

7

In Pit, Prison, or Palace

Service
We serve God despite difficulties.

POWER TEXT

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:35-37).

KEY REFERENCES

- Genesis 39-41
- *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chap. 20, pp. 213-223
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 2, pp. 40-46; pp. 51-60
- Student story on page 82 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 11, Growing in Christ
- No. 21, Stewardship
- No. 17, Spiritual Gifts and Ministries

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** God leads them in spite of Satan's obstacles.
- **Feel** God is stronger than Satan.
- **Respond** by choosing to serve wherever God leads.

POWERPOINT

God blesses when we serve Him in spite of Satan's obstacles.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

God has a plan for Joseph; however, Satan constantly tries to obstruct the plan. Joseph experiences many difficulties. He is sold by his own brothers, falsely accused of immorality, and put in prison. Through each of these difficult experiences Joseph trusts in God. God is able to bless him as a slave and as a prisoner, and uses each situation, however negative, to prepare Joseph for the special work He wants him to do.

This is a lesson about service.

Joseph served God regardless of the circumstances. God honored Joseph's service and used each of Satan's stumbling blocks as a building block to further His plan. God is stronger than Satan is and will bless our faithful service.

Teacher Enrichment

"The marked prosperity which attended everything placed under Joseph's care was not the result of a direct miracle; but his industry, care, and energy were crowned with the divine blessing. Joseph attributed his success to the favor of God, and even his idolatrous master accepted this as the secret of his unparalled prosperity. Without steadfast, well-directed effort, however, success could never have been attained. God was glorified by the faithfulness of His servant. It was His purpose that in purity and uprightness the believer in God should appear in marked contrast to the worshipers of idols—that thus the light of heavenly grace might shine forth amid the darkness of heathenism" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 214).

Do I give undivided service to God? Do I trust completely that His grace will give me strength for each new day? Is God glorified by my faithfulness?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson. Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at the door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. Standing Up* *B. A Picture of Life*	solid-color plates, bag of rice, tables, chairs
* Prayer & Praise	15-20	See page 77. Prayer & Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, offering container, paper, pencils, scissors
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	 Bibles, two volunteers, crumpled balls of paper Bibles, paper, pencils, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (optional)
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Serving Anyway*	white/chalkboard, markers/chalk, resource book with service ideas (optional)
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Knowing the Difference*	photocopies of the Serenity Prayer (p. 151), newsprint or butcher paper, tape, markers
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments B. Reminder to Parents C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

Standing Up

Have students form pairs and work with a partner on this activity. Each team will need to place a chair with its back against the wall so it does not slide easily. One person in each team will sit on a chair with their feet flat on the floor. The second person on the team will remain standing and will press with their index finger against their partner's forehead while the person who is seated will try to rise to their feet.

Debriefing

Ask: **Why did you find this activity difficult?** (We could not stand up.) Explain to students that their center of mass was over the chair not over their feet. Say: **Satan often brings obstacles our way so we often face challenges in our Christian walk. Let's say our power text, Romans 8:35-37:**

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:35-37).

Let's remember that

God blesses when we serve Him in spite of Satan's obstacles.

(Adapted from *"Fun With Gravity and Center of Mass."* Retrieved from http://www.csr.utexas.edu/grace/education/activities/pdf/Fun_Gravity.pdf.)

B

YOU NEED:

- ☐ plates
- ☐ bag of rice
- ☐ tables
- ☐ chairs

A Picture of Life

Set up tables and chairs, and form pairs. Have partners sit across from each other at a table. Then give each pair a plate and a handful of rice. Say: **I'm going to assign each pair an item to illustrate using the rice, such as a house with a dog in the yard, an airplane with clouds, or a person holding a balloon. You'll create your illustration by placing the rice, one grain at a time, onto your plate. If you pick up more than one grain of rice at a time, you'll have to start over.**

Make the suggestions difficult, yet not impossible, for students to complete. Then have them begin their work. After a minute or so, interrupt them and say: **One more thing . . . at times the table will shake, which might mess up your work. Be prepared.**

During the next few minutes, watch to see that students follow your instructions. Bump or gently push the tables as you pass by them from time to time. It's OK if students try to save their creations by picking their plates up off the table.

Allow time for students to attempt their illustrations; then have them show what they've done. Ask: **What was it like to work on this project? Did you ever feel like giving up? When have you felt like that in life? How can we overcome what Satan does to us?** Say: **Let's say our power text, Romans 8:35-37:**

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:35-37).

Our power point is:

God blesses when we serve Him in spite of Satan's obstacles.

(Adapted from *No-Miss Lessons for PreTeen Kids* [Loveland, Colo.: Group Publishing, 1997], p. 84. Used by permission.)

Prayer & Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Humble Thyself" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 81)
"Heavenly Father" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 34)
"Seek Ye First" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 83)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use *Adventist Mission for Youth and Adults* (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION), or another mission report available to you. Using a world map, have the students identify and mark with pushpins the location where the mission story is taking place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ offering container

Say: **We are all asked to serve in different ways. One way we all can serve is by giving our offerings to help others.**

Prayer

YOU NEED:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils
- ☐ scissors

Say: **Last week we committed our hands in service to God. This week I would like you to outline your foot on sheets of paper. On one side, write a request, and on the other, write something you can do with your feet to serve God.** Put the feet with the commitment side out beside the hands from last week. Pray for the requests. Close with a prayer of commitment as well as for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

Notes

2

BIBLE LESSON

Introducing the Bible Story

Ask the following questions:

A. **Have you ever experienced a teacher or adult showing favoritism to someone? How did it feel?**

B. **Have you ever been separated from your parents/family for at least one week/one month/one year? How did you feel?**

C. **Have you ever been falsely accused or felt that everyone and everything were against you? Describe your feelings.**

Say: **In our lesson today Joseph experienced all these things. And yet he decided to persevere and serve God in spite of Satan's obstacles.**

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ crumpled balls of paper
- ☐ two volunteers

Experiencing the Story

Ask students to find Genesis 39-41 in their Bibles. Review with them briefly the obstacles Joseph had faced as he tried to serve God.

Ask two volunteers to leave the class, and after they leave, instruct them silently to do the following short role-play: One of them will enter the class first and as directed by you will start picking up crumpled pieces of paper that you have placed in a certain part of the class prior to Sabbath School. This student will follow your directions. Then the other student will enter the class and move toward the one who is doing the cleanup. He/she will address the helper, saying: "Look at the mess you've made! I will tell your parents." While the first student will protest, saying that he/she is actually helping clean up the mess, the other student will continue accusing him/her until you intervene.

Debriefing

Ask: **What do you think were the feelings of the student who helped when he/she was unfairly accused? How do you think Joseph felt when he was sold into slavery by his own brothers and accused unjustly in Potiphar's house in spite of being innocent? What helped Joseph continue to serve faithfully in every situation despite the challenges he was facing?**

Ask two or three students to share an experience when they were glad God had sent His Comforter to be with them through a difficult experience. Ask: **How will remembering these things change the way you respond in the next difficult time?** Say: **Remember:**

God blesses when we serve Him in spite of Satan's obstacles.

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils
- ☐ *Patriarchs and Prophets* (optional)

Exploring the Bible

Say: **Find a partner.** (Allow time.) **I am going to read several questions and Bible texts where you can find the answer. You write down all the facts, and then we'll see who can tell us the answer to this question: How many years was Joseph separated from his family?**

1. How old was Joseph when his brothers sold him into slavery? (Genesis 37:2 [17])
2. How much time did Joseph spend in prison? (Genesis 40:1; 41:1 [at least two years])
3. How old was Joseph when Pharaoh made him second in command in all of Egypt? (Genesis 41:46 [30])
4. How many years of plenty were there? (Genesis 41:28-30 [7])
5. How many years of famine had passed when Joseph's brothers first came to Egypt to buy food? (Genesis 45:6 [2])

To solve the puzzle, subtract how old Joseph was when he left home from how old he was when his brothers came to Egypt. (Answer: 22 years)

Debriefing

Ask: **When have you spent time away from home? What's the longest amount of time you've been apart from your family? How might it feel to be separated from someone you love for 22 years? Let's say our power text, Romans 8:35-37:**

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:35-37).

Just remember our power point:

God blesses when we serve Him in spite of Satan's obstacles.

YOU NEED:
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk
- ☐ resource book with service ideas (optional)

Serving Anyway

Lead your students in a discussion of obstacles they may perceive in their lives that might keep them from serving others effectively (point out that these may not be caused by Satan, but may be just circumstances of life). They may list things such as their age, their lack of income, parental restrictions on their time away from home, their lack of training, etc. Where everyone can see, make a list headed "My Obstacles to Service."

Ask: **What obstacles to serving others might Joseph have felt he had?** (He was young. A slave. No special training. In prison. Forgotten by the butler.) **What did Joseph do instead of giving up?** (He served Potiphar well, learned how to do things better, did his best even though he was a slave. Made others more comfortable in prison. Organized things for others.)

Make another heading, "Ways I Can Serve," next to the first heading. Discuss with your students ways they can serve others even with their perceived obstacles. Try to obtain a book with service ideas for young people (such as *Who Cares?* by Linnea Torkelsen, available from AdventSource, 1-800-328-0525).

Some ideas might include: organizing a social event for people not usually included in that type of activity, fixing things for older people or children, reading to older people or children, taking younger children on a walk or bike ride when their parents are busy, volunteering time to community services, performing a skit or puppet show for mentally or physically disabled persons in your community, tutoring younger children in reading or math, buying a garden tool to use and then leave for an older person.

Help your students make plans to help someone and participate in a service activity as soon as they have the opportunity. Say: **Remember:**

God blesses when we serve Him in spite of Satan's obstacles.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:

- ☐ photocopies of the Serenity Prayer (p. 151)
- ☐ newsprint OR butcher paper
- ☐ tape
- ☐ markers

Knowing the Difference

Ask students to share if they had the opportunity to follow Jesus' example by serving someone during the past week.

Ask: **How did Jesus' life of service inspire you to do something special to help someone? What acts of kindness did you do to show someone that you care?**

Photocopy and distribute the "Serenity Prayer" handout (p. 151).

Say: **Some of you may have heard the first part of this prayer, but many of you may not have heard the whole thing. This is one person's idea of how to live as Joseph did, making the best of the opportunities he had to serve and live for God, and leaving God to take care of the obstacles that Satan was continually putting in his way.**

Read the prayer aloud together.

Have students form groups of three or four. Distribute to them large sheets of paper and pencils. Have each person in the group trace around one of their hands on the large sheet of paper. (There will be three or four hand outlines on the finished product for each group.) Next, have learners write in their own hand outlines ways they can serve others or "change the things they can" in their daily lives. Tape their handiworks to the wall as a reminder.

Say: **Remember:**

God blesses when we serve Him in spite of Satan's obstacles.

(Adapted from *Last Impressions: Unforgettable Closings for Youth Meetings* [Loveland, Colo.: Group Publishing, 1996], p. 72. Used by permission.)

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Ask God to help each of your students understand the difference they can make in their world by serving in spite of the unfavorable circumstances they may be facing.

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **God called Moses to lead Israel. God also calls us to use the talents He gives us in His service.**

Notes

Student lesson

In Pit, Prison, or Palace

Imagine how you would feel if someone took you away from your family. There was no time to say goodbye, no time to take anything you needed and wanted for the journey. You believed you would never see them again. How would you feel?

Today my life abruptly changed once again. Most people take transition slowly and gradually; not me! Change drops in on me like a blinding flash and without warning. I've learned that God is the only constant in my life.

Let me tell you what I mean. Let's start at the first jolting change. Miles from home and safety, my angry, jealous brothers threw me into an empty, unused cistern.

Originally planning to kill me, instead they sold me to an Ishmaelite caravan on its way to Egypt. I pleaded with them to have mercy, but their sneering faces held out no hope as they handed me over to the Ishmaelites.

In one instant I was no longer my father's favored son—I was a slave! I watched the familiar countryside fade from my view. I had to decide how I was going to react to all this. I remembered the stories my father had told me about God—his God.

I decided I would claim Him as my God. I would rely completely on God and serve Him to the best of my ability, whatever happened to me. After making that decision, I was able to get a little sleep.

In Egypt I was sold to Potiphar, captain of the guard. Even though I was only 17 then, the Lord blessed me, and for 10 years I served Potiphar well. Everything prospered, and he treated me like a son rather than a slave. I valued his trust in me.

But once again my life changed in an instant. Because Potiphar's wife raised false accusations against me, I went from favored slave to prisoner in a dungeon. At first I felt humiliated to receive the punishment due to criminals, because I was innocent.

But then I remembered my father's stories and how I had promised to serve God no matter what happened. I had chosen integrity as a rule of life, and in spite of the challenges I was facing, I knew I could trust the God of my fathers to fulfill His promises in my life.

So even in a dungeon I looked around for others to serve. I began organizing the prison and encouraging the prisoners. Eventually the guards put me in charge.

I'll always remember when Pharaoh's butler and baker were thrown into the prison. They both had dreams and asked me to interpret them. Unfortunately, the baker was going to be beheaded, but the butler was going to get his job back. I asked him to remember me when he would return to the palace.

Two years later I was still in prison. I had my thirtieth birthday and wondered how many more birthdays I would spend there. But one day I saw the sunshine again. I was whisked into the royal salon and given a bath, a shave, a haircut, and new clothes. Then I was taken before Pharaoh.

It seems Pharaoh had had a troubling dream. Once again God was giving me an opportunity to serve someone who needed help understanding what God was trying to communicate to him. I told Pharaoh about the years of plenty and the years of famine that were just ahead.

I told him that in order to survive the famine, he should choose a wise man to oversee the collection, storage, and later distribution of one fifth of the food grown during the years of plenty.

After consulting with his advisers, Pharaoh chose me to be that man. "You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you. . . . I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt," he said (Genesis 41:40, 41). Then he gave me his signet ring, a robe, a chariot, and even a wife—the beautiful Asenath.

In one day I went from favored prisoner to Zaphenath-Paneah, ruler of Egypt next to Pharaoh. I knew I did not deserve such great favor. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was once again at work in my life. This time He was calling me to serve Him at the palace.

God was entrusting me with the responsibility of preparing a nation for a time of crisis. What an honor it was to serve my God in a new field of responsibility! God had been with me from the pit to the prison to the palace. I determined to continue serving Him faithfully for the rest of my life!

KEY REFERENCES

- Genesis 39-41
- *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chap. 20, pp. 213-223
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 2, pp. 40-46; 51-60
- Our Beliefs, nos. 11, 21, 17

POWER TEXT

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:35-37).

POWER POINT

God blesses when we serve Him in spite of Satan's obstacles.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 60.

Sunday

READ Read Genesis 41:14–16 and this week's lesson, "In Pit, Prison, or Palace."

LEARN Begin to memorize the power text.

LIST List the ways Joseph served other people.

PRAY Ask God to show you ways you can serve.

Monday

READ Read Mark 9:33–35.

LIST List the ways God helped solve Joseph's problems.

THINK How did Joseph's willingness to serve provide solutions to many of his problems?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to bring solutions to your problems.

Tuesday

READ Read Matthew 20:25–28.

LIST List some characteristics of a servant that you think Jesus was talking about.

THINK How can I follow Jesus' example of self-sacrificial service as I seek to serve someone today?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God for the patience to be kind and considerate when you serve your brothers and sisters.

Wednesday

READ Read Galatians 6:2 and Romans 15:1.

THINK What does it mean to carry one another's burdens?

LIST List ways you can help carry the burdens of someone in your family and someone you know at school.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask for strength to carry someone's burden today.

Thursday

READ Read Genesis 41:37–39.

THINK What impressed Pharaoh most in Joseph's life?

IMAGINE Imagine that you are a reporter. In your Bible study journal, write an imaginary interview with Joseph.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God not to allow anything to separate you from Him.

Friday

READ Read 1 Peter 4:12, 13.

REMEMBER Keep in mind that God blesses when we serve in spite of Satan's obstacles.

ACT Act out the story of Joseph with your family members at worship.

PLAN Discuss a way that you as a family can serve those around you, no matter how difficult the circumstances.

SING Make up a verse to "Humble Thyself in the Sight of God" or another familiar song that reflects Joseph's experience.

REPEAT Repeat the power text aloud by memory.

PRAY Thank God that He blesses your service in spite of Satan's obstacles.