

Teacher Background & Preparation Sheet

For Teacher Study Only – Not Read Aloud

LESSON IDENTIFICATION

Week #:	12
Date:	March 22, 2026
Lesson Title:	Joseph: God Works Through Hard Things
Primary Scripture:	Genesis 37–50
Bible Timeline:	Patriarch Period – Final section of Genesis, leading into Israel's time in Egypt

PURPOSE OF THIS LESSON

Children will learn that:

- God is sovereign even when life feels unfair.
- God is present in suffering.
- God uses evil actions for good purposes.
- God keeps His covenant promises through hardship.
- Joseph's story points forward to Jesus, who suffered to save others.

This lesson helps children understand that hardship does not mean God has abandoned them. Genesis 50:20 anchors this truth: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good."

BOOK & PASSAGE BACKGROUND

Book Name:	Genesis
Traditional Author:	Moses
Date Written:	1400–1440 BC
Original Audience:	The Israelites after the Exodus

Purpose of the Book

Genesis explains beginnings — creation, sin, covenant, and God's promise to bless all nations through Abraham's family (Genesis 12:3). Joseph's story explains how Israel came to live in Egypt, setting up the events of Exodus.

HISTORICAL & CULTURAL CONTEXT

Family Structure

The firstborn typically received leadership and greater inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17). Joseph receiving special favor and a richly ornamented robe (Genesis 37:3) created tension.

Slavery in the Ancient Near East

Slavery often resulted from war or debt. Joseph being sold by his brothers (Genesis 37:28) reflects common practices of the time.

Egyptian Culture

Egypt was a powerful and advanced civilization. Records show structured government, prison systems, and food storage programs consistent with Genesis 41.

IMMEDIATE BIBLICAL CONTEXT

Before This Passage

God changed Jacob's name to Israel (Genesis 32:28). The covenant promise continues through his sons.

After This Passage

Genesis ends with Joseph's death in Egypt (Genesis 50:26), preparing for the Israelites' growth and later oppression described in Exodus 1.

Why This Moment Matters in God's Plan

Joseph's relocation to Egypt preserves the covenant family during famine (Genesis 45:7). This fulfills God's earlier warning to Abraham that his descendants would live in a foreign land (Genesis 15:13).

KEY THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS

CORE TRUTH #1: What This Lesson Teaches About God

God is sovereign over suffering.

Genesis 50:20 — “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good.”

- God’s sovereignty does not remove human responsibility but demonstrates His control over outcomes (Romans 8:28).
- God is faithful to His covenant promises (Genesis 46:3–4).

CORE TRUTH #2: What This Lesson Teaches About People

People are capable of jealousy, hatred, and betrayal.

Genesis 37:4 — Joseph’s brothers hated him.

Sin flows from the heart (Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21–23).

Yet repentance and forgiveness are possible. Joseph forgives his brothers (Genesis 45:5; 50:21).

CORE TRUTH #3: What This Lesson Teaches About Salvation

Joseph suffers though innocent.

- He is betrayed for silver (Genesis 37:28).
- He saves many lives through suffering (Genesis 50:20).

These details point forward to Jesus:

- Jesus was betrayed for silver (Matthew 26:14–15).
- Jesus was innocent (1 Peter 2:22).
- Jesus saves through His suffering (Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 3:18).

Joseph is not the Savior, but his life foreshadows Christ.

CORE TRUTH #4: Trusting God’s Word

Genesis 15:13 predicted Israel’s time in a foreign land. Joseph’s relocation to Egypt begins that fulfillment.

The unity between Genesis and Exodus confirms the reliability of Scripture.

Manuscripts of Genesis found among the Dead Sea Scrolls confirm textual consistency over centuries.

CORE TRUTH #5: God as Trinity

- God the **Father** preserves the covenant line through Joseph.
- God the **Son** is foreshadowed in Joseph’s suffering and exaltation (Philippians 2:8–9).
- God the **Holy Spirit** works behind the scenes, directing history toward redemption (John 16:13).

God is one God in three Persons.

Though the Trinity is progressively revealed, the unified action of God in redemption is evident throughout Genesis.

RELIABILITY OF SCRIPTURE

Historical Consistency

Ancient Egyptian records describe seven-year famine cycles and centralized grain storage, aligning with Genesis 41.

Geographical Accuracy

Locations mentioned in Genesis correspond with known trade routes between Canaan and Egypt.

Literary Honesty

The Bible records the sins of Israel's founding family without exaggeration or concealment. This transparency supports authenticity.

APOLOGETICS FOUNDATION

How could God allow something so evil?

Scripture answers first. Genesis 50:20 shows that God can intend good through evil actions without being the author of sin (James 1:13). Romans 8:28 confirms that God works in all things for good for those who love Him. God's sovereignty means nothing is wasted.

ANTICIPATED CHILD QUESTIONS

Why did God let Joseph suffer?

God had a bigger plan to save many lives (Genesis 45:7; 50:20).

Was it wrong for Joseph's brothers to sell him?

Yes. Their jealousy and hatred were sinful (Genesis 37:4; Exodus 20:13).

Did Joseph ever get angry at God?

The Bible does not show him blaming God. Instead, he trusted God's purpose (Genesis 39:2, 21).

Why did Joseph forgive them?

He understood God's greater plan (Genesis 50:20–21).

COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS

■ ■ Misunderstanding: If something bad happens, God is not in control.

Correction: Genesis 50:20 shows God's sovereign control even in evil circumstances.

■ ■ Misunderstanding: If I trust God, nothing hard will happen.

Correction: Joseph trusted God and still suffered. Trust does not remove hardship, but God remains present (Genesis 39:2).

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Joseph was rejected, suffered, and then exalted to save others.

Jesus was rejected (John 1:11), suffered on the cross (Isaiah 53:5), and was exalted in resurrection (Philippians 2:9–11).

- Joseph saved people from famine. Jesus saves us from sin and eternal separation from God (Romans 6:23).
- Joseph forgave those who harmed him. Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34).

Joseph points us to Christ.

TEACHER HEART PREPARATION

Some children may already be walking through hardship.

Pray for sensitivity and compassion.

Pray that children understand that God’s presence does not disappear in suffering.

Remember Genesis 50:20 personally.

God is working in what you cannot yet see.