

Story: **Joseph, Jacob's Son**
Background Scripture : **Genesis 37-50**

YOU WILL NEED: Signs that say: *Joseph, Cupbearer, Baker, Pharaoh*; Enough small Tootsie Rolls for each student to get two; One large Tootsie Roll per class.

Joseph, Jacob's Son

SAY: Today we will learn about a man who had courage and trusted God even though bad things kept happening to him. He also loved his brothers who treated him terribly.

Tell your students that you have a treat for all of them. Then pass out a small Tootsie roll to each student. However, give the last student a large tootsie roll.

Ask the students—Do you think this is fair—that he gets a big tootsie roll and all of you get a small one? (No.)

Ask the students—What if this happened all the time—How would you feel?
(Jealous. Angry. Cheated, Etc.)

To be fair, give all the students with a small tootsie roll another small one but tell them to remember how they felt when they got a small one and someone else got a big one.

SAY: Today we are going to learn about a man named Joseph. This *isn't* the Joseph who was Jesus' earthly dad. This Joseph lived almost two thousand years before Jesus was born.

Show in your Bible where Genesis with today's story of Joseph is found and then show them where the Gospels are with the story of Mary and Joseph. Show them how much space is between the two. Help them to understand that these are two totally separate characters. Also, show them where these stories are found on the Bible Book Chart.

SAY: Joseph is Jacob's son and although Jacob had other children, Joseph was his favorite, which made his brothers jealous.

Ask the students—What does it mean to be jealous?

SAY: It's like the Tootsie rolls—How did you feel when it looked like someone was getting treated better than you. That's how Joseph's brothers felt. So they decided to get rid of Joseph.

Choose 1 volunteers—Give him the Joseph sign.

SAY: To get rid of Joseph, his brothers threw him down in a well. Then they saw a group of traders from another country, so they sold Joseph to them as a slave. Then his brothers took his robe, put animal blood on it and took it to Jacob, their dad, and told him that an animal must have killed Joseph.

Ask the students—**How would you have felt if you were Joseph?**

Re-locate your class to a different part of the room or change the direction their chairs are facing.

SAY: You're no longer in the promised land (or Canaan) where God had sent Abraham. Now you're in Egypt. This is where the traders took Joseph and sold him to a man named Potiphar. (*Have all the kids say, "Potiphar."—It's a fun word!*) Joseph served Potiphar well and Potiphar liked Joseph, but one day Potiphar's wife tried to get Joseph to do something wrong and when he wouldn't do it, she told lies to her husband. As a result Potiphar sent Joseph to prison.

Ask the students—**Now how would you feel if you were Joseph—your brothers threw you in a well, sold you as a slave, and now, because you did what was right, you've been lied about and sent to prison?**

Re-locate your class to a different part of the room or change the direction their chairs are facing.

SAY: Joseph was still in Egypt but now he was in prison but he continued to trust God and God blessed him. Eventually the warden (the man in charge of the prison) put him in charge of all the prisoners. Then one day Pharaoh, the Egyptian king, became angry with two of his servants—his chief cupbearer and his chief baker. (*Give the Cupbearer and the Baker signs to two volunteers.*) He sent them both to the prison where Joseph was.

SAY: One night both the cupbearer and the baker had dreams. Later when Joseph came, he noticed that they both looked bothered. So he asked, "Why are your faces so sad today?" (*Have Joseph repeat this after you.*) Then they told him about the dreams they had and that they didn't understand what they meant. But God gave Joseph the ability to understand them and he explained to them what their dreams meant.

SAY: Two years later Pharaoh had a dream. (Choose a *Pharaoh* volunteer.) He called all the wise men together but no one could figure out its meaning. Then the cupbearer, who had been released from prison, remembered and told Pharaoh about Joseph and how he had understood the dreams in prison. Pharaoh called for Joseph and God showed him the meaning of the dream. It was a warning that they were going to have seven good years with plenty of food followed by seven years of famine, which means that there wouldn't be enough food.

Ask the students—**What would you suggest that the king do if you knew seven years were coming with plenty of food followed by seven years with very little food?**

SAY: Joseph suggested that they collect enough food during the good years so they would have enough food during the hard times. Pharaoh liked his idea and put him in

charge of it, which meant that Joseph was now the second most important man in all of Egypt.

Ask the students—**If someone had treated you wrong like Joseph’s brothers or Potiphar’s wife and you suddenly became very powerful, would you try to get even with them? What do you think Joseph did?** (He didn’t try to get even with them. He continued to trust and obey God.)

Re-locate your class to a different part of the room or change the direction their chairs are facing.

SAY: More than seven years had passed. Joseph had collect plenty of food to help the country during the hard years and even people from other countries were coming to get help from him—among these people were his brothers but so many years had passed that they didn’t even recognize him.

Ask the students—**Do you think Joseph treated them badly because of what they had done to him?** (No. He helped them and Pharaoh brought his whole family down to Egypt and gave them the best lands.)

SAY: Joseph had courage and trusted God even though bad things kept happening. He also treated his brothers kindly even though they had treated him terribly. Listen to what he said to them, “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).

SAY: Because Jesus loves us we can also love others, even when they treat us badly.