

GOD'S PROVISION IN SUFFERING

CONCEPT

God will prosper His children in all circumstances as they trust Him.

GOAL

Christian students will learn that God is in control and working for their good, even in the worst circumstances.

Non-Christian students will learn that Jesus promised to always be with everyone who receives His gift of forgiveness.

PASSAGE: GENESIS 37, 39, 40

Key Verse: "... the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made to prosper." Genesis 39:23

PLANNING AHEAD*

Lesson Supplies

Learning Activity #1:

- Tunics, head coverings, etc., from storage room

Learning Activity #2:

- 5 full-size candy bars

Learning Activity #1:

- "Joseph" handout, 1/student
- *International Children's Bible Handbook*, Lawrence Richards
- *Adventure Bible Handbook*

Craft Supplies

Activity Stations:

- Heavy twine, 3 yards/student
- Plastic drinking straws, 4/student
- Various (at least 3) colors of yarn, three 36" pieces/student
- Yardstick, 1/classroom
- Scissors
- Miniature candy bars, 1/student
- 5 rocks/stones

* **Teachers please note:** For clarity, the shaded areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag. **Items followed by an asterisk* are to be supplied by the teaching team.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION / TEACHER HELPS

"Joseph was not one of *the* patriarchs, and to him the Covenant was not renewed, though he inherited it...His story is necessary for the completion of Jacob's story; because he is the link between the family and the nation, between Canaan and Egypt...and also because he is the most perfect anticipation of Him who was to be *the* Seed of the woman, and the fulfillment of all Messianic prophecy...

"The action of Joseph's brethren in selling him to the Ishmaelites cannot be defended on any ground; yet the result was a contact with Egypt which proved to be a place both of preservation from the Canaanites, and of education for the part which Israel was to play in the history of the world to the end of time; and when God made Jacob go down to Egypt, He said: 'I will *there* make of thee a great nation' (Gen. 46:3).

"The centuries of Israel's servitude in Egypt had been predicted, though *Egypt* was not named (Gen. 15:13, 14); ...and the fulfillment of this prophecy was initiated by the sin of Joseph's brethren...

"The imprisonment of Joseph was a crime, due to the passion of an unscrupulous woman (Gen. 39), yet it led to his becoming Prime Minister of all Egypt (Gen. 41), and this position led to all that followed in the fortunes of his family (Gen. 46-50).

"At every turn we see God turning the wickedness of man to account for the fulfillment of His redeeming purpose and promise.

JOSEPH AND JESUS

"As God's method in fulfillment of His purpose to send into the world a Redeemer was to choose and discipline Abraham and his posterity, it is not irrelevant here to see that Joseph, more than any other character in Bible story, typified Him, and to note in what respects.

There are scores of parallels between Joseph's history and that of the Messiah, but it will suffice for our present purpose if a few of these are named, to justify the claim that Jacob's much-loved son foreshadowed the Son of God's love.

1	The beloved Son	Gen. 37:3	Matt. 3:17
2	Hated by his brethren	Gen. 37: 4,5	John 15:25
3	His Kingship rejected	Gen. 37:8	Luke 19:4
4	Conspired against	Gen. 37:18	Matt. 27:1
5	He was stripped	Gen. 37:23	Matt. 27:28
6	Sold for silver	Gen. 37:28	Matt. 26:15" ¹

Joseph was the beloved son—envied, plotted against and rejected by his own people. He went from a place of honor to a lowly servant. He was falsely accused of wrongdoing, imprisoned with others and raised up to rule over all Egypt. In the midst of these trials Joseph chose to trust God to accomplish all He had promised. Even in the darkest circumstances Joseph trusted God and God "was with Joseph." In these ways, Joseph's life typifies that of Jesus.

Joseph was only seventeen when he was sold as a slave into a pagan land. Everything he had learned about God that would sustain him was packed into those few short years. Who knows what seeds you are planting in the hearts of the children you are teaching—seeds that will bear fruit in their lives, like those planted by Isaac, Jacob and Rachel in Joseph's heart. Joseph's life helps the students understand that God is forever sovereign, even in the worst circumstances. If they are His children, He will never leave them and He will never forsake them.

¹ *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption*, W. Graham Scroggie, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1994, pp. 127-129.

LESSON PLAN

SET UP	Instructions: Prepare Scene #2 for DRAMA. If wanted, you can get costumes from the storage room (in Main Campus location).
INCORPORATION 15-20 MIN	<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft – Weaving like Joseph's Coat Instructions: Follow the directions at the end of the lesson for making a belt or bookmark. Explain: We are making a weaving of bright colors to remind us of Joseph's varicolored coat. The coat reminded his brothers that Joseph was Jacob's favorite son, which made them jealous of Joseph. To get rid of him they sold him as a slave to the Egyptians. • Object Lesson – "Trust Me!" Instructions: As each student enters the room, tell them you are giving them something good. Hand all but 5 students a miniature candy bar. Give the five students the rocks. The 5 will complain! Tell them to trust you. They will see in the OBJECT LESSON conclusion that this is good. • Missions Prayer Instructions: Talk about and pray for Oasis Giving campaign and adopted missionary child.
INTRODUCTION LG GROUP 2 MIN	The last 2 weeks we talked about Abraham's grandson, Jacob. God taught Jacob over many years that he could trust God to keep His promises. Today we're going to talk about Jacob and Rachel's son, Joseph. Joseph wasn't a schemer like his father, but many things happened to him that weren't fair. God was with him always. In spite of what people did to Joseph, God continued to work out His plan. That's what our key verse for today tells us, "... the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made to prosper " (Genesis 39:23).
TRANSITION – 2 MIN	Let's divide up into small groups to find out about Joseph's life. Then each group will do a skit for the class.
LEARNING ACTIVITY #1 – LG GROUP 30 MIN	<p>Drama – Joseph's life</p> <p>Instructions: Divide the class into groups with one teacher in each. Teachers, lead by example and have fun with the skit! The teacher will read the passage (go to end of lesson for passages edited from The Message) as the group acts it out for the rest of the class. If there aren't enough participants for all the parts, have some play 2 or 3 parts. Allow a few minutes for students to practice then present the skits in chronological order. The entire process should take about 30 minutes.</p>
LESSON -- LG GROUP 5 MIN	<p>We learned that God knew everything that would happen to Joseph. And He knew exactly what to do in each circumstance to protect Joseph and to prepare him to be the ruler of Egypt. Because God is the ruler of all, He can bring good out of the worst circumstances in ways that we could never imagine. Joseph was probably very homesick and angry about all that happened to him. He probably talked to God a lot about it. Because he knew God, he believed that God would work things out for good eventually. He kept talking to God and God showed Joseph that He was with him through everything. "... the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made to prosper" (Genesis 39:23).</p> <p>God blessed Joseph so much that people who didn't know God saw clearly that He was with Joseph. That's why Potiphar put him in charge of his house and why the head jailer put him in charge in the prison. Even though he probably didn't always understand why these things were happening to him, Joseph believed God was with Him and in control of everything. He knew God would accomplish His plan. Instead of feeling sorry for himself or getting bitter at his brothers or the others who treated him unfairly, he asked God to use him in good and bad circumstances.</p> <p>Do you believe that God is with you and in control of everything? How do you know that He is with you? The Bible says that He is always with His children. How do you know if you are His child?</p>

	(Tell Him you want to be forgiven and want Jesus' death to count for the punishment you deserve for the bad things you've said and done.) If you ask Him to forgive you, Jesus will always be with you. Jesus promised to always be with everyone who receives His gift of forgiveness (Matthew 28:20). As we cooperate with God, we experience His blessings just as Joseph did. He will give us whatever we need to do whatever He calls us to do. He will change our attitudes and our hearts if we ask Him to. And He will work through us to save people's lives—for eternity. If we ask Him, God might change our bad circumstances. But more often He will help us to go through those circumstances, so we can learn about His faithfulness and trust Him more and more.
TRANSITION – 2 MIN	We've just seen what happened to Joseph. Now let's get together to talk about it. Everyone grab a Bible and get in your small groups.
LEARNING ACTIVITY #2 - LG GROUP 10 MIN	<p>Instructions: These questions are all suggestions. This is your time to help the students apply the concept that God promises to prosper His children in all circumstances as they learn to trust Him.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What bad things happened to Joseph? (For quick reference if students don't remember – Genesis 37:26-28; 39:7-20; 40:23. His brothers were jealous and hated him; he was sold him as a slave; thrown in prison unjustly, forgotten by the butler.) • How did his pride cause him problems? (Gen. 37:3-11, Genesis 37:26-28; He made his brothers jealous by telling his dreams.) • Which bad things weren't a result of his pride? (Genesis 39:7-20; 40:23) • What did God do to help Joseph through all of the bad times? (Genesis 39:2; Acts 7:9,10; Genesis 39:21, 25.) Our key verse is "... the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made to prosper" (Genesis 39:23). (With Joseph, God blessed everything he did, granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden, gave him the ability to interpret dreams.) • What if Joseph hadn't remembered that God was always with him and trusted God? (He might have been mad, not have forgiven his brothers; God would have worked through someone else to accomplish His plan.) • Would any of you like to share a time when it looked like everyone, even God, was against you and you chose to go to God, tell Him how you feel and then to respond the way that Joseph did? <p>Let's pray now. If you haven't asked Jesus to forgive you, you can do that while we pray. We can thank God that He promises to always be with His children. Let's ask Him to remind us to turn to Him in all circumstances and trust that He is in control and will work all things out for our good and His glory.</p>
TRANSITION – 2 MIN	Let's gather as a large group.
LEARNING ACTIVITY #3 – SM GROUP 10 MIN Rationale: to apply scripture to real life.	<p>"Trust Me!" conclusion</p> <p>Which of you received rocks when you came in? Bring them up here; I have something for you. (Give out the full-size candy bars.) Joseph might have thought that all he was going to get was rocks, but God showed him that He was with him. He got more than a large candy bar, didn't he?</p>
OPTIONAL ACTIVITY	Do "Joseph" handout together or give to students to take home.

WOVEN BELT¹



... this simple technique, featured in *NATIVE ARTISTS OF AFRICA* (John Muir Publications), to craft a belt or bookmark.

MATERIALS

- 3 yards heavy twine
- 4 plastic drinking straws
- 3 pieces of colored yarn, each 36 inches long

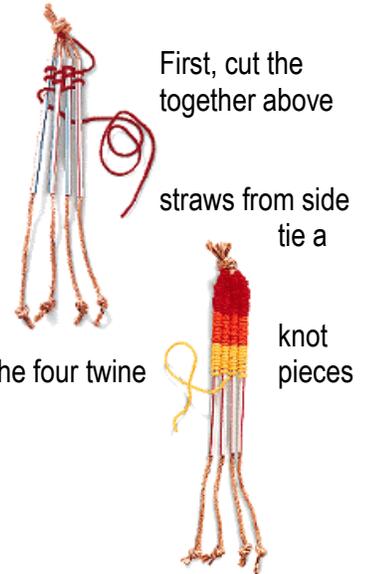
INSTRUCTIONS

twine into four equal pieces and thread each of them through a straw. Tie four of the ends above the straws with an overhand knot. Knot the opposite ends of the twine individually.

Tie a piece of yarn to the twine just below the top knot. Weave the yarn under and over the to side, using your fingers to push up each row and slide the straws down. To change colors, new piece of yarn to the end of the first one and weave in the loose ends.

When you reach the desired length, remove the straws. To secure the last row, tie a square with the two pieces of twine on the left. Repeat with the pair on the right. Finally, tie together the four twine with an overhand knot.

Originally published in [FamilyFun magazine](http://familyfun.com).



¹ <http://familyfun.go.com/crafts/buildmodel/feature/famf29blackhistory/famf29blackhistory3.html>

Scene #1 Gen 37:3-35

[Characters: Jacob, Joseph, Judah, other brothers, Ishmaelites.]

Israel [Jacob] loved Joseph more than any of his other sons because he was the child of his old age. And he made him an elaborately embroidered coat. (4) When his brothers realized that their father loved him more than them, they grew to hate him--they wouldn't even speak to him. (5) Joseph had a dream. When he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. ... (8) His brothers said, "So! You're going to rule us? You're going to boss us around?" ... (9) He had another dream and told this one also to his brothers: ... (10) When he told it to his father and brothers, his father reprimanded him: "What's with all this dreaming? Am I and your mother and your brothers all supposed to bow down to you?" (11) Now his brothers were really jealous; ... (12) His brothers had gone off to ... pasturing their father's flocks. (13) Israel [Jacob] said to Joseph, ..."Go and see how your brothers and the flocks are doing and bring me back a report." ... So Joseph took off, tracked his brothers down, and found them... (18) They spotted him off in the distance. By the time he got to them they had cooked up a plot to kill him. ... When Joseph reached his brothers, they ripped off the fancy coat he was wearing, (24) grabbed him, and threw him into a cistern [well]. ... there wasn't any water in it. (25) ... Looking up, they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites ..., their camels loaded with spices, ointments, and perfumes to sell in Egypt. (26) Judah said, "Brothers, what are we going to get out of killing our brother ...? (27) Let's sell him ..., but let's not kill him--he is, after all, our brother..." His brothers agreed. ... pulled Joseph out of the cistern and sold him for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites who took Joseph with them down to Egypt. ... (31) They [brothers] took Joseph's coat, butchered a goat, and dipped the coat in the blood. (32) They took the fancy coat back to their father and said, "We found this. Look it over--do you think this is your son's coat?" (33) He recognized it at once. "My son's coat--a wild animal has eaten him. Joseph torn limb from limb!" (34) Jacob tore his clothes in grief, dressed in rough burlap, and mourned his son a long, long time. (35) His sons and daughters tried to comfort him but he refused their comfort. ... Oh, how his father wept for him

Scene #2 Gen. 39:1-20

[Characters: Joseph, Potiphar, Potiphar's wife.]

(1) After Joseph had been taken to Egypt ..., Potiphar ..., one of Pharaoh's officials ..., bought him from them. (2) ... GOD was with Joseph and things went very well with him. He ended up living in the home of his Egyptian master. (3) His master recognized that GOD was with him, saw that GOD was working for good in everything he did. (4) He became very fond of Joseph and ... put him in charge of all his personal affairs, turning everything over to him. (5) From that moment on, GOD blessed the home of the Egyptian--all because of Joseph. The blessing of GOD spread over everything he owned, at home and in the fields, (6) and all Potiphar had to concern himself with was eating three meals a day. ... (7) As time went on, his master's wife became infatuated [lovesick] with Joseph ... He said to his master's wife, "... my master ... has put me in charge of everything he owns. (9) ... The only thing he hasn't turned over to me is you. You're his wife...! How could I violate his trust and sin against God?" (10) She pestered him day after day after day, but he stood his ground. ... (11) On one of these days he came to the house to do his work and none of the household servants happened to be there. (12) She grabbed him by his cloak... He left his coat in her hand and ran out of the house. ... (16) She kept his coat right there until his master came home. (17) ... She said, "The Hebrew slave, the one you brought to us, came after me ... (18) When I yelled and screamed, he left his coat with me and ran outside." (19) When his master heard his wife's story ... he was furious. (20) Joseph's master took him and threw him into the jail where the king's prisoners were locked up. Joseph is bought by Potiphar. He works well and is placed in charge. Potiphar's wife tries to make him sin and has Joseph thrown into jail falsely.

Scene #3 Gen. 39:21-40:23

[Characters: Joseph, prison warden, man who served wine to the king, baker]

GOD was still with Joseph: He ... put him on good terms with the head jailer. (22) The head jailer put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners... never even checked on him, because GOD was with him; whatever he did GOD made sure it worked out for the best. (40:1) As time went on, ... the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt crossed their master.. (2) Pharaoh was furious ... and put them in ... the same jail where Joseph was held. (4) The captain of the guard assigned Joseph to see to their needs. After ... a while (5) ... both had a dream on the same night... (6) When Joseph arrived in the morning, he noticed that they were feeling low. (7) So he asked them, ... "What's wrong? Why the long faces?" (8) They said, "We dreamed dreams and there's no one to interpret them." Joseph said, "Don't interpretations come from God? Tell me the dreams." (9) First the head cupbearer told his dream to Joseph: ... (12) Joseph said, "Here's the meaning. ... (13) Within three days, Pharaoh will get you out of here and put you back to your old work... (14) Only remember me when things are going well with you again--tell Pharaoh about me and get me out of this place. ... (16) When the head baker saw how well Joseph's interpretation turned out, he spoke up... (18) Joseph said, "This is the interpretation: ... (19) within three days Pharaoh will take off your head, impale you on a post..." (20) And sure enough, on the third day it was Pharaoh's birthday and he threw a feast for all his servants. He set the head cupbearer and the head baker in places of honor in the presence of all the guests. (21) Then he restored the head cupbearer to his ...post... just as before. (22) And then he impaled the head baker on a post, following Joseph's interpretations exactly. (23) But the head cupbearer never gave Joseph another thought; he forgot all about him.

Scene #4 Gen. 41-1-46

[Characters: Joseph, Pharaoh, magicians/wisemen, man who served wine to the king.]

Two years passed and Pharaoh had a dream: ... (5) He went back to sleep and dreamed a second time: ... (8) When morning came, he was upset. He sent for all the magicians ... of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but they couldn't interpret them ... (9) The head cupbearer then spoke up and said to Pharaoh, "I just now remembered something--I'm sorry, I should have told you this long ago. (10) Once when Pharaoh ... locked me and the head baker in the house of the captain of the guard. (11) We both had dreams on the same night... (12) ... a young Hebrew slave there with us... We told him our dreams and he interpreted them for us... (13) Things turned out just as he interpreted..." (14) Pharaoh at once sent for Joseph. ... (15) "I dreamed a dream... Nobody can interpret it. But I've heard that ... you can interpret it." (16) Joseph answered, "Not I, but God. God will set Pharaoh's mind at ease." (17) Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "... I've told all this to the magicians but they can't figure it out." (25) Joseph said to Pharaoh, "Pharaoh's two dreams both mean the same thing. ... (28) "... God is letting Pharaoh in on what he is going to do. (29) Seven years of plenty are on their way throughout Egypt. (30) But on their heels will come seven years of famine, leaving no trace of the Egyptian plenty. ... (31) there won't be even a scrap left...--the famine will be total. (32) The fact that Pharaoh dreamed the same dream twice emphasizes God's determination to do this and do it soon. (33) "So: Pharaoh needs to look for a wise and experienced man and put him in charge of the country. ..." (37) This seemed like a good idea ... (38) Then Pharaoh said to his officials, "Isn't this the man we need? Are we going to find anyone else who has God's spirit in him like this?" (39) So Pharaoh said to Joseph, ... "I'm putting you in charge of the entire country of Egypt." ... And Joseph took up his duties over the land of Egypt. (46) Joseph was thirty years old when he went to work for Pharaoh the king of Egypt. As soon as Joseph left Pharaoh's presence, he began his work in Egypt.

Joseph

**"... the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made to prosper."
Genesis 39:23**

Instructions: Based on the lesson from Genesis chapters 37, 39-45 and using the Bible handbooks, consider the following statements.

1. Joseph probably learned many things as Potiphar's servant, such as how to speak and write the Egyptian language, facts about Egyptian culture, how an Egyptian household was run, the life of the Captain of Pharaoh's guard, etc. Look in a Bible Dictionary or Atlas to learn what you can about Egyptian culture at the time of Joseph.
2. Joseph was only 17 when he was sold as a slave into a land full of false gods and strange religions. Yet he continued to trust in the one true God. We know that because he gave God the credit for the interpretation of the butler's, baker's and Pharaoh's dreams. Read about some of the religions the Egyptian people practiced. Do you think you would continue to trust the one true God if you were the only one who believed in Him?
3. What do you think helped him to stay loyal to God? Joseph knew from his father and Isaac how faithful God was to them, so he trusted God to keep His promises. He did what was right. The Bible tells us that God was with him and blessed all that he did.