

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Genesis

JOSEPH THE DREAMER

Genesis 37

Elementary Lesson

Year One, Quarter Two, Lesson Four

[0160]

AIM: to use the story of Joseph to teach my students to dream big for themselves.

OBJECTS TO HAVE: 2 runners
 A racetrack
 A Finish line
 A trophy
 Joseph in his coat of many colors
 Your Bible

POINT OF CONTACT: How many of you have ever seen people run a race before? It's really exciting, isn't it? Today I want us to pretend that we are going to watch two people run a race. Here is the first runner. Let's suppose we could talk to this runner. Let's ask runner number one a question. "Runner number one, how many times do you have to run around the track in order to finish the race?" And runner number one says (in a goofy voice), "Oh, I don't know, I guess three or four times."

So then we say, "How do you know when you have finished the race?" And runner number one says, "Oh, I don't know, I guess somebody will let me know when I've run far enough."

So then we ask him, "What will you get if you win the race?" And runner number one says, "I'm not real sure. Maybe a cookie or something."

Then we meet this runner. This is runner number two. "Runner number two, how many times do you have to run around the track in order to finish the race?" And right away he says, "Four."

Then we ask runner number two, "How do you know when you have finished the race?" And runner number two says, "See that line down there? That's the Finish line. I will win when I have crossed the Finish line."

Then we ask runner number two, "And what will you get if you win the race?" And runner number two says, "That big trophy over there."

Now let me ask you a question: Which of these two runners has a better chance to win the race, just from what they told us? That's right, runner number two. Why? Because he knows where he is going, he knows how to get there, and he knows what he will win if he gets there first. You see, runner number two has spent some time thinking about winning the race; but runner number one has not. Runner number two has a **dream**, a **dream** of winning the race; runner number one hasn't really thought about it.

Of course, it takes much more than just a **dream** to win the race. You must exercise, eat right and practice. But you will exercise more, eat better and practice harder if you have a **dream** about winning the race.

Just like those runners, you and I need to be prepared for life. We need to know where the Finish line is, and what it takes to get there. We need to have a **dream** for our lives.

Today I am going to tell you about a young man who had a **dream** for his life. That **dream** caused some problems for him; but that **dream** also caused him to make a difference for his entire family.

STORY: For several weeks we have been talking about Jacob. After Jacob had worked for his father-in-law Laban for 20 years, God led Jacob back home to the land of Canaan. Jacob had many children. Twelve of Jacob's children were boys. Jacob's eleventh son was named *Joseph*.

Of all of Jacob's twelve sons, Jacob loved Joseph the most. Joseph was Jacob's favorite. Jacob loved Joseph so much that he made for him a very special coat. That coat was made of many different colors of thread. It was so colorful that people called it, "Joseph's coat of many colors." Whenever people saw Joseph in that coat they were reminded that Joseph was his father's favorite.

But there was something else that set Joseph apart, besides his coat of many colors, and besides the fact that he was his father's favorite. What set Joseph apart was that Joseph had **dreamed** some **dreams** that he was going to do big

things with his life. Joseph **dreamed** one night that he was out working in the field. He **dreamt** that he was out working in the field with his brothers, binding up bundles of wheat. All of a sudden, his brother's bundles of wheat bowed down before his own bundle of wheat. Joseph understood that to mean that God was going to use him to be an important leader, that God was going to make him a leader even over his older brothers.

Another night, Joseph **dreamt** that the sun and the moon and the eleven stars bowed down to him. Joseph understood that to mean that he was going to be such a leader that his whole family would one day be under his leadership, even his mother and his father.

Now, Joseph was not prideful about his **dreams**. But he did get very excited to think that God was going to use him greatly some day. Every day, all Joseph could think about was his **dream** to do something big for God.

Joseph told his brothers about his **dream**. Of course, they were not as excited about Joseph's **dream** as Joseph was. But one thing is for sure: everybody who knew Joseph knew that he had big **dreams** for his life. In fact, when Joseph walked down the street, people would say, "Here comes the **dreamer!**"

Kids, it is natural for us to **dream** about what God could use us to do some day. But sometimes we are afraid to **dream** big for ourselves. Maybe we think that we are not good enough to do big things with our lives. Maybe we think that only other people get to do big, exciting things with their lives. But the fact is, we should not be afraid to **dream** big for ourselves. We should **dream** about doing big things some day. We should **dream** about being successful. We should **dream** about making a difference in the world.

Every little boy ought to **dream** about growing up, being a husband and a daddy, driving a car, working hard at a job that he loves, and making a difference in the world. Every little girl ought to **dream** about growing up, getting married, being a wife and a mommy, working hard, having a happy home, and making a difference in the world. You don't have to settle for failure. You should not set your sights on "average" or "normal." You should not think small for yourself or for your life. You ought to **dream** and **dream** big.

Now, there are few lessons that we can learn from Joseph about **dreaming** big **dreams**.

First of all, **don't be afraid to tell the people** you love that you have a dream to do big things for God. Joseph was so excited that he told his whole family. Some made fun of him, but some took Joseph's dreams very seriously. Don't ever brag, or think that you are better or more important than someone else; but don't be afraid to tell the people you know, "I'm going to do big things when I grow up." It is not unusual for grown-ups to ask kids, "What are you going to be when you grow up?" They are not asking you to make your final decision right then and there! They are asking you, "What do you dream of doing with your life?" You ought to be able to answer that question with something big.

Second, **make sure you give your dreams to God**. Tell God what you dream of doing, but say, "Now God, I want to do what YOU want me to do with my life." God will either take you to your dream, or God will take you to something that is even bigger and better than what you dream. Always be sure to let God be in control of your dream.

Third, **don't expect everybody to believe your dreams**. Some people will laugh at you. Some people will try to discourage you. But you just keep believing in your dreams. People will say things that will make you think that maybe your dreams are too big, like maybe you shouldn't aim so high. But you just keep your eyes on your dream.

Fourth, **your dreams may take a long time to be fulfilled**. Joseph waited many, many years to see his dreams fulfilled. But God did fulfill Joseph's dreams, and God used Joseph greatly.

Finally, **let your dreams push you forward when things go wrong**. The road ahead was not easy for Joseph, as we will learn next Sunday. But Joseph did not quit. Joseph kept a good attitude. Joseph kept on working hard. Why? Because he believed in the dream that God had put in his heart.

Dream and dream big for yourself. Then trust God to take you to those dreams that He has given you.

Let's learn our memory verse. **Matthew 7:7 - Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.**

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Teen and Adult Lesson

Year One, Quarter Two, Lesson Four

[0160]

Teacher, choose one of the following truths to expand upon in teaching this portion of Scripture to your teen/adult class. Teach and apply the truth that you choose using statements and illustrations that are most helpful and applicable to your students.

- I. **YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID TO DREAM BIG FOR THEMSELVES.** God makes it clear throughout his Word that He wants His people to dream big, ask big, and do big. Psalm 81:10 - *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.* Jeremiah 33:3 – *I will...shew thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not.* Daniel 11:32 – *The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.* Ephesians 3:20 - *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,*
- II. **WE OUGHT TO ENCOURAGE THE YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER OUR INFLUENCE TO DREAM BIG FOR THEMSELVES.** Children will learn to have a spirit of faith and ambition by seeing it in us. Adults who dare will produce children who dare. If there are any risks or dangers in dreaming big, they are far smaller and fewer than the risks of not dreaming big. We ought to encourage and challenge young people to dream big and expect big things from God.
- III. **WE SHOULD TAKE SERIOUSLY THE DREAMS OF YOUNG PEOPLE, WHILE KEEPING THEM FOCUSED ON THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES.** 37:10-11. Jacob tempered Joseph's dreams, but he did not discourage him from having dreams. Jacob helped to keep his son in check. While others were angered by Joseph's dreams, Jacob paid attention to his dreams; he took them seriously. We must keep our children grounded; but we must also be careful not to quench their ambition, not to steal their hope. When a child dreams of becoming president, of curing cancer, of going to the moon, or any other great ambition, the adults in their lives ought to encourage their dreams, while kindly reminding them that it is going to take a great deal of focus and hard work to get them there.
- IV. **PURSUING A GOD-GIVEN DREAM WILL LEAD YOU INTO TROUBLE, BUT DON'T LET THE TROUBLE STOP YOU.** Joseph's dreams brought him to heartache and testing, but that was all a part of realizing his dreams. Pursuing your dreams will lead you down some rocky roads, but in the end, those rocky roads will take you to far greater destinations than the dead end of not dreaming at all.
- V. **HAVING A FAVORITE SON OR DAUGHTER WILL CAUSE TROUBLE FOR THAT SON OR DAUGHTER.** Jacob let it be known that Joseph was his favorite son. 37:3. But ultimately this brought sorrow to Joseph. 37:4. The wise parent will not have a favorite child, but will treat all of his children fairly and love them equally.

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God is Preparing Joseph to be Greatly Used

I. GENESIS 37:1-11 Joseph and His Dreams

1-4 Joseph's brothers hate him because he is his father's favorite

5-8 Joseph's brothers hate him because of his dreams

9-11 Jacob rebukes Joseph, yet respects his dreams

II. GENESIS 37:12-28 Joseph and His Brothers

12-17 Joseph is sent to check on his brothers

18-24 Joseph's brothers conspire against him

25-28 Joseph's brothers sell him to strangers

III. GENESIS 37:29-36 Jacob and His Heartbreak

29-33 Joseph's brothers lie to Jacob

34-35 Jacob mourns for Joseph

36 Joseph is sold as a servant in Egypt

Matthew 7:7

*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find;
knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

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Unscramble the key words and phrases from today's Bible lesson.

BACOJ _____

WVEELT NOSS _____

RAFEVOIT _____

TOCA FO AMNY _____
SCOOLR _____

SMEARD _____

SLENDUB FO _____
THAWE _____

UNS _____

NOMO _____

ARTSS _____

READEL _____

*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find;
knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

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The answers to today's puzzle

BACQJ

J A C O B

WVEELT NOSS

T W E L V E S O N S

RAFEVOIT

F A V O R I T E

TOCA FO AMNY
SCOOLR

C O A T O F M A N Y

C O L O R S

SMEARD

D R E A M S

SLENDUB FO
THAWE

B U N D L E S O F

W H E A T

UNS

S U N

NOMO

M O O N

ARTSS

S T A R S

READEL

L E A D E R