

Main Lesson, Activity & Discussion Questions

Ages 5–11 | Scripture-Centered | Apologetics-Rich | Christ-Centered

LESSON OVERVIEW

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Week #: | 12 |
| Date: | March 22, 2026 |
| Lesson Title: | Joseph: God Works Through Hard Things |
| Primary Scripture: | Genesis 37–50 |
| Bible Timeline: | Patriarch Period – The final section of Genesis, leading into Israel’s time in Egypt |
| Big Idea: | Even when life is hard and unfair, God is working for good. |

MEMORY VERSE

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”

Genesis 50:20

Joseph said these words to the brothers who had hurt him. He understood that even when people do wrong, God can bring good from it.

SETTING THE SCENE (INTRODUCTION)

Before we open our Bibles today, let's remember what this book is.

The Bible is made up of 66 books written by more than 40 different authors. It was written over about 1,500 years, across three continents, and in three languages. And yet it tells one unified story.

It is the true story of a holy God who loves His people and has done whatever it takes to bring them home to Himself. From the beginning, God promised to rescue sinners. He kept that promise by sending the Lord Jesus to die on the cross and rise again so we could be forgiven.

Today's lesson is part of that one big story.

We are still in the book of Genesis. God made promises to Abraham, then to Isaac, then to Jacob, whose name God changed to Israel. Israel had twelve sons. One of them was named Joseph.

And what happens to Joseph seems very unfair.

But let's listen carefully to what God tells us in His Word.

MAIN LESSON NARRATIVE

The Robe and Growing Hatred

“Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons... and he made an ornate robe for him.” — Genesis 37:3

That robe showed special favor.

“When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.” — Genesis 37:4

Hatred began growing in their hearts.

The Dreams

Then Joseph had dreams. In one dream, bundles of grain bowed down to his bundle. In another, the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed down to him (Genesis 37:7–9). These dreams meant that one day Joseph would have authority over his family.

Instead of being excited, his brothers became angry.

Sold by His Own Brothers

One day, Joseph’s father sent him to check on his brothers. When they saw him coming, they made a terrible plan.

“Come now, let’s kill him... Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.” — Genesis 37:20

They threw him into a dry well. While they were eating, traders passed by. So they sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver (Genesis 37:28). Joseph was taken far away to Egypt.

Alone. Betrayed. Afraid.

But listen to something very important.

“The Lord was with Joseph.” — Genesis 39:2

Even in Egypt. Even as a slave. God was with him.

From Potiphar’s House to Prison

Joseph worked in the house of a man named Potiphar. God helped him succeed. But then something unfair happened again. Potiphar’s wife lied about Joseph, and he was thrown into prison. Again, Joseph had done nothing wrong.

“The Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden.” — Genesis 39:21

God was still with him.

Before Pharaoh

Years passed. In prison, Joseph interpreted dreams for two men. Later, Pharaoh had troubling dreams no one could explain. Joseph was brought before him.

“I cannot do it... but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires.” — Genesis 41:16

Joseph gave glory to God. God revealed there would be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of preparing Egypt.

“Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.’” — Genesis 41:41

The boy thrown into a pit was now second in command over Egypt.

Reunion and Forgiveness

Then the famine came. Food was scarce everywhere — even in Canaan, where Joseph’s family lived. His brothers traveled to Egypt to buy grain. They did not recognize Joseph. But he recognized them.

After testing their hearts, Joseph finally revealed himself.

“I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt!” — Genesis 45:4

His brothers were terrified. But Joseph said something amazing.

“Do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.” — Genesis 45:5

Later, when his brothers feared revenge, Joseph answered with one of Scripture’s greatest statements:

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” — Genesis 50:20

God had used suffering to save people. Joseph forgave his brothers.

And God kept His promise to Abraham by preserving the family that would one day bring the Savior into the world.

WHY WE CAN TRUST THIS ACCOUNT

- The Bible includes painful and embarrassing details about Israel’s own family. That honesty supports its truthfulness.
- Egyptian records confirm organized grain storage and famine planning like Genesis 41 describes.
- Genesis 15:13 predicted that Abraham’s descendants would live in a foreign land. Joseph’s story begins that fulfillment.
- Scripture connects consistently across centuries.

We believe this because God tells us in His Word.

WHAT THIS SHOWS US ABOUT JESUS

- Joseph was betrayed for silver. **Jesus was betrayed for silver** (Matthew 26:14–15).
- Joseph suffered though innocent. **Jesus was completely sinless** (1 Peter 2:22).
- Joseph's suffering saved many lives. **Jesus' suffering saves us from sin** (Isaiah 53:5).
- Joseph forgave those who hurt him. **Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them"** (Luke 23:34).

Joseph points us forward to Jesus.

- Jesus is our **Savior**.
- Jesus is our **Sanctifier**, shaping us even through hardship.
- Jesus is our **Healer**, restoring broken hearts.
- Jesus is our **Coming King**.

GOD REVEALED AS TRINITY

- God the **Father** preserves His covenant promise.
- God the **Son** is foreshadowed in Joseph's suffering and exaltation.
- God the **Holy Spirit** works behind the scenes, guiding events toward redemption (John 16:13).

God is one God in three Persons.

LIFE APPLICATION

Sometimes life feels unfair. Sometimes people hurt us. Sometimes things happen that we do not understand.

"The Lord was with Joseph." — Genesis 39:2

If you belong to Jesus, He is with you too.

Hard things do not mean God has left. They may be part of a bigger plan you cannot yet see.

DEFENDING THE TRUTH

How could God allow something so evil?

Genesis 50:20 shows that God can bring good from evil actions without approving the evil. James 1:13 teaches that God does not tempt anyone to sin. God is sovereign and works all things for good for those who love Him (Romans 8:28).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did Joseph's brothers hate him?

Answer: They were jealous because their father favored him and because of his dreams.

2. Was it wrong for them to sell Joseph?

Answer: Yes. Their jealousy and hatred were sinful.

3. What happened to Joseph in Egypt?

Answer: He became a slave, was wrongly put in prison, but God was with him and later made him a leader.

4. What did Joseph mean when he said, "God intended it for good"?

Answer: He meant that God used the evil actions of others to save many lives.

5. How does Joseph's story point to Jesus?

Answer: Both were betrayed, suffered though innocent, and brought salvation through suffering.

Optional Deeper Question:

How should we respond when someone hurts us?

Answer: We choose to forgive them, just like Joseph did. Forgiving means we do not try to get even. We trust God to take care of what is right and wrong. God sees everything, and He is always fair. We can ask Jesus to help us forgive, even when it is hard.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY

Activity: From Pit to Palace Timeline

Purpose: To see how God works over time.

Supplies: Paper and markers.

Instructions

1. Draw four boxes in a row.
2. In the first box, draw the pit.
3. In the second box, draw the prison.
4. In the third box, draw Pharaoh's palace.
5. In the fourth box, draw Joseph forgiving his brothers.

Read Genesis 50:20 together and talk about how God was working in every stage.

TEACHER CLOSING

Read Genesis 50:20 aloud once more.

“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good.”

God was with Joseph in the pit.
God was with Joseph in the prison.
God was with Joseph in the palace.

And if you belong to Jesus, God is with you too.