

Joseph Is Sold By His Brothers

Genesis 37:3-36

MEMORY VERSE

MATTHEW 5:11

"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake."

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Baby food jars, 1/4 cup of warm water for each jar, 6 teaspoons of salt for each jar, paint brushes, and black or dark red construction paper.

A piece of embroidery or cross-stitch.

As many 1 1/2" wooden blocks and sheets of tissue paper as the number of children in your class, a sheet of foam, stamp pads in various colors, and glue.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Evaporating Paint

You will need baby food jars, 1/4 cup of warm water for each jar, 6 teaspoons of salt for each jar, paint brushes, and black or dark red construction paper. Mix the water and salt in the jars and have the children paint pictures on the paper then let them dry. When the water evaporates it will leave sparkly pictures.

Point out to your class that sometimes we can't see the beauty in a situation until later, "after the water has dried." In today's lesson we are going to learn about Joseph who had to trust that the Lord was doing something good in his life even when it looked like things were pretty bad. **God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it doesn't seem like it.**

LESSON TIME!

Sometimes circumstances in our lives may seem unbearable, and often times we may wonder why we must suffer so greatly. Although we may not understand why certain things happen to us, we can be confident that our heavenly Father loves us and is working out something great in our lives. **God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it doesn't seem like it.** Jesus tells us, "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake" (Matthew 5:11).

Just because we live our lives for Jesus doesn't mean we won't have bad things happen in our lives at times. However, we have confidence that no matter what happens our Lord Jesus will cause "all things to work together for good for those who love God and to those who are called according to His purposes" (Romans 8:28).

As we study Joseph's life we will see that God called him to suffer before allowing him to enter glory. Joseph's life in many ways is a picture for us of Jesus' life: he was greatly loved by his father, hated by his brothers, plotted against, sold as slave, arrested unjustly, made to suffer, and then went from suffering to becoming the savior of those who had rejected him. Isn't it amazing that even when life seems out of control that God is still in control? There were probably many times Joseph thought that things were not fair or right in his life, but God was faithful to him and worked everything out for good.

God has called each of us His children, to be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29). We will face trials in our lives, just as Joseph did, but we can be encouraged by his life because just as He worked all together for good in Joseph so has He promised to do in each of our lives as well. **God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it doesn't seem like it.**

GENESIS 37:3-4

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors.

But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

Israel's favoritism toward Joseph caused much jealousy and hatred to occur among his other children. They were jealous when Israel gave Joseph the tunic (coat) of colors he made. A coat with sleeves represented authority in those days, which caused Israel's sons to resent their brother and his coat.

After everything that Israel (Jacob) had been through in his life he should have realized the problems that come when favoritism is shown. He ended up having to run for his life and leave his home for 20 years because of his father and mother showing favoritism.

The Bible teaches that we should not show any partiality towards others. As brothers and sisters in Jesus we need to love one another the same. When we favor someone over another then someone's feelings are going to get hurt. Let's be careful to love one another the same, as Jesus loves us!

GENESIS 37:5-11

Now Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more.

So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed:

"There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and

indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."

And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."

So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?"

And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

The dream that Joseph had was really the Lord revealing Joseph's future. There would come a day that Joseph's brothers would bow down to him. Joseph, or his brothers, really didn't understand what all this meant in the dreams, but from what they did understand, Joseph's brothers just became angry. Through these two dreams God showed that Joseph would rule over his family. Joseph's dreams were his assurance that God did have a plan for his life and that he would need to live his life for God, even in the midst of trouble.

Trusting in God's word alone gives us the peace and the hope we need to hold fast in the midst of difficult times. As we put our trust in God's word we can rest in Him because we know that He will work everything out for good in our lives. He will give us the

strength to stand and the peace to live by. Later on Joseph will have to keep his eyes on the Lord as some very difficult things happen in his life. **God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it doesn't seem like it.**

Joseph's brothers became hateful and envious toward him rather than recognizing God's choice as to who would rule. Their wicked hearts chose hate instead of submission, revealing exactly why they weren't called to lead. Israel pondered these dreams with the understanding that God's ways were not as man's for he too had been called to lead as the younger.

GENESIS 37:12-17

Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am."

Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.

Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?"

So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks."

And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

Joseph's servant heart is revealed as he faithfully followed his father's command. Joseph did what Israel asked in full understanding that he was being sent to the brothers that taunted, mocked, and hated him. Yet, Joseph went willingly as an obedient servant.

Jesus also came as an obedient servant to the Father, even knowing that he would be rejected, mocked and hated. Joseph and Jesus are examples for us to be obedient in what we are asked to do and to be humble servants, even when it is difficult. **God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it doesn't seem like it.**

GENESIS 37:18-22

Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him.

Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming!

"Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him."

And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"--that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.

Joseph's brothers became so consumed with hatred and envy they plotted to kill him together. The wickedness they harbored in their

hearts finally came out in full. Reuben planned to rescue Joseph, so he convinced them to not kill him, but rather to throw him into a pit.

Hatred is a very strong emotion. As Christians we are not to hate anyone. We are to love our enemies and those who are against us as Jesus taught. Jesus compared the hatred that we can have in our hearts to murder (Matthew 5:21-22). We need to be careful about bad feelings that we have towards others. If we become angry with someone else we need to first go to the Lord and pray about our heart and attitude and then go to that person and talk to them about the situation. This is how Jesus told us how to handle these things.

As we will see in our story these brothers handled their anger in a wrong way and then sinned. They ended up causing great pain for Joseph, Israel and themselves. **God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it doesn't seem like it.**

GENESIS 37:23-28

So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him.

Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.

And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt.

So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?"

“Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh.” And his brothers listened.

Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

Joseph’s brothers had grown so hard hearted they didn't even respond to his cries from the pit but planned to let him die the slow, tortuous death of starvation and dehydration. However, God spared his life and he instead was sold as a slave into a strange, foreign country.

God alone is wise and knows exactly what is best for us. He loved Joseph just as he loves each one of us. He knew that Joseph must enter into this trial so that character may be built into his life. **God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it doesn't seem like it.**

Beauty from Chaos

Bring a piece of embroidery or cross stitch. Show the children the back of the piece and ask them if they think it is beautiful. Then turn the piece around and show them the beautiful picture or pattern. Ask them to describe the difference of the front and the back.

Explain that sometimes we only see the “back” of our lives, but God always sees the “front” and it’s something beautiful that He is creating. **God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it doesn't seem like it.**

Through trials and difficult times we can be preserved by faith in our Maker because we know He will work it all out for good. God

knew Joseph needed to suffer for righteousness sake before becoming a leader just as God knows what is best in each of our lives. We can trust in Him no matter what the circumstances because God is in control and He sees our lives as a tale that has been told.

GENESIS 37:29-35

Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes.

And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?"

So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood.

Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?"

And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces."

Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days.

And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

Joseph's brothers lied to their father, showing him Joseph's tunic soaked in goat's blood. Here we see the same deceit Israel had used on his own father earlier in his life. His sons' hatred and deceit

caused unbearable pain for Israel. Yet, through it all, even Israel's pain was among the things that would work together for good.

We also see how that when a sin is committed and a lie is told we often have to lie more and more to keep from getting caught. Eventually it will be found out. But often one sin leads to another sin and another sin. If and when we do sin we need to pray and confess it to the Lord immediately and then make it right with the person we may have hurt.

GENESIS 37:36

Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

Joseph had been sold as slave and would be starting a new phase in his life. Yet, through all the reviling and persecution, he would be blessed for he was in the Lord's will, placed perfectly in His eternal plan. And so are we blessed when we follow his path despite trouble and hardship, for we have a loving, awesome God who works out all things for good for His children.

In coming lessons we will continue to learn about Joseph. We will see how that even though things get worse for Joseph, God still works everything out according to His plan in the end. **God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it doesn't seem like it.**

Home-made Rubber Stamps

You will need 1 1/2" wooden blocks, a sheet of foam, stamp pads in various colors, glue, and sheets of tissue paper. Let the kids use their imaginations to cut out shapes from the foam that will fit on the wooden blocks. Have them glue the foam to the blocks, stamp the blocks on the pads and decorate the tissue paper into "custom" wrapping paper.

Explain that little, funny looking pieces of foam can make a beautiful useful thing like wrapping paper, when it is all put together. Sometimes we don't see how our lives will be all put together, but God is working a wonderful plan for our lives, even when it does not seem like it.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust the Lord no matter what the circumstances of our lives. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.