



# Lesson Eleven

## *God Planned Joseph's Life*



### Growing as a Teacher

#### Scripture

Genesis 37; 39–41

#### Bible Truth

God planned happy and unhappy events in Joseph's life to accomplish his will. Joseph trusted and obeyed God in good and bad times.

#### Lesson Aim

To recognize that God is in control of our lives and to thank him for taking care of us.

#### Memory Verse

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.  
ROMANS 8:28

God so rules over his creation that the pleasant and unpleasant things in our lives accomplish his purposes for us and for his kingdom. God's providential working in the lives of his people is nowhere more clearly portrayed in the Old Testament than in the account of Joseph.

The seeds of conflict sown years before in Jacob's family by Laban's deceit flourished in the next generation in the rivalry between the sons of different mothers. Joseph's older brothers were angered by his report to their father of their ungodly behavior while they were tending sheep far from home, and they hated him even more when Jacob gave him an ornate coat, clear confirmation of Jacob's pre-eminent love for Joseph, the first son of his beloved Rachel. The brothers' jealous hatred grew to a climax when Joseph rashly told them about his two dreams. Though not fully understanding their significance, they understood enough to ask, "Do you intend to reign over us?"

Joseph worked diligently as a slave for Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard, who put him in charge of his household. When Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him, Joseph refused to submit to temptation but was nevertheless put into prison when she spitefully and falsely accused him. Exhibiting diligence in adverse circumstances again, Joseph was put in charge of the prison. A fellow prisoner who was returning to the royal household promised to speak to Pharaoh on Joseph's behalf but forgot about him until Pharaoh needed someone to interpret his dream two years later. God gave Joseph the ability to interpret Pharaoh's dream and the wisdom to recommend a course of action. Unable to think of any Egyptian as wise as Joseph, Pharaoh appointed Joseph as ruler over Egypt to prepare for the coming famine.

Joseph was sold as a slave, falsely accused and imprisoned, and forgotten by a friend. Rather than becoming resentful or depressed, he demonstrated his faith in the Lord in all circumstances. Though far from the Promised Land and God's chosen people, Joseph was always conscious that he was living in the presence of God, so he trusted God, worked diligently and remained committed to his moral principles. Even the pagan Egyptians could see "the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did" (Genesis 39:23). This is a picture of how we should live. Read through Genesis 37 and chapters 39–41 at one sitting, meditating on each part. Pray that you and your students will show forth the light of God's grace in any circumstance, as Joseph did.

# Lesson Eleven at a Glance

Step	Minutes	Children's Activities	Supplies (complete list, p. 11)
<b>1</b> Welcome	5–10	Watch a Pete Puppet skit about trusting God.	<input type="checkbox"/> Pete Puppet*
<b>2</b> Bible Time	15–20	Listen to the story of how God used happy and unhappy things in Joseph's life.	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 11 Joseph*
<b>3</b> Memory Verse	5–10	Memorize Romans 8:28.	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 1a Memory Work poster, TA 1a Verses poster* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Optional:</i> pushpins, glue <input type="checkbox"/> Romans 8:28 door hanger**
<b>4</b> Activities	10–15	Complete <i>At Home 11</i> activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>At Home 11</i> ** <input type="checkbox"/> Pencils <input type="checkbox"/> Crayons or markers
<b>5</b> Final Focus	5	<b>4</b> Sing "I'm Part of the Plan of God" (Songbook, p. 9). Close in prayer.	<input type="checkbox"/> Songbook* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Optional:</i> song poster, <i>Younger Elementary Vol. 1</i> CD

Total time: 40–60 minutes

\* *Younger Elementary Teaching Aids Pack*  
\*\* *Younger Elementary Student Activities Pack*



## Practical Preparation



### Enrichment

Instead of complaining or trying to get revenge when people did unfair things to him, Joseph trusted God and continued to work hard and treat others kindly. Talk about unfair things people do to us and name ways we can respond that will be pleasing to God.

Good preparation is one of the keys to good teaching. As you begin to prepare, read the Scripture passages thoroughly and study the background material so that you will have a good understanding of what God was doing in Joseph's life. Study the Bible lesson so well that you can tell it with confidence and excitement.

Gather the supplies listed in the chart above, noting that you will use **Pete Puppet** again this week.

During **Final Focus**, the children will learn the last stanza of "I'm Part of the Plan of God" (Songbook, p. 9). Playing the *Younger Elementary Vol. 1* CD will encourage them to sing. Also try to get rhythm instruments for the children to play as they sing.



Order CD and/or extra Songbooks from Great Commission Publications at 800-695-3387 or [www.gcp.org](http://www.gcp.org).



## Welcome

5-10 minutes

Let Pete Puppet welcome the children to class, then turn him toward you as you begin the skit.

### Moving On

Pete: Mom, I'm home!

Mom: Hi, Pete. How was school?

Pete: It was fine, except that today was Mike's last day. His family is moving tomorrow.

Mom: *(sympathetically)* I know you'll miss him.

Pete: *(sadly)* I sure will. I feel sorry for him, too. He's sad because he has to leave his friends. It's not fair that he has to move just so his dad can get a new job.

Mom: You have a lot of friends here, don't you? And do you really like them?

Pete: *(happily)* Sure, my friends are great! I like my school and my teacher, too.

Mom: Do you remember how sad you were because you had to leave your friends when we moved here? And it was hard at first, but it didn't take long for you to make new friends.

Pete: I'd forgotten about that. It seems like a long time ago.

Mom: Do you think God will take care of Mike's family in their new home just like he's taken care of us here?

Pete: I guess he will. And he'll give Mike new friends like he's given me. I hadn't thought of it like that. Maybe I'll tell Mike that before he leaves tomorrow!

*As you put Pete away and help the children get settled for class, say* Today we're going to learn about someone who trusted God when life was hard because he knew God was in control.



## Bible Time

15-20 minutes

At the end of our lesson last week, Jacob went back to Canaan and made up with his brother Esau. God had given Jacob faith, and he had learned to trust and obey God. Jacob had worked seven years so that he could marry Laban's daughter Rachel, but what had Laban done to him? *(tricked him into marrying his older daughter, Leah)* Then Jacob worked another seven years for Rachel. Jacob's wife Leah had many sons, but Rachel didn't have any children. After many years, God gave Jacob and Rachel a son, whom they named Joseph. Several years later, they had another baby and named him Benjamin.

### Early Arrivals



Ask children who arrive early to help you with things around the classroom. They can make changes on the bulletin board, sharpen pencils and so on.





Save TA 11 for Lesson 13.



## Joseph's Dreams

Joseph's dreams set the stage for what was to come and made God's providence evident from the beginning.

Jacob had 12 sons altogether, but Joseph was obviously his favorite. One day Jacob gave Joseph a special coat that was colorful and beautifully decorated. *Display the first panel of TA 11 (Joseph in his special coat).* Ask How did that make his brothers feel? (*jealous*) Their jealousy grew until they hated Joseph.

One day Joseph said to his brothers, "Last night I dreamed we were all in the fields tying up bundles of grain, and your bundles bowed down to mine!" His brothers didn't like that! They said angrily, "Do you think you will rule over us?"

Before long, Joseph had another dream. He told his brothers, "This time I dreamed that the sun, moon and 11 stars bowed down to me." His brothers grew more angry.

One day Jacob sent Joseph to check on his brothers. They had gone a long way from home looking for good grass for the sheep to eat. When they saw him coming, they said, "Here comes that dreamer." Then they thought of a wicked plan. "Let's kill him and throw his body into that deep pit and tell Father a wild animal got him." But the oldest brother, Reuben, said, "Don't kill him. Let's just throw him into the pit." Reuben was secretly planning to rescue him and send him home. So when Joseph came, they tore off his beautiful coat and threw him into the pit.

Later, the brothers saw a caravan of camels and people coming toward them on their way to Egypt. Judah said, "Let's sell Joseph as a slave to these merchants. That way, we can get rid of him but we won't feel guilty about killing him." *Display the second panel of TA 11 (Joseph being sold as a slave).* In a few minutes, Joseph was on his way to Egypt with the caravan. The brothers smeared Joseph's coat with goat's blood and took it to their father. When Jacob saw it, he said, "Some ferocious animal has torn Joseph to pieces." Jacob cried and was very sad for a long time. What a terrible thing the brothers had done to their father. Sometimes we don't think about how much our sins hurt other people.

Joseph was sold as a slave to Potiphar (*POH-ti-far*), who was the captain of the guards for Pharaoh (*FAY-row*), the king of Egypt. Joseph could have said, "Oh, poor me! Why did God let my brothers do this terrible thing to me?" But instead, Joseph trusted God and worked hard. He did such a good job that Potiphar put him in charge of his entire household. But then Potiphar's wife told lies about Joseph, and Joseph was put into prison.

Being in prison was not a happy thing for Joseph, but he knew God was still in control. He trusted and obeyed God, and was such a good worker that he was put in charge of the other prisoners. Two of the prisoners were Pharaoh's butler and baker. One morning they told Joseph they wanted to know the meaning of their strange dreams from the night before. The butler had dreamed that he took grapes from a vine, squeezed the juice into a cup and gave the cup to Pharaoh. God gave Joseph the power to explain the dream, and he said to the butler, "In three days you will be back in Pharaoh's palace serving him again. When you go back, please ask Pharaoh to get me out of prison." The butler promised he would.

The baker said he had dreamed he had three baskets of bread on his head, and birds came and ate all the bread. Joseph told him, “In three days, you will be hanged.” Three days later, things happened just as Joseph had said they would. But when the butler returned to Pharaoh’s palace, he forgot all about Joseph.

Joseph spent two more years in prison, but then Pharaoh had a dream. He dreamed that he was standing by the Nile River when seven healthy, fat cows came out of the river and ate grass along the riverbank. Then seven sickly, thin cows came out of the river and ate the healthy cows. In his second dream, Pharaoh saw seven thin, scorched heads of grain eat seven full, healthy heads of grain.

Pharaoh called in the wise men of Egypt to explain his dream, but no one knew what it meant. Then the butler told Pharaoh about Joseph. *Display the third panel of TA 11 (Joseph and Pharaoh).* When Pharaoh told Joseph his dream, Joseph said, “God is telling you what he is about to do. The seven good cows and the seven good heads of grain mean that for the next seven years God will give you good crops so that there will be more than enough food for everyone. The seven sick cows and the seven thin heads of grain mean that for seven years after that your crops will dry up in the field. Nothing will grow, so your people will not have enough food.”

God also gave Joseph the wisdom to suggest a good plan to get ready for the famine. He told Pharaoh, “Choose a wise man to store up grain during the seven good years so that you will have grain to sell to the people in the seven bad years. Then no one will starve.” Pharaoh and his officials agreed that there was no one in Egypt as wise as Joseph, because Joseph had wisdom from God. Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

God worked in Joseph’s life in surprising ways! Even his hard days as a slave and as a prisoner were part of God’s plan. But God wasn’t finished yet. He would continue working in Joseph’s life and using him to accomplish his purposes.

God is in control of your life, too. He is using happy things and sad things to carry out his purposes in your life, just as he did in Joseph’s life. We can thank God for taking care of us, and we can trust God and obey him, just as Joseph did.



## Memory Verse

5–10 minutes

As you begin teaching the children **Romans 8:28**, point to it on **TA 1a Verses** and read it to them. *Ask To whom did God make this promise? (those who love God—Christians)* Read the verse in unison. *Ask Does this verse say that there’s something good in everything that happens? (No. Some things are not good.)* It says that God uses everything in our lives—even bad things—to do what is best for us.

Pass out the **Romans 8:28 door hangers** and read the verse as a



## Joseph’s New Position

Moving from being a slave and a prisoner to being second in command in Egypt was a remarkable change in Joseph’s status in that foreign land. As a sign of his new position, Pharaoh gave him his own signet ring, robes of fine linen, a gold chain to wear and a chariot.

11



1a

### Fall Memory Verses

How many are your works, O Lord!  
In wisdom you made them all,  
the earth is full of your creatures.  
Psalms 104:24

Know that the Lord is God.  
It is He who made us,  
and we are His. Psalms 100:3a

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners,  
Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

“Whoever has my commands and obeys them,  
he is the one who loves me.  
He who loves me will be loved by my Father,  
and I will love him and show myself to him.” John 14:21

This is love: not that we loved God,  
but that he loved us and sent his Son  
as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:10

For he chose us in him  
before the creation of the world  
to be holy and blameless in his sight. Ephesians 1:4

And we know that in all things God works  
for the good of those who love him,  
who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

1a

Verses



group. Turn the door hangers face down and recite the verse. Then have the children divide into pairs and recite the verse to each other.

If you have time, hand out scissors and have the children cut along the dotted lines to hang them at home.

## 4

### Activities

10–15 minutes

Hand out copies of *At Home 11*, pencils and crayons or markers. Read aloud the title and directions for the part(s) you choose to do. Use your judgment of your students' reading abilities to determine how much help they will need in reading today's activities.

In *God's Plan*, read aloud the word choices, then read each sentence. The choices are arranged in order by number of letters to make it easier to select the correct word. Read aloud the completed story. **Answers: God, slave, all, prison, ruler, plan**

In *Which Came First?* read aloud the sentences in each group, then help the children decide the order. Tell them to put a 1 in the box for the first event, a 2 for the second event and a 3 for the third.

**Answers:** 1. 2, 1, 3

2. 2, 3, 1

3. 2, 1, 3

4. 1, 3, 2

5. 1, 3, 2

6. 3, 2, 1

## 5

### Final Focus

5 minutes

Using the song poster (if you made one), teach the children the third stanza of "I'm Part of the Plan of God," which is about Joseph. Then, if you have rhythm instruments, pass them out for the children to play while you sing the entire song. Remind them of the truth of the refrain: They really are part of God's plan.

As you close in prayer, thank God for having a plan for each of our lives and for taking care of us. Be sure each child leaves with *At Home 11* and a **Romans 8:28 door hanger**.

4

"I'm Part of the Plan of God"  
Songbook, p. 9



### Items to Send Home

- *At Home 11*
- Romans 8:28 door hanger