Unit 4 • Session 2

Joseph Explained Dreams

BIBLE PASSAGE:
Genesis 39–41

STORY POINT: God gave Joseph power to understand dreams.

KEY PASSAGE:
Hosea 13:4

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:
Is there anything God cannot do? God can do all things according to His character.

INTRODUCE THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
PAGE 26

TEACH THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 28

APPLY THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 34

Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.
LEADER Bible Study

Jacob had recognized his favorite son’s bloody robe and concluded that his 17-year-old son had been torn apart by a vicious animal. He was devastated by the news of Joseph’s apparent death. No one could comfort Jacob. (Gen. 37:33-35)

For the next 20 years, Jacob lived with the grief of losing a child. But Scripture shows us what Jacob couldn’t see: God was with Joseph, making him successful and blessing him in Egypt. Joseph worked for Potiphar, an official of Pharaoh, but when Potiphar’s wife falsely accused him of attacking her, Joseph ended up in prison.

God gave Joseph the ability to interpret dreams. Pharaoh’s cupbearer and baker were also in custody when they each had a dream on the same night. “Interpretations belong to God,” Joseph explained. Then Joseph told them what the dreams meant. The cupbearer would be restored to his position, but the baker would be executed.

Two years later, Pharaoh had a dream which no one could interpret. But the cupbearer remembered Joseph and his ability to interpret dreams, and Pharaoh summoned Joseph. God revealed what would happen: there would be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine.

Pharaoh took action, putting Joseph into a position of power to help prepare Egypt for the future. He recognized that Joseph was wise and that God was with him. God blessed Joseph. In one day, Joseph moved from his position in prison to being second in command of Egypt. God had elevated Joseph so he could save the lives of many—even his own people—during the severe famine.

As you teach boys and girls, point them to our God who is with us and blesses us. He blessed us in the greatest way by sending His Son, who gave up His position of honor, to be the Savior of the world. He calls us to action in sharing the gospel with the whole world.

God's People in Egypt

© 2018 LifeWay
The travelers who bought Joseph took him to Egypt and sold him to an Egyptian officer named Potiphar (PAHT ih fuhr). God was with Joseph and made him successful at everything he did. Potiphar put Joseph in charge as his personal assistant.

One day, Potiphar’s wife tried to get Joseph to sin against God and Potiphar, but Joseph refused. This made her angry, and she accused Joseph of doing something he didn’t do. Potiphar believed his wife, and Joseph went to jail.

But God was still with Joseph and blessed him. The jail warden put Joseph in charge of the other prisoners. One night, two of the prisoners—Pharaoh’s cupbearer and baker—both had dreams. They told Joseph about dreams they had. The cupbearer dreamed about a vine with three branches. Grapes grew on the vine, and the cupbearer squeezed them into a cup and gave it to Pharaoh.

The baker dreamed that he had three baskets of bread on his head. The top basket had baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket.

Joseph told them what the dreams meant. Joseph said that in three days, the cupbearer would serve Pharaoh again; but the baker
would not because in three days, he would be put to death. Joseph asked the cupbearer to remember him and to tell Pharaoh that he did not deserve to be in jail.

The cupbearer did serve Pharaoh again, but he forgot about Joseph. Two years later, Pharaoh had two dreams. Pharaoh saw seven fat cows eaten by seven skinny cows, and seven fat heads of grain eaten by seven thin heads. No one knew what these dreams meant! Finally, the cupbearer remembered Joseph.

God told Joseph what Pharaoh’s dreams meant, and Joseph explained the dreams to Pharaoh. “The dreams represent seven years when plenty of food will grow followed by seven years when no food will grow. You should choose someone to save food during the good years to use during the bad years.”

Pharaoh realized that God was with Joseph, so he made Joseph second in command in all of Egypt. No one was more powerful than Joseph except for Pharaoh himself. Joseph stored away food during the good years. When the famine came, people from every land came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph.

Christ Connection: God sent Joseph to Egypt and blessed him so that he rose to a position of great authority. God used Joseph to help Joseph’s family and many others. When Jesus came to earth, He gave up His position of honor in heaven to be the Savior of the world.
**INTRODUCE the Story**

**SESSION TITLE:** Joseph Explained Dreams  
**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Genesis 39–41  
**STORY POINT:** God gave Joseph power to understand dreams.  
**KEY PASSAGE:** Hosea 13:4  
**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Is there anything God cannot do? God can do all things according to His character.

---

**Welcome time**
Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to try to think of a dream they had recently. Invite volunteers to share about their dreams.

**Activity page (5 minutes)**
Invite kids to complete “To the Point” on the activity page. Guide kids to use the key to decode the message about today’s Bible story.  
**SAY**  
- What message did you uncover? [Allow kids to respond.] That’s very interesting. I wonder how understanding dreams would be helpful to Joseph. We’ll find out more when we hear today’s Bible story.

---

**Session starter (10 minutes)**
**OPTION 1:** There you are!  
Form two teams of kids. If your kids do not know each other well, review names before playing.  
Instruct players to sit with their team, several feet away from the other team. Choose two volunteers to hold a...
blanket between the two teams so players cannot see the other team.

For each round, one player from each team will sit behind the blanket. Count down from three and then the volunteers should drop the blanket. The first player to shout out then name of the other player wins the round.

Award a point for each correct identification. Play multiple rounds as time allows.

**SAY** • In our Bible story today, we’ll see how Joseph told a man to remember him. The man forgot about Joseph for two years! We’ll find out more when we hear our Bible story today.

**OPTION 2:** What does it mean?

Distribute a “Letter Meanings” printable to each kid. Challenge kids to work individually or in groups to complete as many of the phrases as they can. Explain that each letter stands for a word. Use the first phrase as an example: 24 H in a D. *(24 hours in a day)*

Allow kids to work for several minutes. Then refer to the answer key to check kids’ work.

**SAY** • Was it hard to figure out the meaning of any of those letter phrases? When you don’t know what something means, what are some places you might go to for answers?

In our Bible story today, Joseph told others what their dreams meant. How did he do that? We will find out!

**Transition to teach the story**
TEACH the Story

SESSION TITLE: Joseph Explained Dreams
BIBLE PASSAGE: Genesis 39–41
STORY POINT: God gave Joseph power to understand dreams.
KEY PASSAGE: Hosea 13:4
BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Is there anything God cannot do? God can do all things according to His character.

Countdown
Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)
[Leader enters wearing an apron and carrying a Bible. Three baskets of rolls are positioned on a table.]
LEADER • Hello! I am so glad you are here. Welcome to the Mishpacha (meesh pah HA H) International Bakery! Mishpacha is a Hebrew word that means “family.” If you’re new here, my name is [your name] and I am one of the many bakers here. If you were here last week, welcome back!

Let me tell you about our daily special. Today’s bread of the day is the orange sweet roll. These rolls are on sale as buy one, get two free. You can see them here in these three baskets.

I choose the daily special based on what I’ve been reading in my Bible. Let me tell you about this latest story. See if you can figure out what it has to do with three baskets of bread.
Big picture question (1 minute)
LEADER • Sometimes when life feels out of control, it’s easy to forget that God is in control. We might wonder if God can even help us. As you hear more from Joseph’s story today, keep our big picture question and answer in mind. *Is there anything God cannot do? God can do all things according to His character.*

Giant timeline (1 minute)
Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.
LEADER • We’ve been learning about the nation God was forming through the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **God changed Jacob’s name to Israel, the name of God’s covenant people.** Jacob and his family settled in the land of Canaan.

As we heard last week, Jacob’s 12 sons did not always get along. Joseph’s brothers were jealous of Joseph because he was Jacob’s favorite son. Joseph also dreamed that he would one day rule over his family. One day, **Joseph’s brothers sold him into slavery.** Joseph ended up in Egypt. Let’s find out what happened to him. Check out our Bible story.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)
Open your Bible to Genesis 39–41. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Joseph Explained Dreams.”
LEADER • Joseph’s experience in Egypt was a little bit like a roller coaster. [*Hold your hand at waist level.*]
Joseph was sold as a slave to an important man named Potiphar. God was with Joseph. God made Joseph successful, and Potiphar put Joseph in charge as his personal assistant. [Raise your hand to head level.] Then Potiphar’s wife accused Joseph of doing something he didn’t do, and Joseph went to jail. [Drop hand to your side.]

God was with Joseph in prison. By this time, Joseph was about 28 years old. How did God help Joseph? Well, God gave Joseph power to understand dreams. When two of Pharaoh’s servants—the cupbearer and baker—had dreams in prison, Joseph told them what the dreams meant. Sadly, the cupbearer forgot about Joseph and he stayed in prison. Could God get Joseph out of prison? Let’s answer our big picture question: Is there anything God cannot do? God can do all things according to His character.

Two years later, Pharaoh had a dream that no one could interpret. Finally, the cupbearer remembered Joseph! Joseph explained that the dream meant a famine was coming. Pharaoh made Joseph second-in-command in all of Egypt. [Raise hand to head level.] So during the years of plenty, Joseph saved up food in Egypt. Then during the years of famine, everyone came to Egypt to buy the food they needed.

Christ connection

LEADER • We see in this story how God sent Joseph to Egypt and blessed him so that he rose to a position of great authority—from the prison to the palace. God used Joseph to help Joseph’s family and many others.
When Jesus came to earth, He gave up His position of honor—coming from heaven to earth—to be the Savior of the world.

**Questions from kids video (3 minutes)**
Show the “Unit 4, Session 2” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about how people can know what God is saying to them today. Guide them to discuss how they feel about studying the Bible, knowing that God speaks to us through His Word.

**Missions moment (3 minutes)**
On separate pieces of poster board, write Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka. Use rolls of masking tape to stick the poster boards to a wall facing your group.

Ask for seven volunteers to put on one of the colored T-shirts or bandannas. Display the South Asia map and challenge kids to identify the countries.

Read from the poster boards the name of a country and give kids 30 seconds to decide which color they think corresponds to that country. The person wearing that color should grab that poster and stand in front of the group.

Repeat with each country. Then check kids’ answers and make any corrections.

**LEADER •** God has a plan for South Asians to know He sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue them.

**Key passage (5 minutes)**
Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Hosea 13:4.

**LEADER •** God chose the family of Abraham, Isaac, and
Jacob to be His special people. He planned to form them into a nation—the nation of Israel. God is the same today as He was in the Bible stories we read. We’ll work on memorizing Hosea 13:4 as a reminder that He is the only God, and only He can save us. Let’s sing.

Lead kids in singing “You Know No God But Me.”

**Sing (4 minutes)**

Open your Bible and read aloud Psalm 111:10.

**LEADER • In our story today, God gave Joseph power to understand dreams.** Pharaoh recognized that God was with Joseph. God is with us too, and we can rely on Him for knowledge and understanding. Let’s sing.

Sing together “This Is My God.”

**Pray (2 minutes)**

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

**LEADER • Lord God, You are good. You are with us, and You bless us in so many ways. Open our eyes to recognize all the good gifts you give us. Make us aware of Your presence. You blessed us in the greatest way by sending Your Son to be our Savior. Help us tell others this good news! Amen.**

**Dismiss to apply the story**
The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God’s punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It’s something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God’s family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He’s already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I’m a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.
SESSION TITLE: Joseph Explained Dreams

BIBLE PASSAGE: Genesis 39–41

STORY POINT: God gave Joseph power to understand dreams.

KEY PASSAGE: Hosea 13:4

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Is there anything God cannot do? God can do all things according to His character.

---

**Key passage activity (5 minutes)**

Before the session, print a few extra copies of the key passage poster. Cut each poster into several large pieces and place the pieces in a bag.

Form groups of kids based on the number of posters you prepared. Give each group a bag and challenge groups to put together the key passage puzzle. When kids finish, lead them to say the key passage together.

**SAY** • Great job, everyone. Keep working to memorize our key passage. We’ll practice it again next week!

**Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)**


**SAY** • God was with Joseph, even when he was in prison! We saw in our story today that God gave Joseph power to understand dreams. After Joseph interpreted Pharaoh’s dreams, Pharaoh made Joseph an important ruler in Egypt. [Point out the location of Egypt (H8) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map.]
Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Where does wisdom come from? How can we have wisdom and understanding? *Point out that wisdom doesn’t always come with age. Wisdom is understanding how life works best, and because God created everything, wisdom comes from Him. God gives wisdom to anyone who asks for it.*
   (Option: Choose a volunteer to read James 1:5.)

2. How did Joseph have confidence before the most powerful ruler of Egypt? *Guide kids to recognize how Joseph trusted in God’s plan for his life. Joseph believed the dreams from God that meant he would one day be a ruler.*
   (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 13:6.)

3. Joseph was in prison for more than two years. How can we trust God’s timing in our lives? *Remind kids that God is in control. He sees the bigger picture and works everything for His glory and our good. God’s timing is always perfect.*
   (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 5:6.)

**Activity choice (10 minutes)**

**OPTION 1:** Music missions

Before the session, search online for a traditional Nepalese song. Be prepared to play the song during class.

Give each kid a piece of paper and a pencil and instruct him to write down the name of a popular song on the radio or familiar children’s song. Instruct kids to fold the paper in half and place it in the plastic cup.

Invite them to play a musical guessing game. Each kid will draw a song title from the cup. One at a time, kids will hum the tune to the song while the others try to guess the...
song’s name. After everyone has a turn, share that you have a tough tune for them to try to guess.

Play the traditional Nepalese song. Ask if anyone knows the name of this song. Then share that it is a traditional tune from Nepal. Remind kids that Nepal is a country in South Asia, and share that God has given missionaries a really creative idea to share the gospel with the people of Nepal through music. Read or ask a volunteer to read the “Telling Nepal” story.

**SAY**

- Part of God’s plan for South Asians to hear the gospel is through music. God wants people from every tongue, tribe, and nation to be part of His family.
- *Is there anything God cannot do? God can do all things according to His character.*

**OPTION 2:** Play charades

Before the session, write several actions, including the following, on separate index cards: traveling through a desert, sitting in prison, dreaming, running out of food to eat.

Form two teams of kids. Mix up the cards and place them facedown on a table. Call for a player from team 1 to draw a card from the top of the pile. He should read the card and then silently act out the action. His team will have 30 seconds to guess the action written on the card.

Award 10 points for a correct guess. If a team does not guess in 30 seconds, give the other team a chance to make one guess. If team 2 is correct, award them 5 points. Play again with a player from team 2. Alternate between teams until kids act out all of the actions or as time allows.

**SAY**

- Great job, everyone! Did any of the motions players made surprise you after you learned what was written on the card? If the card said, running out of food to
eat, did you act out skinny cows eating fat cows? Probably not. When Pharaoh had a dream, no one could interpret it. But God gave Joseph power to understand dreams. Pharaoh brought Joseph out of prison and made him an important ruler in Egypt.

God sent Joseph to Egypt and blessed him so that he rose to a position of great authority. God used Joseph to help Joseph’s family and many others.

When Jesus came to earth, He gave up His position of honor in heaven to be the Savior of the world.

**Journal and prayer (5 minutes)**

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God for Jesus. Give Him the honor He deserves, acknowledging that He humbled Himself to come to earth and save sinners because He loves us.

As time allows, lead kids to complete “Dream Meanings” on the activity page. Kids should match each dream with its meaning and identify who had each dream—the baker, the cupbearer, or Pharaoh.