

LESSON 23

# Joseph Is Attacked by His Brothers

GENESIS 37:12-36



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**BIBLE TRUTH**

GOD SAVED JOSEPH SO THAT HE MIGHT ONE DAY SAVE US

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. **OPENING REVIEW** . . . . . **5 MIN**  
Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
2. **BIBLE STORY** . . . . . **10 MIN**  
Read Genesis 37:12–36 from the Scriptures or read story 23, “Joseph Is Attacked by His Brothers,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** . . . . . **10 MIN**  
It’s So Unfair  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ large bag of candy-coated chocolates
  - ✓ small box of candy
  - ✓ bag of small boxes of raisins (the smallest boxes you can find)
4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** . . . . . **10 MIN**
5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** . . . . . **15 MIN**  
God Even Uses Sin  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ pencils and paper
6. **SWORD BIBLE MEMORY** . . . . . **5 MIN**
7. **ACTIVITY TIME** . . . . . **15 MIN**  
Covering Sin  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ crayons, colored pencils, paper
8. **CLOSING PRAYER** . . . . . **5 MIN**
9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** . . . . . **10 MIN**  
Jealous Sin Leads to Broken Relationships  
**SUPPLIES:**
  - ✓ pretzel rods (enough to give one to each member of the class plus extras)
  - ✓ a roll of tape
  - ✓ juice
  - ✓ cups (enough for the class)

**TOTAL 85 MIN**

## PREPARING TO TEACH

## TEACHING POINTS

**Joseph’s brothers plotted against him**—In their jealousy, Joseph’s brothers plan to murder him. They have certainly heard how their own father stole the birthright of his older brother, Esau. Now it appears that the same thing is happening to them. The older brothers are going to bow down to the younger! They resent Joseph’s dreams and the special treatment their father gives him. They despise that Joseph, in his manager’s coat, is checking up on their work as if he were the oldest brother. In their sinful judging, the brothers sentence Joseph to death.

(Later, in Egypt, Joseph’s strong abilities as a manager and leader became obvious. Clearly, Jacob saw something special in his son and was not simply “playing favorites.”)

**Not all the brothers are equally guilty, but all are guilty**—Not all the brothers are equally guilty in the plot against Joseph. At the same time, none of the brothers tries as hard as he can to save him. Reuben suggests that they simply throw Joseph into a pit without killing him. Reuben’s hope is to come back later and rescue Joseph. While Reuben is off somewhere else, Judah suggests that the brothers sell Joseph as a slave. Judah seems genuinely concerned for Joseph. But he also seems willing to share in the profit the brothers will make if they sell him.

**Sin produces more sin**—As often happens, one sin leads to another. After selling off their brother, Joseph’s brothers must lie to their father to conceal their wicked actions. Even Reuben and Judah were part of the lying. When the sons try to comfort their father in his mourning for Joseph, they undoubtedly tell additional lies. Sin just produces more sin.

## A LITTLE BIT MORE

*Deceit*

In a rebuke, Paul describes lying (deceit) this way: “You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? (Acts 13:10).

John records Jesus speaking of unbelievers and the devil this way: “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning,

not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44 NIV).

Deceit started in the human race in the garden when Satan tempted Eve. Adam and Eve hid from God, and from that time, deception entered the human race and became one of our most frequent sins. Sin loves to grow in the darkness. In secret, lying allows us to believe we can hide our sin, but God is not fooled; he sees all things.

### WHERE IS JESUS? \_\_\_\_\_

How does today’s Bible story fit into God’s greater plan of redemption?

Read Matthew 27:17–23.

Joseph was treated unfairly by his brothers because of the brothers’ resentment and jealousy. This is one of many Old Testament stories that look forward to the life of Jesus.

Joseph was betrayed, bound, and sold into slavery by his jealous brothers. But later God would use Joseph to save his brothers. Like Joseph, Jesus was unjustly turned over to Pilate out of envy, which is very similar to jealousy. And later, Jesus would make a way of salvation.

When we look at the life of Joseph, we see a picture of Jesus who was betrayed, bound, and crucified by his own people because they were jealous of him and resented him.

## THE LESSON

### OPENING REVIEW . . . . . 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

### BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN

Read Genesis 37:12–36 from the Scriptures or read story 23, “Joseph Is Attacked by His Brothers,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

**OBJECT LESSON 1** . . . . . **10 MIN**

**It's So Unfair**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ large bag of candy-coated chocolates
- ✓ small box of candy
- ✓ bag of small boxes of raisins (the smallest boxes you can find)

*Note:* You can substitute other items for the above. The important thing is that the items clearly have different values from each other; e.g., a small box of raisins is not as good a gift as a small box of candy, and a small box of candy is not as desirable as a large bag of candy-coated chocolates.

The object of this exercise is to help the children identify with Joseph's brothers.

Recruit eleven volunteers to come to the front.

Give ten of the children one small box of raisins and the last child, your favorite, the box of candy. Have them return to their seats and then ask the class what they thought about what you did. They are likely to talk about how you were not fair. Explain to them that the child who received the box of candy was your favorite. Draw out some of the children who received the raisins and ask them how they felt. Go on with this for some time until it is well established that you were not fair.

Then, take out the large bag of candy-coated chocolates and present it to your favorite child and explain that he is not permitted to share it with the class.

When you present the bag of candy, the class will really think you are being unfair. Help them to connect their feelings with that of Joseph's brothers. When we read the story of Joseph, it is easy to identify with Joseph the victim and not the sinful brothers. Joseph, however, is a picture of Christ who was unjustly betrayed by those closest to him. We are more like the sinful brothers who eventually, when the famine comes, will need to be saved.

Help the children see how quickly jealousy and even anger fill our hearts and how we need a Savior to deliver us from our sin. (Close this object lesson by encouraging your "favorite" to share the candy with the class.)

**TEACHING/DISCUSSION . . . . . 10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

**OBJECT LESSON 2 . . . . . 15 MIN**

**God Even Uses Sin**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ pencils and paper

Read the passage out loud to the class and then have the children turn to Genesis 50:19–20. Have the children write out the answers to these questions:

- How did God work the sin of Joseph’s brothers together for the good of many people?  
*(The children should write about how God used Joseph in Egypt to save Israel from the famine.)*
- How did God ultimately bring good to us from Joseph’s brothers’ sins?  
*(Had all Israel perished in the famine, the promise God made to Abraham would not have been fulfilled. Jesus would not have been born in the line of Abraham. But God’s plan can never be thwarted by man.)*

Discuss the class’ answers and talk about how God is working in history to bring salvation to his people.

**SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

**ACTIVITY TIME . . . . . 15 MIN**

**Covering Sin**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ crayons, colored pencils, paper

Have the children draw a picture of Joseph's brothers dipping his coat in blood to cover their sin. They are trying to cover their own sin. Talk about how Jesus truly covers our sin by his death and forgiveness.

**CLOSING PRAYER . . . . . 5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

**BONUS OBJECT LESSON . . . . . 10 MIN**

**Jealous Sin Leads to Broken Relationships**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ pretzel rods (enough to give one to each member of the class plus extras)
- ✓ a roll of tape
- ✓ juice
- ✓ cups (enough for the class)

The object of this exercise is to show how our greed and jealousy can drive us.

Place a desk or table in the front of the room and mark with tape on the floor five feet on either side of the table. Ask for two volunteers. Place two pretzel rods on the table and explain that when you say go they may run to the table and take the pretzel rods.

Explain to the class that you will give a glass of juice to anyone who gets a pretzel. (Be careful that you don't say anything that would suggest they fight over the pretzels.) The reality is that the children will want to have pretzels and will likely break them in the process. If a round results in one person cleanly getting both pretzels, allow the other person a second turn. Be sure to observe their sinful behaviors; e.g., boasting, fighting, and whining.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **Why didn't one or more of you give up the pretzels to each other and share?**  
*(Our desires to have the pretzels and keep them for ourselves overpowered any thoughts of sharing.)*
- **What happened to the pretzels when you fought over them?**  
*(When the pretzels broke, it was because you would rather break the pretzel than give it to the other person.)*

- How were the broken pretzels like the broken relationships between Joseph and his brothers?

*(Joseph's brothers were jealous of what he had and plotted his murder. They were willing to sacrifice their relationship to get what they wanted. Often our desires crush the very things we might love. Sin destroys relationships.)*

- How did Jesus reverse the destruction of sin?

*(Jesus came to die on the cross and take away the penalty of sin. When he lives inside us, he writes his law on our hearts and causes us to desire not to sin.)*