

Lesson B1.4 - God Tells Us What to Do



Teacher's Pages with Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

For Lower Elementary Students and Classes

Recommended for students in Preschool, Kindergarten, and Grades 1-2.

Quick Facts for the Teacher

Lesson Summary: Genesis 41:1-45

► Bible Characters: Joseph, Pharaoh

Pharaoh had been having very strange dreams, but no one could interpret them. Pharaoh's butler suggested Joseph could do it. With God's help, Joseph explained that Pharaoh's dreams predicted a famine, and told him what to do. Pharaoh was so impressed that he made Joseph a ruler in Egypt.

Brief Bible Background

► Today's Lesson is from the Old Testament

► Scripture Section: Slavery

After coming to Egypt in the time of Joseph, the Israelites later came under bondage to the Pharaoh, working as forced labor to build his cities. (This period covers the time between Genesis and Exodus.)

For More Information

The primary role of a Sunday School teacher for Preschool, Kindergarten (pre-readers), and Early Elementary (new readers) is to simply tell children the stories of Scripture and introduce them to the major characters of the Bible.

Teachers who want to know more about the lessons for their own familiarity with the story are encouraged to read the information in the SEED Upper Elementary and Youth Teacher's Pages.

a. Classroom Greeting

Teachers should arrive 10 to 15 minutes before class and greet students and parents by name. Write the day's Bible Message on the white board or poster board for all the kids to see. Have kids gather on a rug or in a dedicated meeting space. Encourage the children to learn each other's names.

b. Opening Prayer Song

This same opening prayer song should be sung every week with young kids — remember, repetition is good. The words to this song are sung to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." No accompaniment needed.

*Thank you, Jesus, for this day, for this day, for this day.
Thank you, Jesus, for this day and everything you do.*

*Help us as we learn and pray, learn and pray, learn and pray.
Help us as we learn and pray and turn our hearts to you!*

c. Introduction to Today's Message

*Teacher's Script (student responses are in **bold**).*

Sometimes, we feel confused or have big decisions to make. Where can we look for help? Today's Bible message is: **God Tells Us What to Do**. Say that with me: **God Tells Us What to Do**. When we need help, we can always pray. **God Tells Us What to Do**.

- Raise your hand if you have ever asked God to help you with something. (*Choose a child to answer.*)
- Who are some people we can ask for help as well? (*Parents, teachers, grandparents*)

In our story today, there was a king named Pharaoh who was worried. But his prisoner, Joseph, knew how to help him. Joseph turned to God and prayed. Why? Joseph knew that **God Tells Us What to Do**.

d. SEED Bible Story Video

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This may be displayed simply on a laptop computer or tablet. If the classroom is equipped with a computer video monitor or video projector, the video can be displayed in a larger size.

e. Read the Story with Poster Pictures

The Bible Story has been divided into four parts, each with an accompanying Poster Picture. The teacher should hold up or point to the relevant Poster Picture while reading the individual part of the story, asking questions while reading. Posters may be printed on letter-sized paper, or enlarged and printed on ledger-sized paper if a bigger printer is available. Poster pictures may also be opened as a PDF on a computer screen, scrolling through each of the four pages.

**Picture 1**

Tell the children: Pharaoh was the king of Egypt, and he was very troubled. His advisors couldn't help him. But Pharaoh's butler knew someone who might know what to do. This man was called Joseph, and he was in jail.

Read the caption: Pharaoh was upset by strange dreams. He hoped someone could explain what they meant. So he called for Joseph.

- *Point out Pharaoh, Joseph and the butler. [Pharaoh is wearing gold and purple, Joseph is wearing the head covering, the butler is dressed all in brown.]*
- *Why was Joseph in jail? [He had been blamed for something he didn't do.]*

**Picture 2**

Tell the children: One of Pharaoh's dreams was about seven fat cows that ate seven skinny cows. The other was about seven big heads of grain that ate seven smaller ones.

Read the caption: Joseph listened. He told Pharaoh that on his own, he couldn't explain these dreams. But God could help him do it.

- *Look at the picture. How does Pharaoh look? [Worried and confused.]*
- *Have you ever been bothered by strange dreams, as Pharaoh was? What helped you to feel better? [Praying to God, talking to someone about it, remembering it was just a dream, etc.]*

**Picture 3**

Tell the children: Joseph turned to God to help him understand Pharaoh's dreams. And sure enough, God told Joseph what to do.

Read the caption: Joseph said that both dreams meant the same thing. There would be seven years of plenty. Then, seven years of hunger.

- *Look at the picture. How is Pharaoh reacting to Joseph's words? [Pharaoh seems to be listening carefully and looks relieved to have an answer.]*
- *What do you see in the background that tells us where Pharaoh lives? [Pyramids. Pharaoh was the king of Egypt, which has lots of pyramids.]*

**Picture 4**

Tell the children: Joseph suggested that Pharaoh choose a wise person to help him store up enough grain for the years of hunger. Pharaoh was impressed.

Read the caption: Pharaoh chose Joseph to be a ruler over Egypt. Because of this, there was enough food for all when the bad years came.

- *Look at the picture. Where is Joseph? What is he doing? [He is sitting, dressed in Egyptian clothes, and giving directions about what to do with the grain.]*
- *What can people do with grain? [Grain can be cooked as a cereal, ground into flour for bread, or even used in salads. Grain is very nutritious.]*

Remember today's message: **God Tells Us What to Do!**

f. Bible Story Rhyme (optional)

The Bible Story Rhyme below is the same one found on the Upper Elementary Student sheet. The teacher can read the beginning of the line and see if the children can finish the last rhyming word of the phrase.

*The Pharaoh had some scary dreams.
He asked about what they could mean.
They brought in Joseph to explain
secrets only God could name.*

*Seven fat cows, Pharaoh saw,
but seven thin cows ate them all;
seven heads of grain were plump,
but seven thin heads ate them up.*

*Joseph told him, "These are years —
the good and bad that will appear."
The king made Joseph governor
to make sure food was kept in store.*

h. Young Children's Craft (optional)

Simple in-class craft activities may be completed by the children if there is time left at the end of class.

Watercolor Dreamscapes

Materials Needed: Heavy white paper, pencils, permanent markers, water color paints, paintbrushes, cups of water.

Instructions: Give each student a piece of heavy white paper, a pencil, markers, a paintbrush, a cup of water, and close access to watercolor paints.

Ask kids to think of an odd or funny dream they have had. Invite them to draw images from that dream (in pencil) all around the paper. When they have enough of these, they can trace over the pencil drawings with markers. Then, to give the picture a "dream-like" haze, have them wet a paintbrush with water, dip it into the watercolor paint, and thinly paint all around their drawn images. If the marker lines blur a little, that's okay, as it will give a fuzzy, dreamy look to the picture.

Invite volunteers to show their picture and tell the class about their strange dream. Afterwards, ask the class what they do if they are woken up in the night by a dream. Explain that the next time this happens, they can remember Pharaoh and know that they aren't the first to experience this. They can also remember what helped Pharaoh: turning to God. Anytime we are scared or upset, we need only pray. God never slumbers or sleeps and is an ever-present source of help.



h. Song (optional)

The tune of this classic sung table grace can be heard on YouTube, Vimeo, or online children's music sites. Try to listen to it as a round so you get an idea of how to sing it that way.

It is typically sung before a meal, and works well with today's story since God provided daily food and kept the Egyptians from starving during a famine.

For Health and Strength

For health and strength * and daily food we praise your name, Oh Lord.

To sing as a round: Divide the class into two groups. Group 1 begins singing the song with you (the teacher). Group 2 will start singing "For health and strength..." at the asterisk, as Group 1 sings the word "and."

(It helps if another adult or older student can lead the second group so they know when to begin.)

i. Story Review: Then What Happened?

Then What Happened is a learning game that helps kids retell the story and remember the flow of events. The teacher reads the starting sentence and then chooses a student to continue the story. There are two rules: each student may only add one sentence or say one new thing, and events in the story need to be in the right order.

► **Start: Pharaoh was upset by his dreams. He didn't understand what they meant or know what to do. Then what happened?**

If the younger kids have trouble, cut a Take-Home Page into four pieces (with no words) and let the kids put the illustrations in order while they tell the story.

j. Closing Prayer

Send the children home with the Take-Home Page, and tell them to ask their parents to read the story to them again (or, perhaps, they can read it to their parents).

End class with this closing prayer, repeated each week for memorization.

For all our friends, and family too,

Please bless them, Lord, in all they do.

Thank you for helping us today

So we could learn and grow and play.

Be with us as we leave again.

And bring us back next time. Amen.