

TEXT Genesis 41:9-16, 28-43; 42:5,6; 45:4-10

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to tell how Joseph's God-given ability to interpret dreams caused him to be released from prison and made ruler over the land of Egypt.

MEMORY VERSE See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.
— Genesis 41:41

Ruler in Egypt

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

SEE I — Point up.

HAVE SET — Strike fists together, one on top of the other.

THEE — Point to others.

OVER ALL — With right hand flat, palm down, make a large circle horizontally and clockwise.

THE LAND OF EGYPT — Make a C with the index finger and thumb. Put it on forehead, palm forward.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

A palm tree and two pyramids are in the visual display of our memory verse this week. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut apart the pieces as indicated by the heavy black lines. Arrange them in order, a piece at a time, as your students recite each section of the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Open your session by showing your class a book with a bookmark about halfway through. Explain to your class that you haven't finished the book yet, but that it is a very exciting adventure story. Outline the plot briefly, building up the suspense. Then set the book down. When they wonder what happened next, explain that you haven't read the last chapters yet. Compare this to Joseph's life — it unfolded chapter by chapter. He didn't know what the end would be, but God did!

1. Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, dreamed two dreams and needed to understand the meaning of them.
2. He was told that Joseph could interpret dreams, so he had him brought out of the prison.
3. Joseph told him that his ability to interpret dreams came from God.
4. He explained that the meaning of the king's dreams was that there would be seven years of plenty in Egypt, followed by seven years of famine, and advised Pharaoh how to plan for this situation.

Climax: Pharaoh set Joseph as ruler over all of Egypt, second only to himself.

Conclusion: God rewarded Joseph for his faithfulness and his integrity. All of his family came to live in Egypt

and were saved from the famine.

Response: Your students will be able to describe why Joseph was released from prison and set up as ruler over Egypt.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

While in prison Joseph was used of God to interpret the dreams of two other men in prison, Pharaoh's baker and his cupbearer. As the dreams indicated, the baker was hanged and the cupbearer was restored to his former position with Pharaoh.

Besides talking directly to people, God used dreams to tell of some future event or to give a warning. There are many occasions mentioned in the Bible where dreams are spoken of specifically. Godly men who interpreted were definite about the power's being of God and not of themselves. Dreams may lead men astray. If the content of the dream and its interpretation is not in harmony with the Word of God, one can be sure it is not from God. God's Spirit will witness to the truth, or the fulfillment of the prophecy will confirm the Word. Jeremiah 23:28 says, "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD."

When Pharaoh desperately wanted his dreams interpreted, the Lord, through Joseph, revealed the meaning of the dreams when all the magicians and wise men of Egypt could not. Pharaoh immediately set Joseph over his house and over all the land of Egypt; only in the throne would Pharaoh be greater.

When Pharaoh took his ring of authority and placed it on Joseph's finger, all the people of Egypt knew that Joseph had been given enormous power in the land. The signet ring symbolized great authority and was also used to sign documents. Impressing a signet ring into clay or wax was like signing one's signature today and all kings as well as other men of authority had their own special mark or symbol engraved in their ring.

Using the power or gifts that God had given him, even while still a slave in a foreign land, Joseph won the favor of God and man. Through his faithfulness and obedience to God, Joseph rose from the position of a slave to that of a ruler in the land. His father and family moved to Egypt and were subject to him. Looking back to Joseph's dreams we can see that nothing is impossible with God.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Have children make Joseph masks to wear as you talk about the fact that Joseph was made ruler over the land of Egypt (see Patterns). Copy the masks onto heavy paper, punch holes where indicated, and attach string.

Discuss with your group how God has a special plan for each individual's life. Prepare a series of pictures cut from a magazine which might illustrate a person's hypothetical progression from childhood to adulthood; for example, baby, child eating cereal, child going to school, new car, wedding, parent, grandparent. Let your students help to glue the pictures on a long strip of paper as you describe each event. Explain to your class that you know which pictures will be pasted on next, and in what order — but they don't know until they see it. In the same way, God knows what His plan is for our lives.

Give each child a copy of the picture of Pharaoh's dreams (see Patterns). Let them color the picture as you teach the story.

Bring to class a number of objects which could be used as a reward: a dollar bill, a toy, etc. Discuss how these might be offered as prizes if one does a job well, completes a task, etc. Joseph didn't know he would receive a reward from God in this life for staying faithful, but God did reward him by making him ruler over Egypt and reuniting him with his family.

Show the students one of your old report cards. Discuss the marks that were given for each area. Then present a "report card" you have made up for Joseph. Instead of subjects such as math, or reading, include traits; such as, truthful, obedient, faithful, upright. Leave the space for the grade blank and let your students help you fill in appropriate marks. Discuss why each mark suggested is appropriate.

QUESTIONS

Where did Pharaoh find Joseph when he wanted to know about his dreams?

Why was Joseph in prison?

Who did Joseph say would give the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams?

Why did God tell Joseph the meanings of dreams?

After telling the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams, what advice did Joseph give him?

What did Pharaoh do about the advice Joseph gave him? Why was Joseph given so much power?

God and Pharaoh trusted Joseph. Can God trust us today? How can we show God that He can trust us?

Joseph was in the right place at the right time to save Israel. Christ came at the right time to save the world. What can you do to help those around you?

Through all of Joseph's problems he stayed close to God. Why was this so important? What would have happened if Joseph had tried to fight his own battles?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

The point to be made with preschoolers for this lesson is that God sees when we do good things and it makes Him happy. Show pictures of little children doing good things (sharing, helping, obeying). After each picture ask your class, "Who sees Jeffy helping?" or "Who sees Susie obeying?" Hold up a picture of Jesus and encourage them to answer, "Jesus does." Tie to the lesson on Joseph by briefly telling how God watched Joseph and saw him doing good deeds. Joseph's reward was that he became ruler in Egypt and was reunited with his family.

Give each child a paper crown to color (see Patterns). Then tape the two pieces together and let them wear the crowns while you talk about Joseph's ending up as a ruler in Egypt. Be sure to explain that Joseph was like a king or president, not a ruler used for measuring.

REVIEW IDEAS

Use this review to wrap up the story of Joseph. Prepare the two number seven puzzles (see Patterns) by enlarging and drawing them on posterboard. Explain to the children that this lesson concerns the seven good and seven bad years during which Joseph was made second in command in Egypt. Tell what each piece represents as you put the puzzle together (in correct order). Here is a brief description of each piece.

1. Pharaoh took Joseph from prison.
2. Joseph explains Pharaoh's dreams.
3. Joseph was made second in command.
4. Joseph instructed the people to store food.
5. A famine came upon the land.
6. Many people looked to Egypt for food.

7. Joseph's brothers came to Egypt.
8. Joseph's own dreams finally came true — family reunion.

Compare life to a puzzle. God knows all the pieces will fit and what the picture will be. Make a large puzzle

which can be assembled with your group (see Patterns). On the back of each piece write a question which could puzzle a child: Why do I get sick? Why did my puppy die? etc. Give an answer as you place each piece in the puzzle. Explain that in some cases only God knows the answer.

MEMORY VERSE SONG



See, I have set thee over all the land, over all the land of E - gypt.



See, I have set thee over all the land, over all the land of E - gypt.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

