



LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Saves

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 37; 39–50

WORD OF WONDER: From Jeremiah 32:17

In my struggles, I pray and ask God to respond. I want Him to save me from my suffering according to my plan. But usually, my plan is not His plan.

When our oldest son was a senior in high school, my husband and I prayed for financial provision for college. God answered our prayer by allowing my husband to be laid off from his job.

Wait ... what? That wasn't what we had in mind! How would that help, Lord?

We didn't understand God's plan, but we knew we could trust Him. We had to trust Him. God's plan offered us a solution that wouldn't have been available had my husband kept his job. It created an opportunity for grants and scholarships that covered our son's entire first year of school.

Are you in a season where you don't think God hears? Know that His ways are unique and perfect. He may not choose to save us from suffering. But we can be confident of this: He will save us in it! In our darkest valleys, God saves.

As you read Genesis 50:15–21, think about your situation. Are you able to see that whatever you are going through, God will use for His good and glory?

God had a plan to save a nation of people through Joseph's suffering. God had a plan to save you and me through Jesus' suffering. Isn't that amazing?

God has "made the heavens and the earth. Nothing is too hard for [Him]" (Jeremiah 32:17).

—**Kristi McElheney**

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JOSEPH'S STORY

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Joseph was Jacob's second youngest and favorite son. Joseph had a lot of very difficult and emotional experiences. He was hated by his brothers, thrown into a hole, sold into slavery, falsely accused, and sent to prison. Yet, God remained faithful to Joseph.

WHAT?

The coat of many colors Jacob gave Joseph signified that Jacob preferred Joseph over his other sons. Typically, this type of coat showed honor and was given to the son who had the birthright. This contributed to the hatred Joseph's brothers had for him.

WHERE?

Joseph traveled from Hebron to Shechem in search of his brothers, then headed approximately 65 miles north to Dothan. There Joseph was taken by Ishmaelite traders about 250 miles southwest, to Egypt, where they sold him as a slave to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials.

WHEN?

Joseph was 17 years old when his brothers sold him into slavery. Two years after Joseph was put in prison by Potiphar, he interpreted Pharaoh's dream. He was 30 years old. Approximately 23 years passed between Joseph's being sold into slavery and his family seeing him again.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Joseph had a big part in God's plan to save His people. God worked through Joseph's slavery in Egypt and his eventual leadership role to preserve and grow Jacob's family into a nation, as He had promised. One day, Jesus would be born in that family!



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Curiosity Activity: Save the Stuffed Animal

SUPPLIES: stuffed animal, step stool or chair

Today we're talking about how God saves! We'll learn about a time when God saved His people. Have you ever needed to be saved from falling down? Allow the kids to respond. **Let's play a game where you will rush to save a stuffed animal before it gets to the floor. I'm going to stand and toss the stuffed animal, and I'll call on one of you to rush to save it before it gets to the floor.**

Stand and hold a stuffed animal. Call out a kid's name before you toss the stuffed animal, and that kid will come save the stuffed animal. Let the kids take turns "saving" the stuffed animal by catching it after you toss it. Repeat until all of the kids have had a turn.

You worked to save the stuffed animal from hitting the floor. We'll learn today that God saves. How do you think God saves us? Allow the kids to respond. **We'll learn more today about how God saved a lot of people through someone named Joseph. We'll also learn about God's plan to rescue and save the whole world!**

Let's say our Wonder Truth together: God saves! Invite kids to repeat the Wonder Truth.

Now stand like a superhero, and say it in your best strong superhero voice: God saves! Encourage the kids to repeat the Wonder Truth.



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Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You for being here with us. We invite Your Holy Spirit to lead us today. Help us understand more about how You save us. Help us remember You are with us even when things are hard. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible

Ask: What is this called? ***The Bible***

Ask: Why is the Bible special? ***Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.***

Tell the Bible Story

The Beginner's Bible, pages 71-77

Joseph's Colorful Robe

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Why were Joseph's brothers upset with him?** *(They were jealous; their dad gave him a special coat; he told them his dreams about them bowing down to him.)*
- **What special present did Joseph's dad give him?** *(a colorful coat)*
- **What did Joseph do to help his brothers?** *(forgave them; saved food)*
- **How did God use Joseph's life to save people?** *(Joseph was able to interpret dreams and save food.)*
- **How has God helped you?**
- **Have you ever been treated unfairly? Share about it?** *(If kids need ideas, offer help such as: when someone else won something and they cheated, or when you didn't get a prize that you deserved.)*
- **How does God save us?**

God is powerful and can do anything. He cares about you. Joseph went through some hard times, but God was always with Joseph. God is always with you. Let's talk to God now in prayer and thank Him for helping us.

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

Nothing is too hard for God.

— Jeremiah 32:17



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Craft: Joseph's Story

SUPPLIES: glue sticks, kid-safe scissors, construction paper (1 sheet per kid)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Joseph's Story Sheet (1 per kid)

Ahead of time, print a Joseph's Story Sheet for each kid. Set out glue sticks, kid-safe scissors, and construction paper.

While I talk about Joseph and his life, you can color and cut out the pictures of things that happened in Joseph's life from the Joseph's Story Sheet and glue them onto a piece of paper to tell Joseph's story. Make sure to glue the pictures onto the paper in order.

Give each kid a Joseph's Story Sheet and a sheet of construction paper. Let them use the glue sticks and kid-safe scissors. Help younger kids by cutting the boxes apart for them, and then assist with gluing and putting the pictures in order.



Let's think about Joseph and his life. A lot of things happened to Joseph! God was with Joseph in everything he went through. Joseph's dad gave him a colorful coat, then his brothers threw him into a pit. Can you find a picture of Joseph in the pit (which is a big hole in the ground)? Allow the kids to find the picture. The brothers sold him to work for someone. After a while, Joseph got put in prison even when he didn't deserve it. Can you find a picture of Joseph in prison? Allow the kids to find the picture. Then he got to work for Pharaoh and help a lot of people. God worked through Joseph to save many people when there wasn't food available. He even helped his brothers. Can you find a picture of Joseph talking with his brothers? Allow the kids to find the picture. When you finish the story sheet, you can use your paper to tell the story of Joseph's life to someone else.

Invite the kids to share their pictures and tell Joseph's story to one another.

Today we learned God worked through Joseph to save many people. God gives us Jesus to save us! God is powerful, and He loves us. Even though Joseph went through hard things, God was always with him. And God is always with us!

Leader Tip: This activity is a great way to review today's story and the life of Joseph. Give kids prompts but allow them to think through the events in order and give answers. This will help solidify the story for them.



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Responding in Worship: Our God Saves

SUPPLIES: pipe cleaners (several for each kid)

Encourage kids to sit in a large circle. **Today we learned that no matter what happens, God is with us, and God saves. At the end of Joseph's story, Joseph told his brothers that even though they planned to harm him, God planned it for good. God saved many people because of Joseph.**

Do you believe God is good? Allow kids to answer. **Think about this question: How has God been good to you?** Allow kids to answer. **God is always with us. He loves us and saves us. No matter what happens, even hard things, we can trust God. He forgives us when we do wrong things. He helps us do the right thing.**

Pass out a few pipe cleaners to each kid.

Today let's worship God by telling Him how good He is. Listen as I play some music and shape your pipe cleaners into something that reminds you that God is good, and that He saves. You can be creative and make it into any shape you want! Listen as I read a verse from Jeremiah and shape your pipe cleaner as you listen to these words:

Jeremiah 32:18b–20 says, "Great and powerful God, your name is the Lord Who Rules Over All. Your purposes are great. Your acts are mighty. Your eyes see everything people do. You reward each one of them in keeping with their conduct. You do this based on what they have done. You performed signs and wonders in Egypt. And you have continued to do them to this day. You have done them in Israel and among all people. You are still known for doing them."

Kids may need help shaping their pipe cleaners or thinking of things to make. For example, they could make a heart, a cross, a house, a family member, a person from the Bible, or a favorite toy.

As you look at your shape, think about God and how good He is. Thank Him for the ways He has shown His goodness to you in your life. Give the kids a moment to pause and pray as they thank God.

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish the activity, pray with them and thank God for how good and trustworthy He is.

God, You are a big and powerful God. Thank You for how You love us, help us, and save us. Thank You for how good You are to us. Help us trust in You no matter what happens. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: Our God, who loves you, is with you! He is mighty to save and will never leave you. May you always trust Him.