

LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

Genesis 41:15-43

Acts 2:17-18

Session Theme:

Perseverance

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: Never Give Up!

Find several pictures of famous Olympic athletes and bring them to class on your phone, printed from a computer, or in a library book. Show the photos to the kids and see how many people they recognize. Ask what it takes to become an Olympian. (Many years of hard work.) Next, ask kids if these medal-winning athletes always had the glory you see in these photos. (No, they worked for long periods without any recognition. It took perseverance — not giving up no matter how hard things were — to achieve their goals.)

In today's story, we will hear about one man who persevered through years of suffering, and who later led a nation to persevere through years of famine. He trusted God and never gave up. Who was he, and what happened? Let's begin our lesson and find out!

c. Opening Prayer

O God, sometimes we face hard times. Help us to push onward, looking to you for guidance. With you by our side, all will be well. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- *"God Will Take Care of You" (hymn)*
- *"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" (hymn)*

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the Old Testament
- Scripture Section: Slavery

After coming to Egypt in the time of Joseph, the Israelites later came under bondage to the Pharaoh, working as forced labor to build his cities. (This period covers the time between Genesis and Exodus.)

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level.

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help the students think about the events of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, Questions)

Adult: Bible Study Sheet (Introduction and Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. If you have not already done so, introduce the Theme Word for the week, providing the definition, and asking how the lesson connects to that theme.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format

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Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: Genesis 41:15-43

1. At this point in the story, where was Joseph? What was his situation? How did he get there? (For a hint, skim the previous chapters in Genesis.)

   Joseph was in the foreign land of Egypt, far from home, having been sold as a slave by his jealous brothers. To make matters worse, he was falsely accused of attempted rape by his Egyptian master's wife, and as a result he was being held in prison.

2. What is a "Pharaoh"? What did this Pharaoh see in his troubling dream? What did he do when he awoke?

   Pharaoh is the traditional title given to the King of Egypt. The term means "great house" and was used in the same way we use the term "White House" to refer not simply to the building, but to the U.S. President and staff as well. The Pharaoh saw seven fat cows swallowed up by sickly cows, and seven good grain stalks consumed by weak stalks. He saw it as a bad omen and wanted to have the dream explained.

3. How did Pharaoh hear about Joseph? What did Joseph do differently from the magicians? According to verse 16, where did Joseph's ability come from?

   The Pharaoh heard about Joseph through his butler (cup-bearer) who had been imprisoned with Joseph but was later released. This man knew of Joseph's talent with dreams. But this was not a pretend or learned skill on Joseph's part (as it was for the king's advisors); it was actually a gift of revelation from God himself.

4. According to Joseph, what did Pharaoh's dream mean? What did the cows and the heads of grain represent? How did this show what was going to happen in Egypt?

   The cows and the heads of grain represented seven good years, followed by seven bad years, which were about to take place in Egypt. By having this information in advance, the Egyptians were in a position to prepare for what was to come. God was at work to save people!

5. From what you see here, does it seem that the Pharaoh trusted Joseph? Why or why not? What happened to Joseph after he translated the dream?

   The Pharaoh seemed very pleased with Joseph's explanation (even though it meant there were hard times ahead). In fact, the Pharaoh took this as evidence of Joseph's intelligence and competence, so he promoted Joseph to the office of chief steward and overseer of the kingdom.

6. Read Acts 2:17-18. Do you think that dreams can have a symbolic or hidden meaning? Have you ever felt that God was saying something to you through a dream? How would a person of faith verify whether something is or is not a message from God?

   According to Scripture, God does indeed communicate to human beings through dreams. But that doesn't mean that every dream we have has a deep spiritual meaning. Often our dreams reflect things that trouble our subconscious mind. As with all input and advice we get in life, dreams and visions must be in harmony with God's Word (the Bible), and not contrary to it. We should always be suspicious of messages that tell us what we *want* to hear.

7. How did God use Joseph as instrument of his will? Through Joseph, what did God accomplish in this story? How did this save many lives?

   Joseph became the competent leader in Egypt who was able to make appropriate preparations in the bad years so that Egypt had food in the coming drought and famine. Reading further in Scripture we see that Egypt was one of the only places that had food to spare. It was where Joseph's brothers later came to buy grain. Joseph spared not only the Egyptians, but his own family and many others.

8. Joseph had suffered much before he reached this point. What if circumstances in his life had never brought him to Egypt? What can this story teach us about trusting in God and God's timing?

   Joseph makes a significant statement later in Genesis 50:20, when he said to his brothers, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today." While we always remain accountable for the evil we do, God is able to use even misfortune, suffering, and human sin to serve his purposes.

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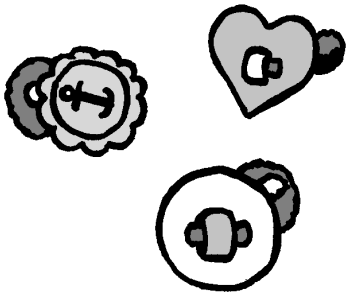
Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Pharaoh's Ring Craft

Materials Needed:

- Chenille sticks
- Scissors
- Pony beads and/or decorative buttons
- Permanent markers or glitter glue (optional)
- Foam shapes (optional)



Instructions:

Give everyone a chenille stick (pipe cleaner), a few pony beads (and/or buttons) and a pair of scissors. If you have foam shapes, hand these out as well. Invite kids to cut their chenille stick in half. Each piece will make a separate ring. Here are some different options for making the "jewel" in the center:

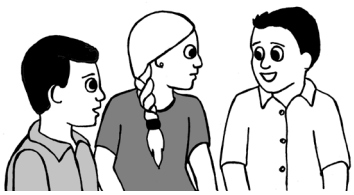
- If using shank buttons (with one loop on the back): Simply thread a piece of chenille stick through the hole.
- If using regular buttons (with two holes): Thread a chenille stick up through the first hole and back down through the second hole.
- If using a regular button and a pony bead: Thread a chenille stick up through first hole, then through the pony bead, then back down through the second hole.
- If using only pony beads: Thread a chenille stick through three pony beads.
- If using a foam shape plus a pony bead or small button: Make a small hole on each side of the foam shape. Thread a chenille stick up through one hole, then through a pony bead (or each hole of a button), then back down through the other hole in the foam shape.

Push the "jewel" to the center of the chenille stick, and wrap around a finger to size it. Twist the ends around the band, and trim off excess. If desired, use permanent markers or glitter glue to decorate the "jewel" of the ring.

Just as Pharaoh gave Joseph a fancy ring, you have an extra ring to give to a family member or friend! The rings can remind both of you to never give up, just like Joseph.

Activity 2: Rhyme the Word Game

No supplies needed



Instructions:

The object of this activity is for kids to guess a word from today's story. To do so, however, they will have to listen closely and think. Some of these may be hard to guess, but those who persevere will do well!

Divide the class into two teams. Explain that you are going to say a sentence out loud. The last word in the sentence will rhyme with an actual word from today's story and will fill in the blank or answer the clue. Team members will work together to come up with the correct word. Whichever team gets the answer first wins a point.

The Questions:

Joseph was kept in _____; he got quite pale. (jail)

He'd been thrown in a _____; that wasn't a hit! (pit)

For ____ years he was he jailed, with nothing to do. (two)

As Pharaoh slept, he had a _____ and saw a meme. (dream)

He saw large _____; they are not sows. (cows)

Some cows were fat and some were _____, unlike their kin. (thin)

Cows eat _____; they may pass gas! (grass)

Some _____ was plump, some thin; it grows on a plain. (grain)

The years of famine would be _____; it wouldn't be heaven. (seven)

The famine harmed the _____; few could stand. (land)

They needed _____; the drought caused pain. (rain)

A long river in Egypt is the ____; it goes on for miles. (Nile)

Joseph looked to _____ for help; this was not odd. (God)

Joseph was _____ in Pharaoh's eyes. (wise)

Joseph ran Pharaoh's _____ and did not grouse. (house)

Pharaoh gave Joseph a _____, a partner for life. (wife)

God helped Joseph for many _____, even throughout many tears. (years)

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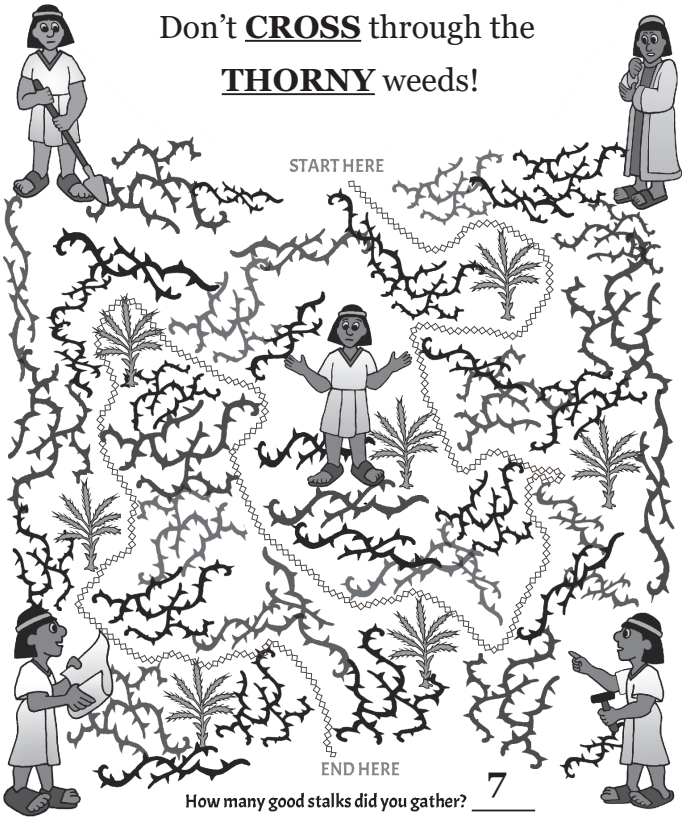
Worksheet Answer Key

Shown below is the solution to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:

Unscrambled Message

Find your **WAY** through the withered **FIELD**.
Your **PATH** must **TOUCH** all of the **GOOD**
stalks of **GRAIN** on the way.
Don't **CROSS** through the
THORNY weeds!



How many good stalks did you gather? 7

Timeline Answer Key

The Israelites were slaves in Egypt for about 400 years. This is said in both the Old and New Testaments:

The Lord said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years" (Genesis 15:13).

God spoke to this effect — that his offspring would be sojourners in a land belonging to others, who would enslave them and afflict them four hundred years (Acts 7:6).

Vocabulary Word for the Week

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary.

Perseverance

to keep going forward without giving up

Joseph had a lot of perseverance. No matter what happened to him, he never gave up.

Reflection for the Week Ahead

Can you recall some of your dreams? Talk together about any dreams you can remember.

There's a sort of science to explaining dreams in our day. For example, if you're being chased after by someone who wants to harm you, it might mean you are scared of something or someone. Another example might be showing up for a test in school and forgetting everything you've studied, if you studied at all. This might mean you feel unprepared for something.

In Joseph's day, God communicated to his people sometimes through dreams. (Jesus' father, also named Joseph, received a message in a dream in Matthew 1:18-25.) But Joseph, Jacob's son, was able to interpret all sorts of dreams, including the King of Egypt's!



Talk together about the Holy Spirit helping Joseph understand the dreams he was asked to interpret. Do you think God still communicates with his people through dreams? Why or why not?

Even though God can use our dreams, does this mean that <u>all</u> of our dreams are messages from God? Explain.

The Practice of Prayer

On the lines below, write a prayer asking for God's guidance. Ask him to help you listen for his voice in your life — whether it's through dreams, other peoples' words, in church, or through a friend.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.

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