Preschool–Grade 6

Joseph in Prison

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

Main point: God is with me everywhere, and good things come from God.
Bible passage: Genesis 40. Read Genesis 40:1–23 yourself before class.
Memory verse: "Do not interpretations belong to God?" *Genesis 40:8 (KJV)*. An **interpretation** is what something means. Only God knows!
You need: a Bible, a paper cup, a few purple paper circles for grapes, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at Genesis 40. Hide the purple paper "grapes" around the room.

1. Opening game: Sad Face, Happy Face (5 minutes)

Make a sad face, and the kids copy you. Make a happy face, and they copy you. Go faster and faster! Then ask: "What can we do when a friend looks sad?" Say: "Today we will hear a true story about a man named Joseph who saw that two men were sad, and he helped them."

2. Bible story (5 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Genesis 40. 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 in prison, but God was with him (Genesis 39:21). *(Point up.)*
Two of the king's helpers came to the prison (40:3). *(Hold up two fingers.)*
One served the king's drinks. One baked the king's bread (40:1). *(Pretend to drink, then knead dough.)*
Joseph took care of them (40:4). *(Pat your heart.)*
One night, they both had dreams (40:5). *(Lay your head on your hands.)*
In the morning, they looked sad (40:6). *(Make a sad face.)*
Joseph said that what dreams mean belongs to God (40:8). *(Point up.)*
Say it with me: "Good things come from God!"
The man had a dream about grapes and the king's cup (40:9–11). *(Pretend to squeeze grapes into a cup.)*
Joseph said that in three days the man would serve the king again (40:13). *(Hold up three fingers.)*
And he did (40:21)! *(Clap, clap, clap.)*
Then the man forgot Joseph (40:23). *(Shrug your shoulders.)*
But God did not forget Joseph! *(Shake your head no, then point up.)*
Say it with me: "God never forgets me!"

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3. Questions to ask (3 minutes)

1. Who was with Joseph in prison? *(God, Genesis 39:21)*
2. How did the two men look in the morning? *(Sad, 40:6)*
3. Who knows what dreams mean? *(God, 40:8)*

4. Memory verse (3 minutes)

Say: "Joseph said, 'Do not interpretations belong to God?' That means only God knows what the dreams mean." Teach the motion: put your hands on your head like you are thinking, then point up to God on "belong to God." Say the verse with the motion three times: in a normal voice, in a whisper, and in a happy loud voice. Then say "Genesis 40:8" 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: Grapes for the Cup (5–10 minutes)

Kids hunt for the hidden purple "grapes" and drop them into the paper cup, like the man in the dream (Genesis 40:11). Count them together. Then give each child a take-home sheet. In the drawing box, help them draw a cup and purple grapes. While they color, ask: "Who was with Joseph? Who never forgets you?"

7. Prayer

Say each line, and the kids say it after you:
"Thank You, God, for being with me everywhere.
Thank You that You never forget me. In Jesus' name, amen."

Tips for little ones: keep the story happy and short. Leave out the baker's dream; little ones only need the butler, the grapes and the cup. Send the take-home sheet home so parents can tell the story again this week.

If a child asks why Joseph was in prison: say, "Someone told a lie about Joseph. But God was with him there."

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