Old Testament

Lesson 14 - Joseph Interprets Dreams

Aim
* To learn that Joseph always kept a good attitude in difficult circumstances
* To learn how we can keep a good attitude when things go wrong

Materials
• Bible story about Joseph - Genesis 39-41
• Pictures of the story
• Story wheel patterns, card, glue, paper fasteners
• Worksheets

Lesson Outline
1. Introduction
2. Story
3. Questions
4. Activities - retell the story, act out the story, worksheets
5. Conclusion
6. End with a Prayer

1) Introduction
Review last week’s story. Jacob made Joseph a colourful robe, because he was his favourite son. His brothers, didn’t like this and became jealous. Joseph also had strange dreams. In one, his brothers bundles of wheat bowed down to his bundle of wheat. In another dream, the sun, moon and eleven stars bowed down to Joseph. These dreams made his brothers so angry, that they wanted to kill him. One day they sold him as a slave to some traders. Then they lied to their father and said he had been killed by a wild animal.

2) Story - Joseph Interprets Dreams
Joseph was taken to Egypt and sold as a slave to Potiphar, the Captain of the Guard to Pharaoh. He worked hard and was later put in charge of the whole household. He was wrongly put in prison when Potiphar’s wife said he had attacked her. In prison he correctly interpreted the dreams of a baker and butler. He became known for explaining the meaning of dreams, and when Pharaoh had some dreams, Joseph correctly explained that they meant there would be seven years of good harvest followed by seven years of bad harvest. To reward him Pharaoh made Joseph governor of all Egypt.
3) Questions
1. What special thing could Joseph do? - *He could interpret people’s dreams*
2. What dreams did the butler and baker have?
3. What happened to them?
4. What did Pharaoh dream about? What did the dreams mean?
5. How did God help Joseph?
   - *He was made head of Potiphar’s household*
   - *God gave him the power to interpret dreams*
   - *Pharaoh made him governor of Egypt*
6. What bad thing happened to Joseph? - *He was put in prison when he had done nothing wrong*
7. What attitude did Joseph have in prison? - *Instead of complaining to God for what happened, he trusted in God prayed*
8. How can we keep a good attitude when things go wrong?
   - *Remember that God is always with us*
   - *Ask God to help us*
   - *Always be thankful*
   - *Keep a positive attitude*
   - *Believe that things will get better*

4) Activities
* Act out the story
* Worksheets
* Put the pictures in the correct order. Retell the story
* Which picture is missing? Cover the pictures with a cloth and take one picture away. Take the cloth away. Which picture is missing?
* Make a story wheel
  Colour the pictures on the wheel shapes. Glue onto card. Cut out the wheel shapes. On the first wheel, cut out a window above where Joseph is lying. Using a paper fastener attach the two wheels together at the center. Re-tell the story of Joseph using the story wheel

5) Conclusion
Ask each child what they could learn from today’s lesson. Refer to the lesson aims:

* To learn that Joseph always kept a good attitude in difficult circumstances
  - *Instead of complaining to God for what happened, he trusted in God prayed*

* To learn how we can keep a good attitude when things go wrong
  - *Always be thankful*
  - *Keep a positive attitude*
  - *Believe that things will get better*
  - *Remember that God is always with us*
  - *Ask God to help us*

6) End with a Prayer
Joseph Interprets Dreams

Joseph was taken to Egypt where he was sold as a slave to a man called Potiphar. He was Captain of the Guard to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

God was with Joseph. He worked hard for Potiphar and was successful in whatever he did. Potiphar was pleased with Joseph and put him in charge of the whole household. However, Potiphar's wife had fallen in love with Joseph. She began to pester him to return her love, but Joseph was too honest to take advantage of her. "How could I betray my master's trust? Besides, it is a sin against God."

When she couldn't get her own way, Potiphar's wife was angry. So, she pretended that Joseph had attacked her, and Potiphar ordered Joseph to be thrown into the royal prison. There he remained for many years.

While Joseph was in the prison, God was with him. The man running the prison was pleased with Joseph, so he put Joseph in charge of all of the prisoners. While he was there, Pharaoh's butler and baker were brought to the prison for displeasing their master. One morning, the two prisoners looked miserable. "We both had strange dreams last night," they told Joseph, "and we don't understand what they mean."

"God can show us what dreams mean," said Joseph. "Tell me what you saw."

The butler told Joseph of a grapevine with three branches. He had squeezed the grape juice into Pharaoh's cup and given it to him to drink.

"The meaning is clear," said Joseph. "In three days, you will be free and back at work. Please, put in a good word for me."

"I promise," the butler said.

The baker told his dream. "In my dream, I was carrying three baskets full of bread and pastries on my head and birds flew down and pecked at them."

Joseph shook his head, sadly. "This dream is not good," he said. "In three days, Pharaoh will kill you."

Joseph was right. It was Pharaoh's birthday three days later. He ordered the chief baker to be put to death, and give the butler his job back. As soon as the butler was released, he forgot about the promise he had made and so Joseph remained in prison.
Pharaoh’s Dreams

Two years later, Pharaoh had two strange dreams which none of his wise men could explain. Then the butler remembered Joseph and brought him before the king. "The God whom I worship helps me to understand the meaning of dreams," Joseph told the Pharaoh.

So, Pharaoh told Joseph his dreams. "I saw seven fat cows come out of the river to feed on the grass. Then seven thin, bony cows came along and ate up the fat ones." Pharaoh went on. "In my second dream, I saw seven ripe ears of wheat growing on one stalk. Then seven thin, withered ears of wheat sprouted and swallowed up the ripe ears."

Joseph explained that God was preparing Pharaoh for the future. Both dreams meant that there were going to be seven years of good crops followed by seven years of famine.

Pharaoh was impressed by Joseph. "God has given you great wisdom. I will make you governor of all Egypt."

Joseph ordered huge storehouses to be built in every city. During the next seven years, there were wonderful harvests. Vast amounts of wheat were stored away. Then came the bad years. Joseph organized the distribution of the stored wheat, and foreigners came to Egypt to buy some at a high price.
Joseph in Prison
Joseph in Prison

Which picture is different from the others?

In prison, a baker and a butler had dreams. Joseph told them what their dreams meant. Which is the baker and which is the butler?
Joseph in Prison
Down:

2. Joseph told Pharaoh that there would be seven years of abundance followed by seven years of ______________.
3. Joseph told the butler and the ______________ what their dreams meant.
5. Joseph said to Pharaoh "God has ______________ what he is about to do"
6. Potiphar put Joseph in Charge of his ______________.

Across:

1. Potiphar's wife lied about Joseph and ______________ had him put in prison.
4. The Warden put Joseph in charge of all those in ______________.
7. The ______________ and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were being held in prison — had a dream the same night.
8. Pharaoh put Joseph in Charge of the whole land. of ______________.
9. The Lord was with ______________ and gave him success in whatever he did.
10. Pharaoh had two ______________.
Story Wheel
Story wheel