Joseph in Egypt



Scripture Reference: Genesis 39-41

Suggested Theme: God is righteous and full of integrity. We should do what is right even when no one is looking, and know that it pleases God.

Memory Verse: "Happy are those who are fair and do what is right at all times." Psalm 106:3, ICB

Story Overview:

In Egypt, Joseph became a slave to an official named Potiphar and quickly rose to be the head servant of the household. After Potiphar's wife lied about him, Joseph was imprisoned. After interpreting the dreams of fellow prisoners, Joseph was invited to interpret the dreams of Pharoah. Pharaoh was so impressed that he placed Joseph in charge of all of Egypt to prepare for an upcoming famine. At every step, even away from his family, Joseph gave glory to God and acted with integrity.

Background Study:

(Genesis 39:1-20) In Egypt, Joseph was sold as a slave to Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh's guard. God blessed Joseph in the work he did. After a time, Potiphar trusted Joseph so much that he placed him in charge of everything he had.

Joseph was well-built and handsome. Potiphar's wife tried to tempt him, but he refused to sin. Who would have known if Joseph would have disobeyed God? His family was not around, and he might never see them again. The fact that Joseph chose to do the right thing even when no one else was around to see him shows that he had personal integrity. He did the right thing because he truly was a righteous person.

Eventually, Potiphar's wife tricked him and accused him. Potiphar was angry over this (Genesis 39:19) and had Joseph put in prison. Execution would have been the normal punishment for the sin he was falsely accused of committing.

(Genesis 39:20-40:23) Sold into slavery by his brothers and thrown into prison for a crime he didn't commit, Joseph could have given up on God, but even in prison, he remained faithful. God blessed Joseph in prison; soon, the warden put him in charge of everything done there. Joseph was about seventeen years old when he was sold into slavery and apparently was put in prison soon after that. He was thirty years old when he was released from prison. So, he had been in prison for close to thirteen years.

(Genesis 41:1-40) It is not unusual that the cupbearer, the baker, and Pharaoh all seemed obsessed with their dreams. Dreams were given great importance in those days. Pharaoh's advisers even had manuals to help them interpret dreams. Note that Joseph didn't use a manual—he depended on God to provide the interpretation.

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/

(Genesis 41:41-57) Joseph boldly suggested a plan for dealing with the famine, but God must have been at work because Pharaoh was impressed. Pharaoh showers Joseph with gifts and honour, including Pharaoh's signet ring, robes and fine linen, a gold chain necklace, a chariot to ride, a new name and a wife.

Joseph's time in Egypt was filled with extremely bad and extremely good events. In whatever situation Joseph found himself in, he gave glory to God, worked hard and kept his personal integrity.

Way to Introduce the Story:

"Who had a dream last night? What did you dream about?" (Take time to share dreams that you and the children have had.) "In today's story we are going to learn about dreams that have meaning."

The Story:

Joseph had been sold by his own brothers as a slave and was taken to Egypt. He was sold to a man named Potiphar, one of the Pharaoh's officials. A slave has to do everything his master tells him to do, but he never gets paid. Joseph worked hard in Potiphar's house.

But even though Potiphar was his master in Egypt, Joseph knew that God was his true master. He was always honest and tried to do things the way God would want him to.

Soon, Potiphar trusted Joseph so much that he put him in charge of his entire household. Joseph was even in charge of other slaves and told them what to do. He made sure that the other slaves took good care of Potiphar's wife.

But Potiphar's wife was not a good woman. She wanted Joseph to be her boyfriend, but Joseph knew that was wrong. She was already married to Potiphar, and being her boyfriend would be wrong. One day, when no one else was in the house, Potiphar's wife grabbed Joseph's cloak and said, "Come to bed with me. No one will know."

But Joseph had integrity. He wanted to do the right thing even if no one else could see him. He knew that God could see him. Joseph ran away from Potiphar's wife so fast that he left his cloak.

Potiphar's wife was very angry with Joseph. She told lies to Potiphar. Then she held up Joseph's cloak and said, "See, I have proof that he tried to attack me. He left his cloak in my bedroom." When Potiphar heard this, he had Joseph sent to prison. It was a sad day for Joseph.

Even though Joseph was very sad to go to prison, he still tried acting the way God would want him to. Soon, the warden in the prison learned to trust Joseph, too. He put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners.

Two men were sent to the prison by Pharaoh, the ruler of all of Egypt. One man had been a cup-bearer in the palace, and the other had been a baker. Each of these men had dreams and was very upset by them.

"Tell me your dreams," Joseph said. "God will help me tell you what the dreams mean."

The cupbearer had dreamed about a grapevine with three branches. In the dream, the cupbearer squeezed grape juice into a cup for Pharaoh. Joseph was happy to tell him that in three days, the Pharaoh would let him out of prison and ask him to return to work.

"When that happens", Joseph requested, "please remember to tell Pharaoh about me."

The baker dreamed about three baskets on his head. The top was full of the bread and cakes he had baked for Pharaoh. He carried the baskets, and the birds ate all the breads and cakes. Joseph was sorry to tell him this meant that the Pharaoh would have him put to death by hanging in three days. After he died, the birds would eat his body. The baker was very worried.

Three days later, the Pharaoh had a big party for important guests. During the party, he called the cupbearer and the baker forward in front of all of his guests. He announced that the cupbearer would have

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/

his job back. He would be in charge of bringing wine to the Pharaoh. This was just as Joseph had said.

And sadly, the meaning of the baker's dream also came true, just as Joseph had said. Pharaoh announced that he was to be put to death by hanging.

Two years passed, and the cupbearer forgot about Joseph. One night, Pharaoh had a dream. He really wanted someone to tell him what it meant. He called together all of his advisors and told them about his dream. Even though they were magicians and the wisest men in Egypt, they did not know what the dream meant.

And that is when the cupbearer finally remembered Joseph. He told Pharaoh how Joseph had correctly interpreted his dream and that of the baker.

So Joseph was taken out of the prison and brought to Pharaoh. When Pharaoh asked Joseph to interpret the dream, Joseph told him, "I cannot interpret your dream but GOD can interpret it for you."

So Pharaoh explained what he had dreamed about. "I dreamed of seven fat cows eating among the reeds. While they were eating, seven scrawny and ugly cows came up and ate the fat cows. Even after they had eaten the fat cows, the last cows were still scrawny and ugly.

Then, I dreamed of seven full and good heads of grain that sprouted. Seven thin and scorched heads of grain then sprouted and swallowed all of the fat heads of grain."

"I have told these dreams to all my magicians but none of them could tell me what they mean," the Pharaoh told Joseph.

Joseph explained, "It is God who is giving you these dreams to tell you what He is about to do. Both dreams mean the same thing. The seven fat cows and seven fat heads of grain represent seven years of abundance when crops grow well and there is extra food for everyone. The seven scrawny cows and seven scorched heads of grain represent seven years of famine when grain will not grow, and there will not be enough food."

Joseph continued, "During the seven years of abundance Pharaoh should put someone in charge so he can save and store all of the extra food. Then, when the seven years of famine come, the people in Egypt will have enough food and not go hungry."

Pharaoh knew immediately that this was the true meaning of his dream.

He put Joseph in charge of storing grain for all of Egypt. He gave Joseph his own ring and a gold necklace. He also gave Joseph a chariot to ride on and told everyone in Egypt to follow Joseph's instructions. Joseph was only second to the Pharaoh in all of Egypt. Pharaoh also chose a wife for Joseph to show him honour.

So, Joseph had come to Egypt as a slave, and now he was a wealthy leader of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. Joseph had integrity in good times and bad. He wanted to do the right thing even if no one else could see him. Joseph trusted God and knew that God was with him.

Do you have integrity like Joseph?

top

Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/

top

Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

Review:

- Who was Joseph sold to in Egypt? (Potiphar)
- Why did Potiphar put Joseph in prison? (Potiphar's wife told lies about him)
- Whose dreams did Joseph interpret in prison? (The Chief Baker and Chief Butler to the Pharaoh)
- What did Pharaoh's dreams about cows and grain mean? (Seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine)
- Who did Pharaoh put in charge of preparing for the famine? (Joseph)
- Joseph's brother sold him into slavery, which was a bad thing, but how did God use Joseph's situation for good in this story? (God used Joseph to interpret Pharaoh's dream and save many people from starvation)

Reflection:

- What do you think Joseph's prison smelled, looked, or felt like?
- How do you think Joseph felt when Potiphar's wife lied about him doing bad things? Have you ever been accused of doing something you didn't?
- How do you think Joseph felt when he became Potiphar's slave?
- Have you ever had a dream that was confusing? How do you think the Chief Butler, Chief Baker, and Pharaoh felt when Joseph interpreted their dreams for them?
- What do you wonder about in this story?
- Do you think it would be hard to love and obey God in prison like Joseph did? What is something that you struggle to obey God?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

Song Suggestions:

- Jacob Lived in Canaan Song
- Sons of Jacob Song

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/

- Ha-la-la-la Song
- Oh, Be Careful
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

top

Activities and Crafts:

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

- Continue to learn the names of the twelve sons of Jacob.
- Write situations on cards. Let the children act out the situation, showing personal integrity. The other children can guess what they are acting out and how they are showing integrity. Here are some examples:
  - Integrity is seeing rubbish/trash on the floor, picking it up, and putting it in the bin without being asked.
  - Integrity is saying good things about someone when others are gossiping about them.
  - Integrity is choosing not to watch a movie that you are not allowed to watch, even when you are at a friend's house and your parents would never know.
  - Integrity is telling the teacher that you were playing by her desk and broke her vase while she was out of the room.
  - Integrity is telling the truth even if it means you will get in trouble.
  - Integrity is finding money on the floor at the library and reporting it to the librarian rather than putting it into your pocket.
  - Integrity is replacing someone else's property that you broke.
  - Integrity is studying for the test and writing your own answers instead of copying someone else's work.
- Another way to do this is to show pictures of different places and let the children say how they could show integrity.
- Retell the story and let the children create the appropriate sound effects. They could make the sound of footsteps, Potiphar's wife blowing kisses, prison doors closing, or sleeping.
- Look up Egypt on a map.
- Search online or use books from the library and study things about life in ancient Egypt.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable "God's Story" printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

Crafts:

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/

- Copy Egyptian writing.
- Make a salt dough map of Egypt
- Write the memory verse on a large piece of paper and then decorate the border with Egyptian symbols.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

top

Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page Joseph and Potiphar and puzzle worksheets (Calvary Curriculum)
- Colouring page Joseph in prison and puzzle worksheets (Calvary Curriculum)
- Craft: A selection of Egyptian crafts (Danielle's Place)

top

Date
2026/11/01

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/