

# JOSEPH: FROM SLAVE TO DEPUTY PHARAOH

**Bible Basis:** Genesis 37:1–36; 39:1–23; 41:1–45:7

**Key Verse:** Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. ... You planned to harm me. But God planned it for good.” —Genesis 50:19–20, NIV

**Bible Point:** God worked things out for Joseph’s good. God knows what’s good for me.

**Resource:** *The Story for Children*, Chapter 3: “Joseph: From Slave to Deputy Pharaoh”

## STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Greet the children and announce that you’re going to make some statements. If they agree a statement is “true,” they should stamp a foot three times. If they think the statement is “false,” they should turn around in a circle. Make a series of statements, such as “Ice cream is a healthy breakfast” or “There should be no such thing as bedtime.” Do as many as you have time for and allow kids to vote. Then ask:

- How do you know if something is good for you or not?
- Does something good ever come out of something bad? Explain.

Say, **Not everything we choose to do is good for us, and sometimes we can’t help the bad things that happen to us. In today’s Bible story, we’ll find out that God knows what’s best for us.**

## STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

**Stuff You Need:** copies of *The Story for Children*, Bibles, *The Story Elementary Trading Card 3*

Tell the story from *The Story for Children*, Chapter 3, pausing throughout to show the emotions mentioned. You can also have children find Genesis 37 and mark it in their Bibles. Either you or a child in your class can read the Scripture passages listed throughout the story.

### From PIT to Palace

When you come to a word appearing in bold, pause and ask children to show what that feeling looks like.

Read Genesis 37:3–4. Joseph’s ten older brothers were **jealous**. (Pause and ask kids to show what “jealous” looks like.) One day the brothers had a chance to make Joseph **worried** (pause). Some of them wanted to kill him, but they threw him in a dry well instead. Imagine Joseph’s **surprise** (pause). Then, the brothers decided to sell Joseph to a group of traders who were passing. The brothers were **glad** (pause) to be rid of Joseph, and that’s how Joseph ended up in Egypt as a slave.

Even though he was a slave, Joseph had a pretty good job in Egypt with a lot of responsibility. People depended on him, and he always did a good job. Then one day, someone told some lies about him, and that's how Joseph ended up in prison. I'm sure Joseph was **shocked** (pause) and **confused** (pause). But once again, Joseph did a good job and ended up with a lot of responsibility even in prison. He never gave up on being **hopeful** (pause).

After a few years, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, started having bad dreams about fat cows and skinny cows. He didn't understand what these crazy dreams meant, and was **puzzled** (pause) and **exhausted** (pause) from not sleeping. So Pharaoh asked Joseph to help him. Joseph explained that the seven fat cows meant Egypt would have seven good years with plenty of food. But the seven skinny cows meant there would be seven bad years without enough food for everyone. Joseph told Pharaoh to save food during the good years to feed everyone during the bad years. Pharaoh was **pleased** (pause). Because of that great idea, Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of saving food. Read *Genesis 41:39–40*. Joseph could have been **proud** (pause), but he wasn't.

Years later, people from all around came to Egypt looking for food. Joseph's ten older brothers were part of that crowd. They had no idea what had happened to Joseph, and they didn't recognize him. Joseph could have been **angry** (pause), but he wasn't. Joseph had to turn away **crying** (pause). But Joseph didn't tell his brothers who he was. Finally, though, Joseph couldn't take it any longer. He wanted to show his **love** (pause). Read *Genesis 45:3* (pause), 4–5. That's how Joseph ended up saving his whole family.

When Joseph's brothers put him in a dry well and then sold him as a slave, they wanted bad things to happen to him. Instead, God worked out everything so that good things happened for the brothers and lots of other people. God always has amazing ideas that we never think of!

After you have told the Bible story, give each child a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 3*. Ask children to look at the picture and tell you about the emotion shown in the picture. As a class, read the key verse from the back of the card or from the Bible. Ask:

- Name the bad things that happened to Joseph.
- Tell me how God made something good come out of the bad things.

Collect the cards for now. You'll send them home with the children later.

## STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help your class explore the lesson further.

### OPTION 1: FAT COWS, SKINNY COWS

**Stuff You Need:** black, brown, tan, and white construction paper, cotton balls, glue, 4" and 6" circle templates, safety scissors, markers

Cut circle templates ahead of time. Say, **Joseph told Pharaoh what his dream about fat cows and skinny cows meant. Let's make a reminder that God works things out for our good.** Show how to

make cows out of the circles. The large circle is the body; the small circle is the head. Draw on legs and a tail or cut shapes from paper. Each child should make a skinny cow and fat cow of any color they choose. For a skinny cow, glue the shapes flat on the paper. For a fat cow, place a cotton ball under the large circle, then glue the edges down. As children work, engage them in discussion.

- **What did the skinny cows and fat cows mean in our Bible story?**
- **How did God work things out for Joseph's good?**

*Optional:* While children work on the cows, ask if they know how many stomachs a cow has. The answer is four, and each one serves a different purpose. A cow can digest things that humans cannot. Wow!

Close by saying, **Joseph's story is a good reminder that we can trust God to know what's best for us.**

### **OPTION 2: Pass the Sack**

**Stuff You Need:** construction paper, safety scissors, CD player, and music

**Optional:** paper lunch sacks

Ahead of time, cut eleven sack shapes out of construction paper. Make ten the same color, and the last one a different color or, use paper lunch sacks and color one different from the rest. Have the group sit in a circle.

Say, **Joseph had a lot of trouble because of what his ten brothers did. But God worked things for good and Joseph gave his brothers sacks of food. Explain that you will play music while the children pass the sacks around the room. When the music stops, whoever is holding the sack of a different color will tell the beginning of the story.** Keep playing until children have recounted the whole story. If necessary, remind children of the sequence.

### **OPTION 3: THE BROTHERS MEET AGAIN**

**Stuff You Need:** The Brothers Meet Again Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Talk to the group about the famine and about when Joseph and his brothers meet in Egypt. Color the scene and have them share the story of Joseph with their families.

Close by saying, **Even when we can't see what's going to happen, God knows. He can work things out for the best.**

### **OPTION 4: JOSEPH AND HIS COLORFUL COAT**

**Stuff you need:** Joseph and His Colorful Coat Activity Sheet, coffee filters, colored markers, spray water bottle (or paint brush to use to flick water), Joseph template, a coat template

1. Give an activity sheet to each child.
2. Give each child a coffee filter to color as he/she chooses. This will be the coat.

3. Wet the coffee filter.
4. Hang to dry for roughly half an hour or blow dry with a hairdryer set on low.
5. While the coat dries, students will have time to color Joseph.
6. When coffee filters are dry, have students use the template to cut the filters into the shape of the coat.
7. Glue coat to Joseph.

## **STEP 4: GOING HOME**

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At the end of the lesson, pray in small groups about situations the children would like to see God work for good. Make sure each child takes home a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 3*, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.