Preschool–Grade 6

Joseph and Potiphar

Sunday School Lesson for Preschool (Ages 3–5), 20–30 minutes

Main point: God helps me say no to wrong things.
Bible passage: Genesis 39. Read Genesis 39:1–23 yourself before class, and read the teacher note at the end.
Memory verse: "how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" *Genesis 39:9 (KJV).*
Wickedness means a very bad thing.
You need: a Bible, a small basket with a few classroom things in it (a book, a cup, a crayon box), crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at Genesis 39.

1. Opening game: Take Care of It (5 minutes)

Give each child one thing from the basket to hold. Say: "Take good care of it!" Walk around the room together, holding the things carefully. Then each child puts the thing back in the basket. Say: "Good job! Today we will hear a true story about a man named Joseph. His master gave him a whole house to take care of."

2. Bible story (5 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Genesis 39. Say: "This story is true. It is in God's Word." Read each line slowly and do the motion. When you see **Say it with me**, the kids say the line back to you.

Joseph was taken far away, to the land of Egypt (Genesis 39:1). *(Walk in place.)*
A man named Potiphar bought Joseph. Joseph was his servant now (39:1). *(Bow your head.)*
But God was with Joseph (39:2). *(Point up.)*
Say it with me: "God was with Joseph!"
Joseph did a good job, and God made it all go well (39:3). *(Thumbs up.)*
Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his whole house (39:4). *(Spread your arms wide.)*
Someone asked Joseph to do a wrong thing, again and again (39:10). *(Shake your head.)*
Joseph said no. He would not sin against God (39:9). *(Hold up your hand: stop!)*
Then Joseph was blamed for something he did not do, and he was put in prison (39:20). *(Make prison bars with your fingers in front of your face.)*
But God was with Joseph in the prison too (39:21). *(Point up.)*
God made Joseph the one in charge in the prison (39:22). *(Stand up tall.)*
Say it with me: "God helps me say no!"

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3. Questions to ask (3 minutes)

1. Who was with Joseph? *(God, Genesis 39:2)*
2. When Joseph was asked to do wrong, what did he say? *(No! 39:9)*
3. Was God with Joseph in the prison? *(Yes! 39:21)*

4. Memory verse (3 minutes)

Say: "Joseph said, 'how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' That means, 'I will not do this very bad thing. I will not sin against God.'" Teach the motion: hold up your hand like a stop sign on "how then can I do," and point up on "sin against God." Say the verse with the motion three times: in a normal voice, in a whisper, and in a strong voice. Then say "Genesis 39:9" and clap three times.

5. What this means for us (3 minutes)

Say: "God loves you! Everyone has done wrong things. That is called sin (Romans 3:23). Jesus is God. He came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins. He was buried. Then He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us what to do (Acts 2:38). We repent: we tell God we are sorry, and we stop doing wrong. We are baptized in Jesus' name, down under the water, and our sins are washed away. And God gives us the Holy Ghost. That is God's own Spirit in us. When people are filled with the Holy Ghost, they speak in other tongues, words God gives them (Acts 2:4)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: God Was with Joseph (5–10 minutes)

Give each child a take-home sheet. In the drawing box, help them draw a house on one side and a prison on the other, and Joseph in both places. While they color, ask: "Who was with Joseph in the house? Who was with Joseph in the prison?" (God!) Kids who finish early can play Take Care of It again.

7. Prayer

Say each line, and the kids say it after you:
"Thank You, God, for being with Joseph.
Thank You for being with me.
Help me say no to wrong things. In Jesus' name, amen."

Tip: send the take-home sheet home so parents can tell the story again this week.

Teacher note: what this lesson leaves out. The preschool story doesn't name Potiphar's wife or tell what she wanted (Genesis 39:7–18). If a child asks what the wrong thing was, say simply: "Something God said was wrong. Joseph would not sin against God, so he said no."

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