

**TEXT** Genesis 37:1-11

**OBJECTIVE** The students will be able to relate the dreams Joseph had, and will understand that God showed these to Joseph as an indication of His future plan for Joseph's life.

**MEMORY VERSE** I the Lord . . . will speak unto him in a dream.  
— Numbers 12:6

# Joseph's Dreams

## MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

**I THE LORD** — Make an L with thumb and first finger of the right hand. Touch thumb to left shoulder, bring across in front of body touching right waist.

**WILL SPEAK** — Hold right index finger in front of mouth, then roll it forward in a circular movement.

**UNTO HIM** — Point to someone.

**IN A DREAM** — Touch the forehead with the index finger and draw it away, crooking and uncrooking finger several times, palm facing you.

## MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

Our memory verse for this week is illustrated by a man who is dreaming as the Lord speaks to him. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut apart the three sections on the heavy black lines. Reassemble the picture with your group as each portion of the verse is learned.

## BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Open your session by asking your class if they ever have dreams. Draw a dream (cloud) shape on a chalkboard. As the children discuss their dreams, illustrate them in the dream shape. Explain that we all have dreams, but Joseph's dreams were special.

1. Joseph's father loved him very much, and so he made him a special coat of many colors. This made his brothers angry.

2. Joseph dreamed that he and his brothers were binding sheaves in the field, and all of his brothers' sheaves bowed over to his.

3. He dreamed again that the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to him.

Climax: When Joseph told his dreams to his brothers, they were more angry than ever, and very jealous of him.

Conclusion: Joseph's dreams were sent from God and showed him part of God's plan for his life, but this made his brothers very unhappy.

Response: Your students will be able to describe the dreams that Joseph had and tell why they were impor-

tant. They will be able to describe his brothers' reaction to these dreams.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

After Jacob returned to Canaan with his family, he first settled at Succoth, then moved near Shechem for a time and finally migrated southward. It was near Bethlehem that Rachel died while giving birth to Benjamin. Finally, returning to Mamre, near Hebron, Jacob settled down near his father Isaac. It was here, as shepherds, that the sons of Jacob showed their resentment toward Joseph to whom their father showed favoritism. His giving Joseph the coat of many colors added to the brothers' envy.

Joseph's dreams indicating his exalted or superior position, told perhaps unwisely to his brothers, further antagonized them. Dreams in Bible times were highly regarded and thought to be warnings or predictions of the future. Dream interpreters were always in demand, especially by kings and people in authority. If the interpretations were accurate or seemingly favorable, they secured a place of honor and prestige for the interpreter.

One principle of interpretation seems quite evident: when the symbol is in the natural realm, the interpretation is in the human realm; e.g., when Joseph dreamed of the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing to him, his brothers immediately knew the meaning as referring to his father, mother, and themselves. Joseph, too, must have understood this to be an indication of God's plan for his life, at least a part of it.

God's revelations to man were often given through His servants in dreams and visions. Also He gave warnings and admonition through dreams to persons outside His chosen people. Oftentimes these were clear enough to be understood but at other times an interpreter was needed, such as Joseph's interpretation for Pharaoh and Daniel's for Nebuchadnezzar.

God can, and perhaps sometimes does, reveal His will in dreams today, but for the most part that is unnecessary because He has provided us with His written Word and the Holy Spirit as a Guide and Teacher.

## IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Let your class use the finger puppets of the sun, moon, and stars; also of sheaves (see Patterns) as you tell the story.

Make a hand puppet to use for this lesson and the following one (see Patterns). The body of the puppet can be made from fabric, Pellon-type fabric, or felt. The face and hands may be traced and colored, using non-fusible Pellon which will color nicely and last for a long time. (This is also a good material to use for homemade flannel board characters — trace, color, and cut out. They stick to the flannel board and are suitable for many Bible lessons.) Attach a face and the hands to the body. If the faces are attached with Velcro they can be easily replaced with others and used with several lessons.

Use cornstalks and bind them together with strings to make sheaves. Illustrate the brothers' sheaves bowing down to Joseph's sheaf. Also show pictures of the sun, moon, and stars depicting his brothers and parents also bowing down to him. Use a boy doll as Joseph. Bring a colorful coat to class also.

Do a chalk talk with simple stick figures illustrating Joseph's dreams (see Patterns).

Give each child two copies of the "dream" shape (see Patterns). As you talk about the dream with the sheaves, have them glue into one of the dream shapes some bundles of paper strips which you have tied together with thread. When you describe the dream about the stars, give them eleven stars and a sun and moon to glue onto the other dream shape.

## QUESTIONS

Why did Jacob make a coat of many colors for Joseph but not for his other sons?

Joseph's brothers were jealous of their father's love for Joseph. How would you feel if you were in the same situation as Joseph? as his brothers?

What was special about Joseph that made Jacob love him so much? Why do you think God chose Joseph?

Why is being "special" or "chosen" sometimes hard?

Joseph's brothers hated Joseph more because of his dreams. Do you think he should have told them? Why or why not?

How do you feel when your brothers, sisters, or friends are mad at you? How do you think Joseph felt?

What was different about Joseph's dreams?

What did his dream mean?

Have you ever had a special dream that you continued to think about?

Do dreams always come true?

What are some other ways God has talked to people?

## PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Show your little ones a series of pictures which illustrate different things mentioned in the lesson; i.e., coat of many colors, head on pillow with dream balloon above, wheat sheaf, sun, moon, stars — along with unrelated items not in the story (see Patterns). Have children pick out those things that are mentioned in the lesson.

Give each child a cutout of Joseph in a plain coat (see Patterns), to which the children may add the many colors, using colored adhesive strips, stickers, or even coloring in a design.

Illustrate different ways people give us a message: person-to-person talk, telephone, letter, sign language. God spoke to Joseph in dreams. Hold up a cloud-shape cut from construction paper. Draw in the two dreams.

## REVIEW IDEAS

Make a big puzzle — each piece represents a part of the dreams (see Patterns). Enlarge and copy the pattern onto posterboard. Use an X-acto knife to cut around the heavy lines of the five puzzle pieces so they can be removed. Attach the posterboard over a second sheet. Write the five names in the correct open spaces (as shown on pattern), then put the puzzle pieces back into place. During your review tell about each of Joseph's dreams and then go back and talk about the meanings of each one. Remove one piece of the puzzle at a time to reveal who each part of the dreams represented. Tell the children that God knew what was ahead for Joseph's life and that Joseph trusted God.

Bring a large cutout of the word WHY with question mark following (see Patterns). Punch holes in the bottom of the letters and tie long pieces of yarn through the holes. Put the word at the top of the display board. Discuss some of the things that might happen to a person about which they could ask, "Why?" Some examples might be: sickness, loss of someone they love, car

accident, poverty, etc. Attach cards with each of these ideas to the strands of yarn coming down from the WHY? Conclude your review by stressing the verse in Romans 8:28, "All things work together for good to them that love God."

Use some students to act out Joseph and his dreams. Have one sleeping on the floor with a blanket, and eleven students holding large cardboard sheaves. Let these students bow down to Joseph as he dreams. Repeat the scene, replacing the eleven sheaves with ele-

ven cardboard stars and a cardboard sun and moon.

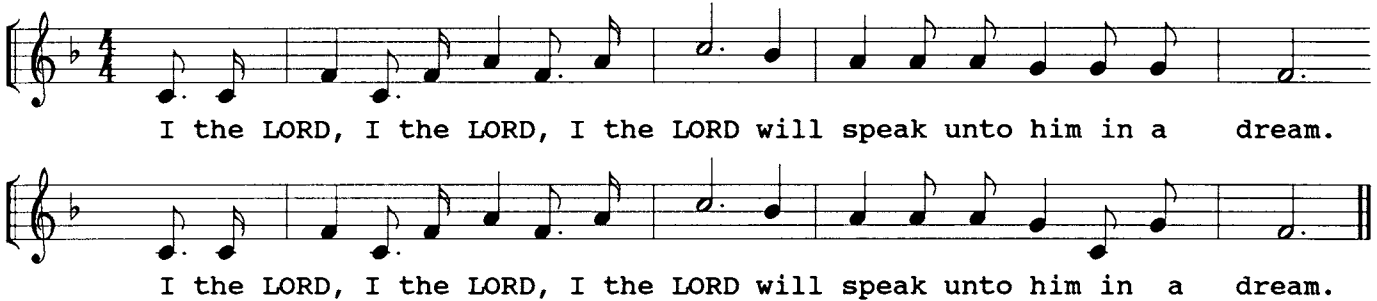
## SUPPORT MATERIAL

Bible Children — Classroom Story and Activity Book — 8 each of 6 pictures, Standard Publishing

Joseph — My Bible Story Card — (3"x4½" card) has picture of Joseph in coat of many colors with Scripture reference on the back, Concordia

Joseph the Dreamer — Palm Tree Bible Series, Concordia

## MEMORY VERSE SONG



I the LORD, I the LORD, I the LORD will speak unto him in a dream.

I the LORD, I the LORD, I the LORD will speak unto him in a dream.

## MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

