

# Lesson 22: Joseph's Dreams

Genesis 35:1, 6, 9-12; 37:1-11 (pg. 44-45, Gospel Story Bible)

## Teaching Points:

**God fulfilled His promise to Jacob** — Once again God reaches out to Jacob. God repeats the promise given to Abraham and gives Jacob a new name, Israel (Genesis 35:9–10). God commands Jacob to be fruitful and multiply and increase in number. Through Jacob, God will make a whole nation by the same name, Israel, and out of that nation will come kings.

**Because Jacob favored Joseph, Joseph's brothers hated him** — Jacob's favorite son is Joseph. He decides to give Joseph a special coat. Although most English translations describe the coat Jacob gave Joseph as multicolored, the more important issue was that it was a long coat with long sleeves; it was the type of coat worn only by managers or officials.

The coat sets Joseph apart from his brothers, making it obvious to everyone that he is his father's favorite son. Joseph's brothers react with jealousy. They hate Joseph so much they will not speak a kind word to him.

**God gave Joseph two dreams** — God gives Joseph two dreams. Joseph tells his brothers about these dreams, perhaps with pride. This is unwise because it tempts Joseph's brothers to be even more jealous of him. The brothers respond with hatred.

## Where is the Gospel?

### How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read Psalm 105:1-19.

Psalm 105 briefly tells the story of God's wonderful works and of his covenant promise to Abraham, the promise to send a Savior. It speaks of God's promise to Abraham lasting forever. It also tells the history of God's work among the Israelites.

We haven't read about this yet, but Joseph is about to find himself alone in Egypt after his brothers sell him as a slave. Verse 17, speaking of the Israelites, says that God "sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave." How did God "send" Joseph? He did it by arranging all the elements of Joseph's life. Every event, every day, was part of God's plan.

The most important part of God's plan was completed when Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead. But God's plan still continues today, in every event and every moment. Because of what Jesus did on the cross, even today God is continuing to bless all nations through the spiritual offspring of Abraham, who are now called Christians.

## Bible Truth:

A man plans  
his course,  
but the Lord  
determines  
his steps.

(Proverbs 16:9  
NIV)

## A Little Bit More (grades 3-5) - Hatred

Hatred, as an expression of sin, is an intense anger for a fellow person. Paul, in Galatians 5:20 NIV, calls hate an obvious act of the sinful nature. He says that those who act with hatred "will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:21).

On the other hand, we are commanded to have righteous anger when we "hate what is evil" according to Romans 12:9 NIV. Jesus said that the world will hate us because of him if we follow him (Mark 13:13). When Joseph's brothers hated him, they were sinning against Joseph and against God.

## Object Lessons:

### 1. Class Cop (Grades K-2)

#### Supplies:

- a police badge or star cut from an aluminum foil pan (or foil over a piece of cardboard)
- tape

Just about every class has one observant young student who would enjoy being class policeman for the day. Choose that student and explain to the class that he is your favorite and you are going to make him the class policeman. Every time one of the other children talks while they should be listening or turns away when they should be paying attention, the police officer will point to them and say, "Pay attention!" Position him at the front of the class and have him practice. Then go on with the lesson and see how long it takes him to find a violator. (You can help him get the hang of the job by pointing out violators if he is slow to start.) Each time your class policeman finds a violator you should remind that person to pay attention and then praise your class policeman for his wonderful work.

After a few violators have been pointed out, have him return to his seat. Ask the class how it felt to have a class policeman pointing out their mistakes. They should say that they didn't like it very much. Help them identify similarities between this exercise and Joseph's role in his family. He was the one who pointed out his brother's mistakes to his dad. That is part of the reason why Joseph's brothers didn't like him. This should help your class connect with the emotion Joseph's brothers felt in the story.

### 2. Saving through Dreams (Grades 3-5)

#### Supplies:

- Bibles
- pencils, paper

Divide the class into groups of five. Have the groups compare the dreams in Genesis 37:5–11 with their fulfillment in Genesis 42–43. Ask the groups to write down the chapters and verses where Joseph's early dreams were fulfilled. Then come back together and discuss the fulfillment of these dreams as a class. Ask the following questions:

- How did God bring salvation to Israel through the fulfillment of Joseph's dreams?  
(Joseph was brought to a place of authority in Egypt. He had food set aside during years of plenty. Later, Jacob and his family would be preserved and move to Goshen.)
- How was this salvation critical to our salvation?  
(God had purposed that Jesus would be born into the line of Israel. Had all of Israel died of starvation in the famine, Jesus would never have been born. God preserved his people and in so doing, preserved us.)