Preschool–Grade 6

Joseph and Potiphar

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Joseph said no to sin, and the LORD was with him. God helps us say no to sin too.
Bible passage: Genesis 39:1–23. Read it before class, and read the teacher note at the end of this lesson.
Memory verse: "There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" *Genesis 39:9 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, 5 paper strips, a marker, tape, 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: write the memory verse on the 5 paper strips (see part 4). Put bookmarks in your Bible at Genesis 39:2, 39:9 and 39:21.

1. Opening game: Into Your Hand (5 minutes)

Put one thing from the basket into a child's hand and say: "Please take good care of this." The child carries it carefully around the circle and puts it back in the basket. Give each child a turn with a different thing. Say: "When someone trusts you with something, you take good care of it. Today we will hear a true story about a man who was trusted with a whole house, and he did what was right."

2. Bible story: The LORD Was with Joseph (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Genesis 39, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

Joseph was a young man. His brothers sold him, and he was brought down to the land of **Egypt** (Genesis 37:28; 39:1). There a man named **Potiphar** bought him. Potiphar was an officer of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt (39:1). Joseph was his servant now.

Read Genesis 39:2 from your Bible: "And the LORD was with Joseph." Say: "Joseph was far from home, but he was not alone. God was with him!" God made everything Joseph did to **prosper**, to go well (39:3). Potiphar saw it. He made Joseph the **overseer** of his house. An overseer is the one in charge. Potiphar put everything he had into Joseph's hand (39:4). God blessed Potiphar's house and his field because of Joseph (39:5).

But Potiphar's wife asked Joseph, day by day, to do something wrong (39:10). Joseph said no! He said, "how then can I do this great **wickedness**, and sin against God?" (39:9). Wickedness means a very bad thing. Joseph would not do it, because he would not sin against God.

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The story continues: Potiphar's wife blamed Joseph for something he did not do. When Potiphar heard her words, he was very angry (39:19). He put Joseph into the **prison**, the place where the king's prisoners were kept (39:20).

Was Joseph alone in the prison? No! **Read Genesis 39:21 from your Bible:** "But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy." **Shewed** means showed. **Mercy** means kindness. God made the **keeper** of the prison, the man in charge, like Joseph (39:21). The keeper put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners (39:22). The keeper did not have to check on anything Joseph did, "because the LORD was with him," and God made it all go well (39:23).

Joseph did what was right even when it was hard. And God was with Joseph in Potiphar's house and in the prison, too. Later, God brought Joseph out of the prison and made him a ruler over all the land of Egypt (Genesis 41:14, 41:41).

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. Who bought Joseph in Egypt? *(Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, Genesis 39:1)*
2. Who was with Joseph? *(The LORD, 39:2)*
3. What job did Potiphar give Joseph? *(Overseer, in charge of his whole house, 39:4)*
4. When Joseph was asked to do wrong, what did he say? *("How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" 39:9)*
5. Was God with Joseph in the prison too? *(Yes! "But the LORD was with Joseph," 39:21)*

4. Memory verse: Verse Strips (5 minutes)

Tape the 5 strips on the wall in order: *There is none greater in this house than I; / neither hath he kept back any thing from me / but thee, because thou art his wife: / how then can I do this great wickedness, / and sin against God? Genesis 39:9.* Explain: Potiphar trusted Joseph with everything in his house, but not with his wife, because she was Potiphar's wife. **Kept back** means kept away; **thee** means you; **wickedness** means a very bad thing. Read the verse together. Then take one strip away and read it again. Keep taking strips away, one each time, until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Joseph said no to sin, because he would not sin against God. God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (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.
This week: when someone asks you to do something wrong, say no, like Joseph. Remember that God is with you.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Joseph and Potiphar word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/joseph-and-potiphar-word-search), crossword, maze or worksheet, the craft (vbshq.com/crafts/joseph-and-potiphar-craft), or **In the House, In the Prison:** call one side of the room "Potiphar's house" and the other side "the prison." Call out "House!" or "Prison!" and the kids walk quickly to that side. Then call, "Where was the LORD?" and everyone shouts, "With Joseph!" (Genesis 39:2, 39:21). Play a few rounds.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for being with Joseph in Potiphar's house and in the prison. Thank You that You are with us too. When someone asks us to do wrong, help us say no, like Joseph did. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: what this lesson leaves out. Genesis 39:7–18 tells what Potiphar's wife wanted and how she blamed Joseph. This lesson says only that she asked him day by day to do wrong, that Joseph said no (39:9–10), and that she blamed him for something he did not do. Don't read 39:7–18 out loud in class. If a child asks what she wanted, say simply: "She wanted Joseph to do something that was wrong in God's eyes, and Joseph would not do it."

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