



GOD'S PROVISION IN SUFFERING

God's Incredible Plan • U3#3 1st-3rd Grade • August 31, 2025

Concept

God will take care of His children in all circumstances as they trust Him.

Goal

Students will learn that God is in control and working for their good, even in the worst circumstances.

Passage

Genesis 37, 39, 40

Key Verse: "... the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did." Genesis 39:23

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Learning Activity #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joseph's Life handout (for Drama), 3/classroom <p>Learning Activity #2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 full-size candy bars <p>Optional Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Joseph" handout, 1/student• <i>International Children's Bible Handbook, Lawrence Richards</i>• <i>Adventure Bible Handbook</i>	<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Woven Belt instructions, several/class• Heavy twine, 3 yards/student• Plastic drinking straws, 4/student• Various (at least 3) colors of yarn, three 36" pieces/student• <i>Yardstick, 1/classroom</i>• Scissors• Miniature candy bars, 1/student• <i>5 rocks/stones</i>

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

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Joseph was not one of the patriarchs, and to him the Covenant was not renewed, though he inherited it...His story is necessary for the completion of Jacob's story; because he is the link between the family and the nation, between Canaan and Egypt...and also because he is the most perfect anticipation of Him who was to be the Seed of the woman, and the fulfillment of all Messianic prophecy...

"The action of Joseph's brethren in selling him to the Ishmaelites cannot be defended on any ground; yet the result was a contact with Egypt which proved to be a place both of preservation from the Canaanites, and of education for the part which Israel was to play in the history of the world to the end of time; and when God made Jacob go down to Egypt, He said: 'I will there make of thee a great nation' (Gen. 46:3).

"The centuries of Israel's servitude in Egypt had been predicted, though Egypt was not named (Gen. 15:13, 14); ...and the fulfillment of this prophecy was initiated by the sin of Joseph's brethren...

"The imprisonment of Joseph was a crime, due to the passion of an unscrupulous woman (Gen. 39), yet it led to his becoming Prime Minister of all Egypt (Gen. 41), and this position led to all that followed in the fortunes of his family (Gen. 46-50).

"At every turn we see God turning the wickedness of man to account for the fulfillment of His redeeming purpose and promise." [1]

Joseph was the beloved son—envied, plotted against and rejected by his own people. He went from a place of honor to a lowly servant. He was falsely accused of wrongdoing, imprisoned with others and raised up to rule over all Egypt. In the midst of these trials Joseph chose to trust God to accomplish all He had promised. Even in the darkest circumstances Joseph trusted God and God "was with Joseph." In these ways, Joseph's life typifies that of Jesus.

Joseph was only seventeen when he was sold as a slave into a pagan land. Everything he had learned about God that would sustain him was packed into those few short years. Who knows what seeds you are planting in the hearts of the children you are teaching—seeds that will bear fruit in their lives, like those planted by Isaac, Jacob and Rachel in Joseph's heart. Joseph's life helps the students understand that God is forever sovereign, even in the worst circumstances. If they are His children, He will never leave them and He will never forsake them.

1 The Unfolding Drama of Redemption, W. Graham Scroggie, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1994, pp. 127-129.

Set Up

Incorporation Lg. Group

Instructions: Prepare Scene #2 for Drama. If wanted, you can get costumes from the storage room (at Main Campus location).

Activity Stations:

- **Craft – Weaving like Joseph's Coat**
 - **Instructions:** Follow the directions provided for making a belt or bookmark.
 - **Explain:** We are making a weaving of bright colors to remind us of Joseph's varicolored coat. The coat reminded his brothers that Joseph was Jacob's favorite son, which made them jealous of Joseph. To get rid of him they sold him as a slave to the Egyptians.
- **Object Lesson – "Trust Me!"**
 - **Instructions:** As each student enters the room, tell them you are giving them something good. Hand all but 5 students a miniature candy bar. Give the five students the rocks. The 5 will complain! Tell them to trust you. They will see in the Object Lesson conclusion that this is good.
- **Missions Prayer**
 - **Instructions:** Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving campaign.

Introduction Lg. Group

The last 2 weeks we talked about Abraham's grandson, Jacob. God taught Jacob over many years that he could trust God to keep His promises. Today we're going to talk about Jacob and Rachel's son, Joseph. Joseph wasn't a schemer like his father, but many things happened to him that weren't fair. God was with him always. In spite of what people did to Joseph, God continued to work out His plan. That's what our key verse for today tells us, "... the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did." Genesis 39:23.

Transition

Let's divide up into small groups to find out about Joseph's life. Then each group will do a skit for the class.

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

Drama – Joseph's life

Instructions: Divide the class into groups with one teacher in each. Teachers, lead by example and have fun with the skit! The teacher will read the passage (packet included separately) as the group acts it out for the rest of the class. If there aren't enough participants for all the parts, have some play 2 or 3 parts. Allow a few minutes for students to practice then present the skits in chronological order. The entire process should take about 30 minutes.

Lesson Lg. Group

We learned that God knew everything that would happen to Joseph. And He knew exactly what to do in each circumstance to protect Joseph and to prepare him to be the ruler of Egypt.

Lesson Continued

Because God is the ruler of all, He can bring good out of the worst circumstances in ways that we could never imagine. Joseph was probably very homesick and angry about all that happened to him. He probably talked to God a lot about it. Because he knew God, he believed that God would work things out for good eventually. He kept talking to God and God showed Joseph that He was with him through everything. "... the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did." Genesis 39:23.

God blessed Joseph so much that people who didn't know God saw clearly that He was with Joseph. That's why Potiphar put him in charge of his house and why the head jailer put him in charge in the prison. Even though he probably didn't always understand why these things were happening to him, Joseph believed God was with Him and in control of everything. He knew God would accomplish His plan. Instead of feeling sorry for himself or getting bitter at his brothers or the others who treated him unfairly, he asked God to use him in good and bad circumstances.

Do you believe that God is with you and in control of everything? How do you know that He is with you? The Bible says that He is always with His children. How do you know if you are His child? (Tell Him you want to be forgiven and want Jesus' death to count for the punishment you deserve for the bad things you've said and done.) If you ask Him to forgive you, Jesus will always be with you. Jesus promised to always be with everyone who receives His gift of forgiveness (Matthew 28:20). As we cooperate with God, we experience His blessings just as Joseph did. He will give us whatever we need to do whatever He calls us to do. He will change our attitudes and our hearts if we ask Him to. And He will work through us to save people's lives—for eternity. If we ask Him, God might change our bad circumstances. But more often He will help us to go through those circumstances, so we can learn about His faithfulness and trust Him more and more.

Transition

We've just seen what happened to Joseph. Now let's get together to talk about it. Everyone grab a Bible and get in your small groups.

Learning Activity# 2 Sm. Groups

Instructions: These questions are all suggestions. This is your time to help the students apply the concept that God promises to take care of His children in all circumstances as they learn to trust Him.

- What bad things happened to Joseph? (For quick reference if students don't remember – Genesis 37:26-28; 39:7-20; 40:23. His brothers were jealous and hated him; he was sold him as a slave; thrown in prison unjustly, forgotten by the butler.)
- How did his pride cause him problems? (Gen. 37:3-11, Genesis 37:26-28; He made his brothers jealous by telling his dreams.)
- Which bad things weren't a result of his pride? (Genesis 39:7-20; 40:23)

Learning Activity# 2 Continued

- What did God do to help Joseph through all of the bad times? (Genesis 39:2; Acts 7:9,10; Genesis 39:21, 25.) Our key verse is "... the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did." Genesis 39:23). (With Joseph, God blessed everything he did, granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden, gave him the ability to interpret dreams.)
- What if Joseph hadn't remembered that God was always with him and trusted God? (He might have been mad, not have forgiven his brothers; God would have worked through someone else to accomplish His plan.)
- Would any of you like to share a time when it looked like everyone, even God, was against you and you chose to go to God, tell Him how you feel and then to respond the way that Joseph did?

Let's pray now. We can thank God that He promises to always be with His children. Let's ask Him to remind us to turn to Him in all circumstances and trust that He is in control and will work all things out for the good of those who love him.

Transition

Let's gather as a large group.

Learning Activity#3 Lg. Group

"Trust Me!" conclusion

Which of you received rocks when you came in? Bring them up here; I have something for you. (Give out the full-size candy bars.) Joseph might have thought that all he was going to get was rocks, but God showed him that He was with him. He got more than a large candy bar, didn't he?

Optional Activity

Do "Joseph" handout together or give to students to take home.