command in all of Egypt. Joseph stored away food during the good years. Then, during the famine, people came to him to buy grain.

One day, Jacob sent 10 of his sons to Egypt to buy grain. The brothers came to Joseph and bowed down. Joseph knew who they were, but they did not recognize him. When Joseph was ready, he told his brothers who he was. “I’m Joseph!” he said. “Don’t be afraid. God sent me here so I could save your people, a remnant, from the famine.”

Joseph’s brothers went home to bring all their family and belongings back to Egypt. Jacob hugged his son Joseph, and they cried.

Jacob’s family was blessed in Egypt, but Jacob got older and died. Now Joseph’s brothers were afraid Joseph would punish them for what they did to him. Joseph said, “You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people.” Joseph comforted his brothers and spoke kindly to them.

Christ Connection: God had a plan for Joseph’s life. He allowed Joseph to suffer

STORYTELLING TIPS

Display art: Show the Bible story picture or use a flannelgraph to depict the story as you tell it.

Use props: Gather and display items related to the story. For example: toy sheep (shepherds), handcuffs (prison), pillow (dreams), bread (grain).

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Joseph was 17 years old when his brothers sold him to travelers going to Egypt. He was in Egypt for 20 years before he saw them again! During that time, Joseph was falsely accused of wrongdoing and thrown into prison. Why did Pharaoh later put him in a position of power? Look at Genesis 41:37-40. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Gen. 41:37-40.] God was with Joseph. God gave Joseph the ability to interpret dreams, and He made Joseph wise.

When there was a famine, Joseph was in charge of the food in Egypt. How did God use Joseph’s position for good? Look at Genesis 42:6. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Gen. 42:6.] Joseph’s brothers came to Egypt for food. Without his help, their family would have died. God also used the famine to bring Joseph’s family back together.

Joseph believed that God was in control and working out His plan to rescue His people even through the actions of Joseph’s brothers. Joseph didn’t realize all God was doing while it was happening, but he was able to look back and see how God provided a way for his family to thrive in Egypt: Had Joseph’s brothers not done evil, Joseph would not have been in Egypt. Had Potiphar’s wife not lied, Joseph would not have been in prison. Had Joseph not been in prison, Pharaoh’s servant would not have met him. Had Pharaoh’s servant not met him, Joseph wouldn’t have been introduced to Pharaoh, who put him in charge of Egypt.

What Joseph’s brothers intended for harm, God intended for good. Joseph invited his family to come live in Egypt where they could thrive. God clearly used Joseph to provide for Jacob’s family and establish a remnant. As Jacob made his way to Egypt, God spoke to him in a vision and repeated the promise He first made to Abraham: ‘I will make you into a great nation’ (Gen. 46:3). ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ God had a plan for Joseph’s life. He allowed Joseph to suffer in order to rescue a whole nation. God planned for Jesus to suffer so that many—people from all nations—would be saved. Jesus died on the cross to save people from their sins. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

2 GROUP DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

| **SAY** “ How did Joseph react to the difficult circumstances he faced? ”

Explain that we don’t know all of Joseph’s thoughts and actions, but the Bible doesn’t record any instance of Joseph turning away from God. His faith in God seems to lead him to trust in God no matter what. The difficulties even increased his faith in God. Joseph declared to his brothers that he believed God was using the evil they did to bring about something good.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 5:3-5.)

| **SAY** “ If you were Joseph, would you get revenge on your brothers or show them mercy? Why? ”

Encourage kids to consider why they feel or think the way they do. What do they believe about God or themselves that leads them to seek revenge? What do they believe that leads them to show mercy? Point out that our sinful nature seeks revenge, but God can change our hearts to want to show mercy like He has shown us mercy through Jesus. We can forgive others and even repay them with good.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Pet. 3:9.)

| **SAY** “ Does God always reveal the way He uses evil or suffering for His good plan? ”

Kids may recognize evil and suffering in the world that seemingly has no purpose or good outcome. Remind kids that injustice, disease, natural disasters, and much more exist because creation is fallen. We can trust that no suffering is meaningless. We can fight for justice, peace, and truth, knowing that God is good and in control. The Bible says one day, Jesus will return and make everything right.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 16:33.)