

# JOSEPH IS ATTACKED BY HIS BROTHERS

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 37:12-36



GRADESCHOOL

*God saved Joseph so that He might one day save us also.*

## The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

### Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

**Joseph's brothers plotted against him** – Jealous of their brother and seeing him from a distance with his robe of honor, Joseph's brothers conspired to murder him. They remembered Joseph's dreams, calling him a dreamer. They were obviously so bothered by the dreams and so envious of the favor Joseph had with his father that they wanted to put an end to Joseph's life. The idea that the younger son would be favored flew in the face of their sense of justice. They sentenced him with their sinful judging and tried to thwart the plan of God for Joseph. They would have been aware of what Jacob, their father, had done to Esau in taking the birthright away from his brother. Now their younger brother was being favored over the rest of the older brothers and he was even being sent to check on them. Jealous and angry, they plotted to murder him.

**Reuben and Judah objected to Joseph's murder** – Not all the brothers went in on the plot to kill Joseph. Two brothers resisted.

First, Reuben objected to the murder and suggested that they instead throw Joseph into a pit. This would give Reuben time to rescue Joseph. Reuben left and essentially did nothing. He did not tell his father, nor bring a rescue party back. Instead, he returned alone only to discover that his brothers had sold him to some descendants of Ishmael. As the oldest, he likely felt responsible. When he saw that his brother was taken, Reuben tore his clothes and left again.

Second, Judah suggested that rather than murdering Joseph, he should be sold as a slave. Judah suggested that murder would not profit them. Judah seemed to fear the Lord, and persuaded his brothers to listen to him.

Joseph himself was pleading for his life. This is not recorded here in Genesis, but it is mentioned later in Genesis 42:21 that Joseph's brothers remembered his pleas.

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**Joseph was sold to the Midianites** – Before Joseph's brothers would change their minds or figure out how to move their pleading brother in order to sell him to the Ishmaelites, God brings a Midianite caravan to that very spot. In God's providence, He rescued Joseph by means of the Midianites.

**Joseph's brothers lie to their father** – As is often the case, one sin leads to another. In this story, Joseph's brothers must lie to conceal their wickedness. Reuben kept silent and gave passive approval by his silence.

**Joseph's father grieves his death** – Jacob recognized his son's robe and mourned for the loss of his son and would not be comforted. All the sons tried to comfort their father, which undoubtedly led to further lies.

## Where is Jesus?

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.*

In the life of Joseph, who was betrayed, bound and sold into slavery by his jealous brothers, we see a picture of Jesus who was betrayed, bound, and crucified by His own people who were also jealous of Him.

## ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

**Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.**

**Bible Passage: Zechariah 9:9**

**Connecting the passage to Christ:**

In Matthew 21:2-6 Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey in fulfillment of this prophecy.

**Questions for reflection:**

- How does this passage refer to Jesus? (The passage speaks of a king coming to the people of Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Kings did not usually ride donkeys. Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey and the people placed their robes before Him and waved palm branches.)
- Could this passage refer to anyone else rather than Jesus? (No, Jesus was the only King who was righteous and brought salvation.)

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### SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

#### BE A DOER OF THE WORD

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.

### ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

#### ONE SIN LEADS TO ANOTHER

##### Supplies

a brand new twenty dollar bill

Tell the children that you are going to tell them a secret and they must promise not to tell anyone.

Then show them the twenty dollar bill. Let them pass it around and, when they are all finished seeing it, ask them if they know what it is. They will say a twenty-dollar bill, but you tell them they are wrong.

Tell them it is a counterfeit twenty and that you met a world famous forger earlier that morning who gave it to you. As objections rise, continue the tale any way you would like to continue the lie.

The point of the story is to help them see that in order to not have sin exposed, you must continue sinning. Allow the story to get ridiculous and then tell them the truth.

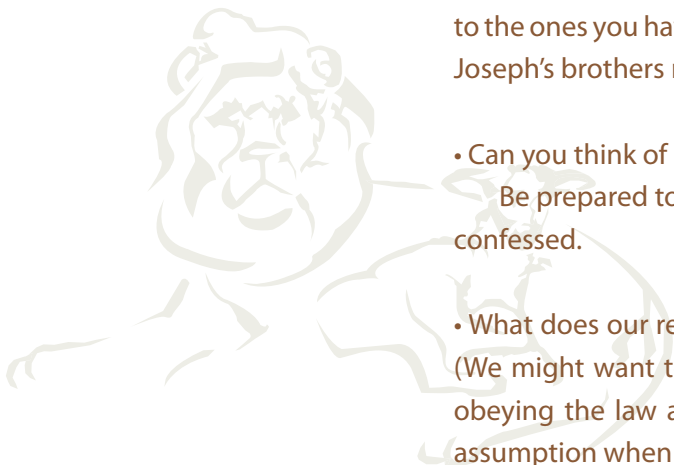
Then ask the class the following questions:

- When you sin or deceive someone, what do you need to continue to do to keep them from discovering your sin? (You need to continue lying or adding more sins to the ones you have already committed. If Rueben had threatened to tell his father, Joseph's brothers may have killed him as well to cover up their sin.)

- Can you think of a time in your life when you had to lie to cover up your sin?

Be prepared to direct the children to their parents if any recent or serious sin is confessed.

- What does our repeated sin reveal about our need for the Gospel and salvation? (We might want to believe we don't need God and that we can be righteous by obeying the law and that we are not really so bad. That is shown to be a false assumption when we repeatedly sin and sin to cover up our first sin.)



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### LIST THE LIES

#### Supplies

White Board

Have the children read through the passage and list where the brothers sinned against Joseph and where they lied. Be sure to include where they must have lied again and again to their grieving father. To truly comfort Jacob in his grief would have been to tell him that Joseph was still alive.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- Which character in the story do you most identify with and why? (Help the children see they are sinners like the brothers, rather than a victim like Joseph.)
- Why is it important that we see ourselves as sinners like Joseph's brothers? (In seeing that we are sinners like Joseph's brothers, it helps us appreciate our need of a Savior to save us from our sinful state.)



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### JEALOUS SIN LEADS TO BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

#### Supplies

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

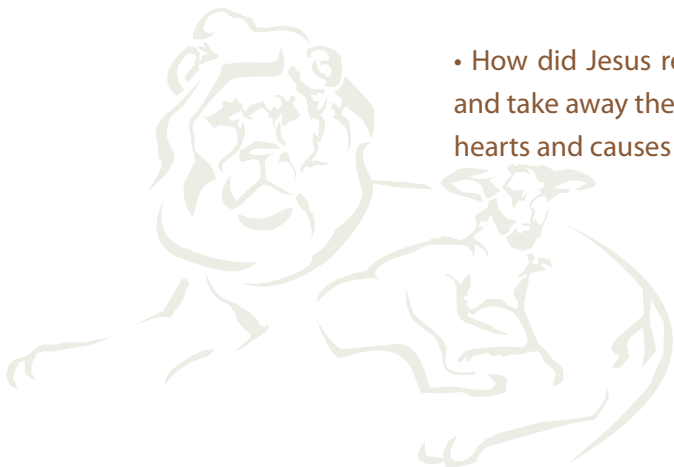
The object of this exercise is to show how our greed and jealousy can drive us.

Place a desk or table in the front of the room and mark off five feet on either side of the table and tape a line on the floor as the starting line. 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 i.e. boasting, fighting, whining, etc.

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.)



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### IT'S SO UNFAIR

#### Supplies

- Large bag of M&M candies
- bag of raisin boxes (small)
- small box of candy. (You can substitute any items for those above. It is important however the value change of the items. 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 M&M candies).

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

Pick out at random 12 boys from the class and have them come to the front. (If you have a son in the class make sure you pick him and use him as the favored brother.)

Give eleven of the boys one small box of raisins and the last boy, your favorite, the box of candy. Have the boys 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 one boy was your favorite. Draw out some of the boys that 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 M&M candies and present it to your favorite boy and explain to him that he is not permitted to share it with the class. (Make sure if the favorite is not your son you check with his parents ahead of time and make sure they are comfortable with the attention and the candy.)

When you present the bag of candy, the class will really think you are being unfair. Draw them out again and then 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.



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### PRAYER

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

### IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children draw a picture of Joseph's brothers dipping his coat in the blood to cover their sin. They were trying to cover their own sin. Talk about how Jesus truly covers our sin by His death and forgiveness.

### FOR OLDER GRADES

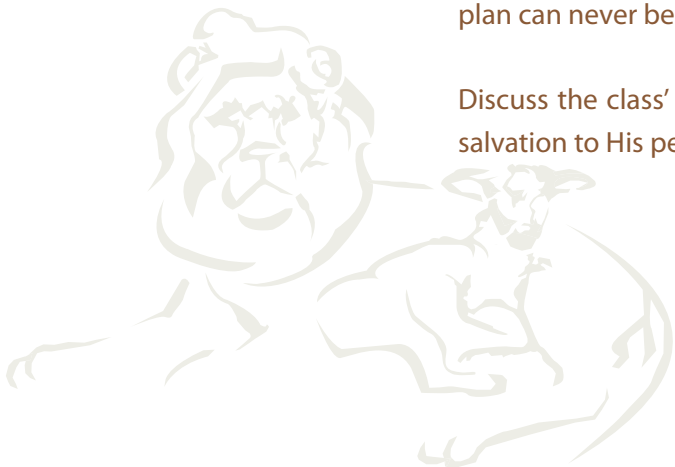
#### Supplies

- pencils
- 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 for 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 brother's 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.



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### A LITTLE BIT MORE

**Deceit (lying)** – In a rebuke Paul describes lying 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 speaks of unbelievers and 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 8:42)

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.

