

Joseph Interprets Dreams and Saves Egypt ■ Lesson 4

Bible Reference: Genesis 40:1-41:57

Bible Point: God helps us help others.

Bible Verse: “God is our help and our shield” (Psalm 33:20b)

Preparing for the Lesson: Prayer

- Read Matthew 10:42.
- In what practical ways can you serve “a cup of cold water” to the children you are teaching?
- Pray: God, I want to help these little ones. Help me see through your eyes as I... Help these children understand that they are not too little to help others, and that they can rely on you for guidance.

Introduce the Bible Point: ‘Help Me’....supplies: blocks

Work with the children to build tall towers of blocks. When the towers fall, encourage the children to help build it again. Suggest that each person take turns adding one block at a time. As you work together, have the children think of ways to help such as balancing the tower, handing blocks to each other, or picking up fallen blocks. Introduce the point that *God helps us help others.*

Share the Story:

Check out the lesson video on dbKids.org. Below is a simplified version of the story found in Genesis. Depending on your children’s ability to understand, you may lead them using the following poem or read directly from the Word of God. Other options would be to find a children’s story bible to read from, watch a short video about Joseph, or act out the story with older family members.

Begin by asking the children what they remember from last week’s bible lesson. They may even want to act out the story thus far.

Sit with children in a circle on the floor and prompt them to recall the facts of the story thus far.

Say: **Let’s remember what we’ve learned about Joseph so far. I’ll tell you what I think happened in that part of the story. If I say something wrong, point your finger up in the air and say, “Not so fast, partner!” Then tell me what really happened.** Read the following statements:

- **A man gave his sheep named Joseph a beautiful coat because the sheep could add two and two.** (“Not so fast, partner!” A man gave his son named Joseph a special coat because he loved him so much.)
- **Joseph’s brothers were jealous, so they threw him into a deep hole.** (true)
- **Joseph wrapped his brothers up in blankets and tied them to the back of his camel. Then they all went to the beach for a picnic.** (“Not so fast, partner!” Joseph’s brothers sold him to slave traders.)
- **Joseph joined the circus and learned how to balance trays of food on his shoulder.** (“Not so fast, partner!” Joseph became a household slave and had to do lots of chores.)
- **Someone told a lie about Joseph, so Potiphar threw Joseph in prison.** (true)

When you have finished reviewing the story, bring out your Bible, open to **Genesis 40**. Say: **Let’s see what the Bible tells us about how God helped Joseph help other people. You can help me tell the story by acting out words in the story. When I say “jail,” put your hands together at the wrists. When I say “dream,” put your hands together, and lay your head on your hands like**

you're asleep. When I say "God," point up to heaven. When I say "cows," moo loudly. Let's practice those.

Practice the actions and words a few times until the children are comfortable with each action. Then read the following story, pausing each time you say the words *jail*, *dream*, *God*, or *cows*.

Say: Joseph was in jail. And even though the jail keeper liked Joseph and let him be in charge of the prisoners, Joseph wanted to be free.

One day, two new prisoners came. They'd been servants of the king of Egypt. But the king got mad at them and threw them in jail. Joseph noticed that the two women seemed upset. So, he asked them, "What's wrong?"

The two men said, "We've had dreams, and we don't know what they mean."

"Tell me your dreams," said Joseph.

So, the two women told Joseph. Then Joseph said, "God is the one who understands dreams. Maybe God will help me tell about your dreams." With God's help, Joseph told the two women what their dreams meant.

Joseph said to one of the men, "Since I have told you about your dream, when you go back to the king, tell him I haven't done anything wrong. Please tell the king to let me out of jail."

One of the men promised to tell the king, but he forgot. Then one day, the king had a dream that he didn't understand. One of the men who had been in jail with Joseph said, "Oh! I remember someone who can help you! His name is Joseph."

"Send for him!" demanded the king.

They let Joseph out of jail and brought him to the king. The king said, "I had a dream. Can you tell me what it means? Can you help me?"

Joseph answered, "God can help me tell about your dream."

The king said, "I dreamed that seven skinny cows ate seven fat cows. But the skinny cows didn't get any fatter. Then I dreamed that seven skinny ears of corn swallowed seven fat ears of corn. But the skinny ears of corn didn't get any fatter. What do these dreams mean?"

God helped Joseph know what the king's dreams meant. "There will be seven years of good crops and lots of food in Egypt. Then there will be seven years of bad crops and no food in Egypt. God wants you to save up grain in the good years so no one will have to go hungry."

The king said, "Will you help us, Joseph? God has shown you all this, and there is no one as wise and understanding as you are."

Joseph said he would help the people. So, the king put Joseph in charge of storing up the grain. God used Joseph to save the people of Egypt.

Tell children they may stop doing their actions. Then ask:

- **Where was Joseph when he helped some men understand their dreams?**
(He was in jail.)
- **What did Joseph ask the men to do when they got out of jail?** (To tell the king he was not guilty and wanted to get out of jail.)
- **What happened to the king that he needed help with?** (He had some dreams that he didn't understand.)
- **How would you feel if you had to tell the leader of your country about his or her dreams?** (Scared; excited; nervous; a little afraid.)
- **Why do you think God helped Joseph understand the king's dreams?**

(God loved Joseph and wanted him out of jail; God wanted everyone to have food.)

Say: **Joseph could have gotten in a lot of trouble with the king if God hadn't helped him understand the king's dreams. But God protected him and kept him safe from harm. That reminds me of what our Bible verse today says about God. Let me read it to you.**

Open your Bible to **Psalm 33:20b** and show children the verse. Say: **Listen to what Psalm 33:20b says: "He [God] is our help and our shield." Wow! God stands between us and trouble, just like a shield! God helped Joseph, and God helps us. And because we know we have God on our side, we can help other people!**

Ask: ● **When has God helped you help others?** (At home with my family; at school; when I'm with my friends.)

Say: **God helps us all the time. But God helps us help others, too.**

One way God really helped us is by sending Jesus to be our special friend. When Jesus lived on earth, he helped lots of people—hurt people, sad people, lonely people. And Jesus still helps people today! God wants us to help, too.

Ask: ● **Who do you know who is sad, or hurt, or lonely?** (My sister is sick; my friend is lonely.)

● **How can you help them?** (I can draw a picture; I can ask them to play.)

Say: **We can try to be like Jesus and look for ways to help other people.**

Do the Bible Story: Joseph and His Brothers

Pick up a packet at DBCC with craft items prepared for each child. Remind children that God helps us help others.