

LESSON 1

JOSEPH'S STORYLESSON **AT A GLANCE****WONDER TRUTH:** God Saves**SCRIPTURE:** [Genesis 37; 39–50](#)**GOD'S BIG STORY:** Jacob's son, Joseph, is sold into slavery and wrongfully imprisoned. Yet God is with him, and Joseph rises to influence in Egypt, where through him, God saves His people from famine.**WORD OF WONDER:** Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. —[Jeremiah 32:17 \(NIV\)](#)**FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS****WHO?**

Joseph was Jacob's second youngest and favorite son. Joseph had a lot of very difficult and emotional experiences. He was hated by his brothers, thrown into a hole, sold into slavery, falsely accused, and sent to prison. Yet, God remained faithful to Joseph.

WHAT?

The coat of many colors Jacob gave Joseph signified that Jacob preferred Joseph over his other sons. Typically, this type of coat showed honor and was given to the son who had the birthright. This contributed to the hatred Joseph's brothers had for him.

WHERE?

Joseph traveled from Hebron to Shechem in search of his brothers, then headed approximately 65 miles north to Dothan. There Joseph was taken by Ishmaelite traders about 250 miles southwest, to Egypt, where they sold him as a slave to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials.

WHEN?

Joseph was 17 years old when his brothers sold him into slavery. Two years after Joseph was put in prison by Potiphar, he interpreted Pharaoh's dream. He was 30 years old. Approximately 23 years passed between Joseph's being sold into slavery and his family seeing him again.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Joseph had a big part in God's plan to save His people. God worked through Joseph's slavery in Egypt and his eventual leadership role to preserve and grow Jacob's family into a nation, as He had promised. One day, Jesus would be born in that family!

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

Welcome Question

As kids arrive ...

Warmly welcome kids by name. Show them the Welcome Question and explain that answers could include preventing physical danger, such as stopping a little kid from running into a busy street, or stopping other kinds of difficult moments, such as helping a friend out of an embarrassing situation at school. Invite kids to share their stories with the people around them.

Have you ever stopped something bad from happening to someone else?

Tell us about it.

Wow ... I'm so glad you were all able to save people when they needed it most! Today in God's big story, we'll hear about how God saved people during a very difficult time. But first, it's time to be curious!

Make It Inclusive: If some kids struggle to focus or understand and follow instructions, pair them with a peer helper or offer them a seat near a leader who can encourage and help them as needed throughout the lesson.

Curiosity Questions

I'm curious ...

- **When you think about someone who saves others, who do you think of?**
- **Share about a person who has helped you when you needed help.**

Elementary STEM Activity: Impossible Bubbles

Ahead of time, make the Impossible Bubble solution for this experiment by adding two tablespoons of sugar to two cups of warm water (distilled water works best) in a bowl and mix with a spoon until the sugar is dissolved. Then add four tablespoons of blue liquid dish soap to the solution. Mix gently to avoid creating bubbles or foam. Cover the solution with plastic wrap and allow it to sit at room temperature for a few hours (overnight is optimal). Consider watching the [How-to Impossible Bubbles STEM Video](#) for a demonstration of the activity.

Leader Tip: Test the STEM activity ahead of time so you know what to expect!

Have you ever blown bubbles? Invite kids to respond; then blow a few bubbles using the regular bubble solution and wand.

What do you think is the biggest bubble you've ever blown? Invite kids to use gestures to show their answers; then blow a few more bubbles.

Bubbles are pretty amazing! But there are probably some things that bubbles can't do!

Do you think it's possible to blow a bubble as big as a skyscraper? Pause for kids to answer.

Do you think it's possible to blow a bubble so tiny that you can only see it in a microscope? Pause for kids to answer.

Do you think it's possible to blow a bubble within another bubble? Pause for kids to answer. **It sounds pretty impossible, but let's find out!**

Demonstrate the following steps for kids as they gather around to watch. (If your group and space are large, consider preparing multiple stations with a set of supplies at each. Assign kids to each station, and invite a different leader to demonstrate the experiment at each station.)

1. Spray the table or flat surface with a thin layer of water.
2. Dip one end of a straw into the bowl of bubble solution.
3. Set the wet end of the straw directly onto the table and blow into the other end. A dome-shaped bubble should form. Stop blowing and gently remove straw from bubble.
4. Dip one end of the straw back into the bowl of bubble solution.
5. Gently insert the wet end of the straw into the dome-shaped bubble so that it is inside the bubble but above the table's surface. Blow into the other end of the straw. A new, smaller dome-shaped bubble should form within the original one.

Once they've seen you blow a bubble within a bubble, consider giving a clean straw to each kid and giving kids a chance to try. (Coach them not to suck their straws so hard that the bubble solution reaches their mouths.)



For added challenge, see if anyone can blow a bubble within a bubble within another bubble!

In this activity, we did something that had sounded almost impossible—we blew a bubble within a bubble! Do you know what made this possible? Pause for answers.

It was actually the water we sprayed on the table ahead of time that made this experiment possible.



Today in God's big story, God will be the One who makes something possible—He saves a man named Joseph and many other people!

Today's Wonder Truth is GOD SAVES.

Preteen STEM Activity: Move That Ice!

Ahead of time, decide if you will provide materials and space for kids to pair up and do the experiment themselves or if you will demonstrate it while the kids watch. Plan what works best for your space and group!

Cut twine into 6" lengths, one for everyone doing the experiment. Also test the experiment ahead of time so you know what to expect. Set up a table at the front of the room, and just before the activity begins, set a bowl of ice cubes on the table.

Leader Tip: Keep the ice cubes in a freezer or cooler until the activity begins.

Hold up an ice cube and ask: **What do you know about ice?** Allow kids to share. **Wow! You are quite the ice experts!**

But do you think it's possible to move this ice cube (hold up an ice cube) **without touching it** (set the ice cube on a table in front of you)? **How?** Invite kids to share their ideas.

Those are great ideas! But let's see if you can figure out how to move an ice cube using only a piece of twine and some salt.

If you have the space and supplies for all the kids to do the experiment with a partner, hand one ice cube and a 6" piece of twine to each pair of kids, and set out salt shakers where everyone can access them. Invite kids to see if they can figure out a way to move their ice cubes using only the materials provided. Kids may or may not figure it out—either is OK! After a couple minutes, demonstrate the experiment and invite kids to try it too.

If demonstrating the experiment while kids watch, invite them to share their ideas: **How do you think we can move the ice without touching it?** Try out each idea as they share it. Then show them how to do the experiment.

Move That Ice! STEM Experiment:

1. Set a piece of twine on top of an ice cube.
2. Sprinkle a good amount of salt on top of the ice and twine.
3. Wait several seconds (up to a minute, if needed). The salt should cause the top of the ice cube to melt.
4. Pick up the two ends of the twine and lift them into the air, which should lift the ice cube.



Explain the science behind the experiment: Salt lowers the freezing point of water, so when it's sprinkled on ice, it causes the ice to melt. (This is why salt is sometimes spread on icy winter roads.) In our experiment, salt melted the top of the ice cube which then refroze around the twine.

In this activity, we did something that had sounded almost impossible—we made the ice move without touching it! And it was the salt that made this possible.

Today in God's big story, God will be the One who makes something possible—He saves a man named Joseph and many other people!

Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD SAVES**.



Declaring God's Wonder

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You are with me in hard times, (Kids repeat.)

And You are the One who saves! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)

Faith

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

Word of Wonder Activity

WORD OF WONDER

Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

—Jeremiah 32:17 (NIV)

Before kids arrive, print the Word of Wonder Label Sheet [NIV](#) on sheets of 1" x 2 5/8" or Avery® Size 5160 labels (one copy per 27 kids). Alternatively, cut out the labels along the dotted lines and have tape available so kids can stick Bible verse slips to their arms.

Today we heard about how God was with Joseph and worked through him to save many people. Our God saves!

Let's worship Him together by saying our Word of Wonder. Open your Bible to [Jeremiah 32:17](#). If possible, display the Word of Wonder Slide [NIV](#). Introduce kids to [Jeremiah 32:17](#) by read it several times together.

Our Word of Wonder mentions God's great and powerful arm. Can you show me what you imagine a powerful arm would look like? Invite kids to flex their bicep muscles.

When we read about God's great and powerful arm, it's not an arm we can see. The Bible verse is talking about how God uses His power to do great things, just like you use your arm to do things! Let's use our arms to put the words in order from our Word of Wonder.

Leader Tip: This activity works best in groups of nine with each kid receiving one verse label. However, in smaller groups, it works to give kids multiple consecutive labels.

Give each kid a Word of Wonder sticky label to stick to her forearm, ideally on her skin instead of her sleeve.

Once everyone has a label, invite kids to stick out their arms and get into verse order. Once in order, encourage them to say the verse together

To make it more challenging, take the Word of Wonder Slide off the screen so they can't use it for reference. If kids need help reading the words, pair them with someone who can read or have a leader help them.

Elementary Questions

- **What hard things happened to Joseph in today's part of God's big story?** (*He was sold into slavery by his brothers, taken far away to Egypt, made a slave in Potiphar's house, and put in jail when he didn't do anything wrong.*)
- **Where was God when these hard things were happening to Joseph?** (*God was with Joseph.*)
- **What is a *famine*?** (*a time when food doesn't grow, and people have nothing to eat*)
- **How did God work through Joseph to save many people during the famine?** (*Joseph understood Pharaoh's dream, which was a warning from God that famine was coming, so Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of storing food. Therefore, people had food to eat during the famine.*)
- **How do you feel when hard things happen to you? How does it feel to know God is always with you?**
- **God saved many people in today's story, and through Jesus, He saves us from our sins (the wrong things we do). What does this show us about God?**

God is very powerful. He loves us and cares about saving us, just like He did Joseph, his family, and many other people in Egypt. When you go through hard things, you can remember God is always with you and can use all things for good in your life. God saves, and we can trust Him! Let's thank Him for this in prayer now.

Leader Tip: Today in God's big story, God worked through Joseph to save many people's physical lives. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, God offers the gift of salvation, forgives our sins, and invites us to live with Him forever. If kids are curious about what it means to us that God saves, consider inviting your ministry leader and the child's parents into the conversation as you talk together about God's love and good plan.

Preteen Questions

What difficult things happened to Joseph in today's part of God's big story? *(He was sold into slavery by his brothers, taken far away to Egypt, made a slave in Potiphar's house, and put in jail when he didn't do anything wrong.)*

Where was God when these difficult things were happening? *(God was with Joseph.)*

How did Joseph change from the beginning of the story to the end? Why do you think he changed?

What is something difficult you have gone through in life? How did God help you learn or grow through that situation?

- **How did God work through Joseph to save many people during the famine?** *(Joseph understood Pharaoh's dream, which was a warning from God that famine was coming, so Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of storing food. Therefore, people had food to eat during the famine.)*
- **God saved many people in today's story, and through Jesus, He saves us from our sins (the wrong things we do). What does this show us about God?**

God is very powerful. He loves us and cares about saving us, just like He did Joseph, his family, and many other people in Egypt. When you go through difficult things, you can remember God is always with you and can use all things for good in your life. God saves, and we can trust Him! Let's thank Him for this in prayer now.

Small Group Prayer Time

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Encourage them to say "unspoken" if they want others to pray for them but don't want to share details. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and thank God for saving us. God hears all our prayers!

Identity

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

Elementary Responding in Worship: God Saves! Comics

Ahead of time, print a [Joseph Comic Sheet](#) for each kid.

Today we learned that God saves. He is powerful, and He is good. At the end of the story we heard today, even after all Joseph faced, he said to his brothers, “You planned to harm me. But God planned it for good. He planned to do what is now being done. He wanted to save many lives” ([Genesis 50:20](#)). God was with Joseph in everything he faced, and through Joseph, God saved many lives!

Give a copy of the Joseph Comic Sheet to each kid and set out coloring utensils.

Ask them to write their names on the back. **This comic strip tells the story of how God saved Joseph, his brothers, and many other people ... but something's missing! Point to the three blank boxes on the Joseph Comic Sheet. Let's help fill in the blanks by drawing pictures of what happened at each of these points in the story.**

Review the story details and help kids think about how God saved people in today's story:

- **What happened after Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery? How did God save Joseph at this point in the story?**
- **What happened while Joseph was in prison? How did God save Joseph at this point in the story?**
- **Why did Joseph's brothers come to Egypt and beg for food? How did God save Joseph, his brothers, and many other people at this point in the story?**

Now, invite kids to color the pictures on their sheets and draw new pictures in the blank boxes. Encourage them to think about the ways God saves people in God's big story today and the times and ways He has saved them. Consider playing music from the [God Rescues Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as kids work.

When they finish, invite kids to share their completed comics with each other.

Make It Inclusive: Provide a variety of drawing utensils to benefit kids of varying fine motor skill levels. For example, markers require less muscle strength/pressure than crayons or colored pencils. If possible, also have simple adaptive tools on hand, such as pencil grips.

Preteen Responding in Worship: My Comic Book Adventure

Ahead of time, print a [My Comic Sheet](#) for each kid.

Today we learned that God saves. He is powerful, and He is good. At the end of the story we heard today, even after all Joseph faced, he said to his brothers, “You planned to harm me. But God planned it for good. He planned to do what is now being done. He wanted to save many lives” ([Genesis 50:20](#)). God was with Joseph in everything he faced, and through Joseph, God saved many lives!

Give a copy of the My Comic Sheet to each kid and set out coloring utensils and pencils. Ask them to write their names on the back. **Just as God was with Joseph, helping and saving him, God is with each of us. God knows what we need when we need it. He doesn’t always save us from difficult situations, but like He did in Joseph’s story, He can save us and others through hard things. When have you experienced something difficult but knew God was with you, helping and saving you? Or maybe you’re experiencing a time like this now.** Pause for kids to think quietly. They don’t need to answer the question aloud.

Let’s create comic strips that tell our stories of how God has saved and helped us and others. You might draw and write about God saving you physically or about God saving you spiritually through Jesus, who died and rose again to offer everyone forgiveness from sin and life forever with Him.

Invite kids to create their comic stories of how God has saved them. They can draw pictures and/or write captions. Consider playing music from the [God Rescues Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as kids work. When they finish, invite kids to share their completed comic stories with each other.

Make It Inclusive: Provide a variety of drawing utensils to benefit kids of varying fine motor skill levels. For example, markers require less muscle strength/pressure than crayons or colored pencils. If possible, also have simple adaptive tools on hand, such as pencil grips.

Blessing Your Kids

Blessing: Our God, who loves you, is with you! He is mighty to save and will never leave you. May you always trust Him.

GAME 1: WHACK AND GET BACK

In this game, the kid in the center of the circle will try to get a seat in the circle before the “chaser” tags her with the pool noodle.

Ahead of time, place chairs in a circle with one chair in the center. There should be the same number of chairs as there are kids. Alternatively, make a circle out of floor dots instead of chairs. If using floor dots, still place one chair in the center of the circle.

Leader Tip: If you don't have enough chairs for every kid, tape a sheet of paper to the ground for each kid or have kids take their shoes off and set the shoes in front of them on the floor to signify their spot.

Gather kids and invite them to sit in the circle of chairs. Choose one willing kid to stand in the center of the circle next to the chair. Place a pool noodle on the center chair.

The person in the middle of the circle is “It.” She will pick up the pool noodle and use it to gently tag someone in the circle before putting the pool noodle back on the chair. (Be careful not to hit anyone's head with the pool noodle!)

The person she tags is the “chaser.” The chaser will then run into the center of the circle and grab the pool noodle to try to tag the person who is It. If the person who is It can run to the empty seat before being tagged, then the person they tagged is now It! If It is tagged before sitting down in the empty chair, then she remains It and tries again.

If the pool noodle falls off the chair in the center of the circle, whoever put it on the chair before it fell off is automatically It. If this happens, a friend can volunteer to “save” the person in the middle by being It instead.

Play several rounds. After the game, invite all the kids sit in their chairs in the circle. (Add the center chair to the circle so everyone has a seat.)

Our Word of Wonder tells us God has a great and powerful arm, and in God's big story today, we saw how God saved Joseph and many people. In our game, you had an opportunity to save a friend by volunteering to be It for a friend. God saves!