

TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Down in a Hole

Joseph Sold by Brothers
and Joseph in Jail
Genesis 37, 39–40

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What helps people
get through hard things?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Hold on because God is with you.

HOST SUPPLIES

- Four kid volunteers
- Two prepared carabiner balls (see "What You Do")

STORY SUPPLIES

- Bible
- Week 1 Timeline Image
- Clothesline and clothespins for the timeline in your room

PRELUDE: Setting the tone for the experience

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

SMALL GROUP

15
MIN

SOCIAL: Providing time for fun interaction

Just for Fun
Opening Activity

LARGE GROUP

35
MIN

STORY: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways WORSHIP: Inviting people to respond to God

Welcome/Opener
Worship ("Lift My Voice" from *Can't Stop Won't Stop*,
"The Power" from *Everything to Me*, and "Trust You With
My Heart" from *This Love*)
Bible Story (Communicator Script)
Key Question
Prayer

SMALL GROUP

25
MIN

GROUPS: Creating a safe place to connect

Application Activity: Take a Snapshot
Bible Story Review: Bible Story Review and
Discussion Questions
Memory Verse Activity: Verses to Take with You
Prayer Activity: Make it Personal with Prayer

HOME: Prompting action beyond the experience

Parent Cue Card (print or email)
Devotional for Kids
Parent Cue App

CLIFFHANGER

THE STORY
ISN'T OVER

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LARGE GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

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TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What helps people
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MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"Let us not become tired of
doing good. At the right time
we will gather a crop if we
don't give up."
Galatians 6:9, NIV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

**Grit—Refusing to give up
when life gets hard**

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

LARGE GROUP

ENGAGE KIDS' HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS STUDENTS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter

WORSHIP LEADER:

AUDIO:

AUDIO:

Host enters . . .

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN (30- OR 60-SECOND VERSION)

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME

WELCOME

Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sports game, movie opening, a viral video on YouTube, etc. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening.

OPENER

HOST: "Hey, everyone! I am so pumped for another month here at [Name of Environment]. It is time to kick the month of October off with a little challenge that will test your ability to stick with it. Does anyone know the theme this month? (Pause for responses.) That's right! All month long we will be talking about the ultimate Cliffhanger . . . the story isn't over. You're going to see all sorts of climbing and outdoor themed games and activities. This month will be quite an adventure together. And it starts with a little game I like to call Carabiner Explosion.

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SLIDE: CARABINER EXPLOSION

Taking out a carabiner.

"I have a feeling a few of you have seen one of these before. Can anyone tell me what this is? (Pause for responses) That's right! This is a carabiner. You use it for mountain climbing . . . or, you know, just for hooking your water bottle or keys to your backpack. But we have a little bit of a problem . . .

Host takes out two carabiner balls.

"Here's where the 'Explosion' part comes in. Just look at this mess! All of these carabiners got mixed up and hooked together. We need two teams of two that think they have the grit to stick with the challenge of taking this entire mess apart! Who thinks they have the grit to unhook ALL of these carabiners from each other?

Host chooses two teams of two, introduces them to the rest of the group, and gets them in position.

"Awesome! Thanks for playing! When I say go, the first team to unhook all of the carabiners in their collection wins! On your mark, get set, GO!

AUDIO: FUN GAME MUSIC

Comment on their progress and cheer them on while they work.

"(After the game) We have a winner! Awesome job, everyone. That was quite a challenge! Remind me to call you this December when I get my Christmas lights out! Now let's stand up and worship our amazing God!"

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COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: “Hey, everybody! So great to see you today. This month is all about cliffhanging adventures! If you know anything about adventure, you probably know that they come with a good amount of difficulty. And if we want to complete the adventure, we have to work through that difficulty with grit. Maybe you’ve heard the word ‘grit’ before. This month we talk about it like this: refusing to give up when life gets hard.

“When it comes to an idea like grit, sometimes it’s helpful to have an example of someone who’s really good at it. And there some amazing people who’ve conquered some serious challenges with grit. So I have a question for you. Does anybody know what an Ironman is? Oh, and I am NOT talking about the superhero . . .

Allow for responses.

“Right. So an Ironman IS a race . . . but not just ANY race but three incredibly hard races all in one. Running, biking, and swimming. You swim, get this, 2.4 miles. If that wasn’t enough, then you get out and you bike . . . wait for it . . . 112.21 miles! The race should be over at this point, right? Nope. Because as soon as you set that bike down, it is time to run a full marathon! 26.2 miles! I told you . . . this race is insane!

“Now, has anybody ever heard of James Lawrence? If you have heard of him, maybe you would recognize him better by his nickname—the Iron Cowboy.

OPTIONAL SLIDE: JAMES “THE IRON COWBOY” LAWRENCE RACING

“Why do they call him that? Well, because James didn’t complete just one Ironman or even two or three. No, he did what was called a 50/50/50. Any guesses on what that stands for?

Allow for guesses.

“Fifty Ironman races . . . in fifty days . . . in fifty states . . . back-to-back-to-back! Can you believe that?! On top of that, back in 2021, while most of the world was sheltering at home during the Coronavirus pandemic, James Lawrence decided to complete 100 full Ironman races in 100 consecutive days. A full Ironman race starts with a 3.8km swim, followed by a 180km bike ride, and if that’s not all, the race ends with a full marathon at 42.2km! And he CHOSE to do that in 100 days in a row! That’s insane, but between March 1 and June 8, 2021, Lawrence did just that. Talk about some grit!

“How difficult must have that been? How many times must he have wanted to quit? How many days must he have wanted to stay in bed but still decided to get up? But in his autobiography, The Iron Cowboy wrote this, ‘I just kept showing up.’ Yes he did! What a wild and inspiring story, but what does this have to do with anything we’re learning about from the Bible today? Great question.”

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TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: “Here are a few things to think about as we continue today. I’m sure The Iron Cowboy faced some SUPER hard moments during those fifty and then one hundred days. While we might never choose to race all of those ironman races, all of us will face some moments when we just feel like giving up. It could be as little as finishing strong at the end of the year before the holiday or something big like a move you have coming up or a parent who’s been out of work for a while. We might wonder how we can keep giving our best.

“So how do we find the grit we need when we’re exhausted by what we’re facing in life? And the truth is, even if we haven’t faced some hard times, chances are pretty high that we will. How can we be sure we’re ready when the time comes? That’s a great question. Thankfully, we don’t have to face anything in our lives on our own, God is with us. We also have some amazing people who faced some incredibly difficult times in the Bible. We can learn from how God showed up in their lives and remember that God will show up for us, too. Let’s check out one of those stories now!”

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: “A few months ago, we started a journey through God’s Big Story: The Bible. The Bible is a collection of history and letters, poetry and prophesy that come together to create an EPIC story of God’s love through Jesus. We started at the beginning, in Genesis, where God created the world. The world was good, but the people God made, Adam and Eve, chose to sin and break God’s rule, and the world became broken. While we still see moments of that original goodness that God created from time to time, sin messed everything up. God decided to rescue the world from the brokenness and pain.

“You might remember that God chose to make that plan through a man named Abraham and his family. God had made a promise to Abraham that He would bless him and make a nation out of his family. Eventually Abraham had a son named Isaac, who then had a son named Jacob. In each generation, God continued to pass down his promise to build this family into a great nation and to give them a land to call their own.

“Jacob went on to have TWELVE sons—the youngest named Joseph. That is where our story begins today.

SLIDE: TRUTH 1 - FAMILY LINE

“One day, Joseph was taking care of the flocks with some of his brothers.

SLIDE: TRUTH 2 - JACOB’S SONS

“And, well, Joseph could be a little bit of a ‘classic younger brother,’ if you know what I mean. He came back to his father and told him what his brothers were doing wrong.

“As you can imagine, there was a little tension between the brothers. Dad certainly did not help things. Look at this:”

Open the Bible to Genesis 37:3a (NIRV) and read.

“‘Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other sons.’

“Dad was playing favorites! Now, you might say, ‘Well maybe his brothers didn’t know.’ Oh, they knew.

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SLIDE: TRUTH 3 - JACOB WITH ARM AROUND JOSEPH

"And because Jacob loved Joseph more than his other sons, he made Joseph a beautiful robe . . .

SLIDE: TRUTH 4 - JOSEPH WEARING A COLORFUL ROBE

"Every time his brothers saw that robe, they were reminded that Joseph was the favorite.

Open the Bible to Genesis 37:4b (NirV) and read.

"So they hated Joseph. They couldn't even speak one kind word to him."

"One day Joseph shared something with his brothers that made things even worse.

Open the Bible to Genesis 37:5-7 (NirV) and read.

"Joseph had a dream. When he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. He said to them, 'Listen to the dream I had. We were tying up bundles of grain out in the field. Suddenly my bundle stood up straight. Your bundles gathered around my bundle and bowed down to it.'"

SLIDE: TRUTH 5 - JOSEPH'S DREAM

"As you can imagine, this did not go over so well with his brothers.

Open the Bible to Genesis 37:8 (NirV) and read.

"Do you plan to be king over us? Will you really rule over us?"

"And they hated him even more because of his dream.

"One day, Joseph's brothers had gone to take care of their father's flocks in a neighboring town, so Jacob told Joseph to go meet up with his brothers and 'check-up' on them and come back with a report. You know Joseph—he was more than willing to spy on his brothers. Eventually when Joseph found his brothers, they saw him approaching in the distance and had an idea.

SLIDE: TRUTH 6 - JOSEPH WALKING DOWN THE ROAD

Open the Bible to Genesis 37:19-20 (NirV) and read.

"Here comes that dreamer!" they said to one another. "Come. Let's kill him. Let's throw him into one of these empty wells. Let's say that a wild animal ate him up. Then we'll see whether his dreams will come true."

"Woah! Did that just happen?"

"One of the brothers, Reuben, heard the plan and tried to save Joseph. He said,

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Open the Bible to Genesis 37:22 (NirV) and read.

““Don't spill any of his blood. Throw him into this empty well here in the desert. But don't harm him yourselves.” Reuben said that to save Joseph from them. He was hoping he could take him back to his father.’

“So just as planned, along came Joseph, wearing that beautiful robe. The brothers ripped off the robe and threw Joseph into an empty well.”

SLIDE: TRUTH 7 - JOSEPH THROWN INTO CISTERN

“And then, can you believe this? They sat down and ate a meal! Well, as they were eating, they saw some Ishmaelite traders headed to Egypt. One of the brothers had an idea.

Open the Bible to Genesis 37:26-27a (NirV) and read.

““What will we gain if we kill our brother and try to cover up what we've done? Come. Let's sell him to these traders.’

“Did you hear that?! Let's not kill him . . . let's sell him?! Not a great brother, huh?

“Now, all of this has been pretty horrendous, but what happened next may be the worst part of all. The brothers took that beautiful robe they had ripped off Joseph, the one that reminded them of how Joseph was the favorite, and they dipped it in goat's blood and brought it back to their dad.

Open the Bible to Genesis 37:33 (NirV) and read.

““Jacob recognized it. He said, “It's my son's robe! A wild animal has eaten him up. Joseph must have been torn to pieces.”’

SLIDE: TRUTH 8 - JACOB REACTS

“And Jacob mourned the loss of his son deeply while the brothers kept their secret. Meanwhile, the traders arrived in Egypt and sold Joseph to Potiphar, who was one of Pharaoh's officials.

SLIDE: TRUTH 9 - JOSEPH MEETING POTIPHAR

“Joseph must have been scared. He was far away from home in a strange land. He had been betrayed by his brothers, enslaved by an Egyptian, and completely alone—or so it seemed. Joseph's story was not over . . . and he was not alone. Check this out:

Open the Bible to Genesis 39:2 (NirV) and read.

““The Lord was with Joseph. He gave him great success. Joseph lived in Potiphar's house.’

“Even when Joseph was at the bottom, when I'm sure he wanted to quit, we're reminded that even in Egypt, God was with Joseph. So in those moments when Joseph might have felt most alone, he was actually not alone at all.

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“Well, Potiphar saw that God was with Joseph and that Joseph was successful in everything he did. This certainly pleased Potiphar. He put Joseph in charge of his house and trusted Joseph to care for everything he owned.”

SLIDE: TRUTH 10 - POTIPHAR HANDING OVER THE KEYS

“From that time on, God blessed Potiphar’s family and household because of Joseph. Joseph did a great job, and Potiphar didn’t have a care in the world.

“Pretty soon, everybody was taking notice of Joseph—including Potiphar’s wife. She noticed how successful Joseph was and began to test him. She made things very difficult for Joseph. But Joseph refused to betray his master. This made Potiphar’s wife angry.

SLIDE: TRUTH 11 - ANGRY FACE OF POTIPHAR’S WIFE

“In her anger, Potiphar’s wife went to her husband and accused Joseph of doing something horrible that he did not do. Potiphar was livid! He took away Joseph’s position and had him thrown in prison.

SLIDE: TRUTH 12 - JOSEPH BEHIND BARS

“Even though Joseph had done nothing wrong, he found himself alone . . . once again.

“Now, just like in Potiphar’s house, the head jailer saw that God was with Joseph. The jailer showed kindness to him and put him in charge of the prison.”

SLIDE: TRUTH 13 - JAILER HANDING JOSEPH THE KEYS

“Joseph cared for all of the prisoners, and the Lord was with him, giving him success in everything he did.”

“Sometime later, the prison got two new prisoners. The first was the king’s baker, and the second was the king’s cupbearer.

SLIDE: TRUTH 14 - JOSEPH RECEIVING TWO NEW PRISONERS

“One night, both the baker and cupbearer had dreams—terrible dreams. Now when it says dreams, what we’re talking about were more like visions about things that would actually come true.

“Well, both men were very upset because they did not know what their dreams meant. Joseph believed that God was able to give him success in telling them what the dreams meant. And so they both recounted what they remembered.”

SLIDE: TRUTH 15 - CUPBEARER AND BAKER SHARING THEIR DREAMS

“Sure enough, God helped Joseph interpret their dreams. The cupbearer would have a great outcome. In fact, he’d be getting out of prison in three days from then! So, Joseph asked him a favor.

Open the Bible to Genesis 40:14-15 (NirV) and read.

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"But when everything is going well with you, remember me. Do me a favor. Speak to Pharaoh about me. Get me out of this prison. I was taken away from the land of the Hebrews by force. Even here I haven't done anything to be put in prison for."

"Remember me! Get me out of here! Seems only fair to ask, right?"

"The baker's dream didn't have the same positive interpretation. Let's just say he was not getting out of prison.

"Three days later, the cupbearer was released, just as Joseph interpreted. Now the third day also happened to be Pharaoh's birthday, and the cupbearer was once again standing next to Pharaoh serving him his drink. Now, remember how Joseph had asked one simple thing from the cupbearer? He asked that he would remember Joseph and tell someone to let him go. Well, sadly, the cupbearer didn't keep his promise. In fact, he completely forgot about Joseph. So, there was Joseph, all alone again."

SLIDE: TRUTH 16 - JOSEPH SITTING IN THE PRISON AGAIN

"This is pretty tough, right? Even though Joseph had been shown kindness in prison, he was still a prisoner. And when it looked like he would finally get out, he was completely forgotten and left alone. Joseph must have been really confused. I'm sure there are many times where he wanted to call it quits and give up trusting in God. But one thing we need to remember is that God was with Joseph.

SLIDE: GOD'S BIG STORY TIMELINE

SLIDE: WEEK 1 TIMELINE IMAGE

If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's timeline image on the clothesline.

"Even when Joseph didn't know it, God was been working on Joseph's behalf already. And God certainly wasn't done with Joseph yet. But we'll have to wait until NEXT week to find out what happens to Joseph!"

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: "As we start wrapping up, let me ask you something. When was God with Joseph? *(Pause for responses.)* Right! God was with Joseph at home. God was with Joseph in the well. And God was with Joseph in Egypt. And even in prison, when it looked like Joseph was all alone, God was with Joseph there, too. Through each moment of Joseph life, God was still working.

"Now, here's something you may not realize—the same is true for you! God is with you, too. God is with you at home, at school, through good times and bad times. And God is always working to help you through whatever you face. But if you're like me, you may have to remind yourself that God is with you. It might not come naturally for us to remind ourselves that God is with us. It may just be easier for us to focus on the fact that we feel alone and we just want to call it quits.

"So the next time you find yourself in a situation where you feel alone and you're not sure there is a way out—like, maybe you're walking into a new school for the first time and you don't know a single person—pray and remember that God is with you. Or maybe you are trying out for a sports team and you are really nervous because

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you don't know anyone else. Pray and remember: God is with you. AND, if you are a follower of Jesus, you are never truly alone! Jesus sent His Spirit to be with us and strengthen us. Now, that is a pretty amazing promise."

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: "Today as you go to groups, think about this question:

SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

"What helps people get through hard things?" Consider the ways in which people try to get through difficult points of life. Do they turn to their friends? Do they pray? Do they listen to music that gets them fired up to keep going? How can remembering that God is with us make a difference for how we get through these difficult moments? If you're not sure how you'd answer those questions, that's ok, too. You'll have a chance to talk more about them with your Small Group Leaders. Before we head out, let's pray and thank God for being with us and helping us show grit!"

Dismiss students to their small groups.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS THE KIDS EXIT.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP