Preschool–Grade 6

Pharaoh's Dream

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

Main point: God gives wisdom, so we give God the glory.
Bible passage: Genesis 41:1–40. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." *Genesis 41:16 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, an envelope with a simple picture inside (a sheep, a star, anything), 6 paper strips, a marker, tape, a small box, about 30 squares of yellow paper, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 6 paper strips (see part 4). Put the picture in the envelope. Put a bookmark in your Bible at Genesis 41:16.

1. Opening game: What Is in the Envelope? (5 minutes)

Hold up the envelope. Kids take turns guessing what picture is inside. Give no clues. After a few guesses, ask: *Can anybody know for sure?* Then open it and show them. Say: "Only the one who put the picture in the envelope knew the answer. Today a king had a dream that nobody could explain. But God knew the answer, and He showed it to a young man named Joseph."

2. Bible story: God Shows Joseph the Answer (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Genesis 41, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

Joseph was in prison in Egypt. The king's chief **butler**, the man who served the king his drink, had been in prison with him, and Joseph told him what his dream meant. But when the butler got out, he forgot Joseph (Genesis 40:23). Two whole years went by (41:1).

Then **Pharaoh**, the king of Egypt, had a dream. He was standing by the river. Up out of the river came seven fat, good-looking **kine**. Kine means cows. They ate grass in a meadow. Then seven more kine came up, thin and ugly. And the seven thin kine ate up the seven fat kine (41:1–4)! Pharaoh woke up.

He fell asleep and dreamed again. Seven big, full ears of **corn** grew up on one stalk. In the Bible, corn means grain, like wheat. Then seven thin ears sprang up, dried out by the east wind. And the seven thin ears ate up the seven full ears (41:5–7)!

In the morning Pharaoh was troubled. He called all the wise men of Egypt, but nobody could tell him what his dreams meant (41:8). Then the butler remembered! He told Pharaoh about a young Hebrew man in the prison who had told him what his dream meant (41:9–13).

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The story continues: Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and they brought him out of the **dungeon** (the prison) in a hurry. Joseph shaved and put on clean clothes, and he came in to Pharaoh (41:14). Pharaoh said he had heard that Joseph could tell what a dream means (41:15). **Read Genesis 41:16 from your Bible:** "It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Say: "That means Joseph could not do it by himself, but God could!"

Pharaoh told Joseph both dreams (41:17–24). Joseph said the two dreams meant the same thing: God was showing Pharaoh what He was about to do (41:25). The seven fat kine and the seven full ears are seven years. For seven years there will be lots and lots of food in Egypt. That is **plenty**. The seven thin kine and the seven thin ears are seven more years. For seven years after that, there will be very little food. That is a **famine** (41:26–31).

Then God gave Joseph a plan (41:39). Joseph said Pharaoh should find a wise man to save food in the good years and keep it in the cities, so the people would have food in the famine (41:33–36). Pharaoh liked the plan (41:37). He said, "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" (41:38). Pharaoh made Joseph ruler over his house and over all his people. Only Pharaoh on his throne was greater than Joseph (41:39–40)!

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. What came up out of the river in Pharaoh's dream? *(Seven fat kine, then seven thin kine, Genesis 41:2–3)*
2. Who remembered Joseph? *(The chief butler, 41:9–12)*
3. Who did Joseph say would give Pharaoh the answer? *(God, 41:16)*
4. What would come first, plenty or famine? *(Seven years of great plenty, then seven years of famine, 41:29–30)*
5. What job did Pharaoh give Joseph? *(Ruler over his house and all his people, 41:40)*

4. Memory verse: Six Strips game (5 minutes)

Tape the 6 strips up in order: *And Joseph answered Pharaoh, / saying, / It is not in me: / God shall give Pharaoh / an answer of peace. / Genesis 41:16.* Explain the words: **It is not in me** means "I can't do it by myself," and **an answer of peace** means a good answer that brings peace. 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 knew that every good answer comes from 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 you need to know what to do, ask God to help you. When someone says you did well, say, "Thank God!"

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Pharaoh's dream word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/pharaohs-dream-word-search), crossword, maze or worksheet, the craft (vbshq.com/crafts/pharaohs-dream-craft), or **Fill the Storehouse:** put the box (the storehouse) at one end of the room and the yellow paper squares (the grain) at the other. Count "Year one!" up to "Year seven!" while kids carry grain to the storehouse, one square each trip. Then say, "Now the seven years of famine!" and count again while kids take one square back out each year to "eat." Ask: *Was there enough food? Who gave Joseph the plan?* (God, Genesis 41:25, 41:39)

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You know everything. Give us wisdom when we don't know what to do, and help us give You the glory, like Joseph did. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Left out on purpose: the butler's story also tells what happened to the chief baker (Genesis 41:13). It is not needed for this lesson. If a child asks, say simply: "Joseph told the baker the truth God showed him, and it happened just as God said (Genesis 40:22)."

About Pharaoh's magicians: the Bible says Pharaoh called the magicians and the wise men of Egypt, and none of them could interpret the dream (41:8). Keep it to that. The point is that only God knew the answer.

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