

WEEK 1

Story Focus: God has a plan for me. We will begin week one by introducing Joseph, his brothers, and the unplanned trip he makes to Egypt. We see Joseph trusting that God has a plan for me in the way he chooses to work hard and do the right thing, even though he is far from his home and family.

WEEK 2

Story Focus: I can trust God's plan even when it's hard. Week two, we will hear about how, even though Joseph works hard and does the right thing, he is thrown in jail for something he didn't do. Was that hard for Joseph? It had to be! And yet we see Joseph trusting that God has a plan for me as he chooses to help those around him instead of feeling sorry for himself.

WEEK 3

Story Focus: God's plan has good things for me to do. Week three, we see God using Joseph to help save a nation from starvation. Because Joseph patiently waits on God and trusts that God has a plan for me, he is able to see the good things God had planned for him to do along.

WEEK 4

Story Focus: God's plan is always best. And, week four, we see Joseph's brothers make their way to Egypt to look for food. They have no idea that they are going to find so much more than food when they get there. They find a brother and forgiveness waiting on them. And, we have the privilege of seeing the end of the story—that God's way is always best.

Just as it was with Joseph, trusting in God's plan is what empowers us to keep going when things are hard. If we were to take away one part of Joseph's story and just focus on it, it would be hard to believe that God's plan is always best. But, when we put all of the parts of Joseph's story together—just as with an ice cream sundae—it gives us a sweet reminder that we can trust that God has a plan for me, and it is always best. We just have to wait until God is done putting all of the parts together.

Our hope this month is that preschoolers will begin to understand that God loves them, and He has a plan for them—a plan they can trust is always best, no matter what.

Today's Suggested Schedule—September 2020, Week 2

Today's Bible Story: I can trust God's plan, even when it's hard.

Joseph in Jail • *Genesis 39–40*

Memory Verse: “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD.” Jeremiah 29:11, NLT

Key Question: Who has a plan for you?

Bottom Line: God has a plan for me.

Basic Truth: God loves me.

10:30-11:00 SMALL GROUP (30 minutes)

SOCIAL: Providing time for fun interaction

In charge

Hard Puzzle

11:00-11:10 Clean Up

11:10-11:30 LARGE GROUP (20 minutes)

WORSHIP: Inviting people to respond to God

“Really Awesome Plan”

“God Loves Me Specially”

STORY: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

Bible Story

Memory Verse

11:30-11:50 SMALL GROUP (25 minutes)

GROUPS: Creating a safe place to connect

What Happened Next?

Moving Plans

Sundae Scoop

Prayer

11:50 Clean Up and Snack

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (30 minutes)

Activities that encourage preschoolers to enter the classroom and begin engaging with peers and Small Group Leaders by providing age appropriate and hands on fun while introducing new concepts they will hear in the day's Bible story.

Prepare to offer the following activities as your preschoolers arrive. Let one or two teachers lead activities in different areas of the room while another teacher greets parents and children at the door.

1. In Charge

What You Need: No supplies needed.

What You Do:

Before the Activity: Have the children line up in a single file line behind you.

During the Activity: Tell the children that you are "in charge," and they must follow you as the leader and mimic what you do. Lead the children around the room while marching. Choose a child to be the new leader and "in charge." Continue with the activity by allowing all of the children a turn to be "in charge."

What You Say:

Before the Activity: "Let's march around the room! I am your leader, and I am IN CHARGE! Let's Go!"

During the Activity: "Follow me. I am in charge! (*Do activity.*) Great job! Keep marching! (*Continue the activity.*) Let's have a new leader who is IN CHARGE! (*Choose a child.*) [Child's name] will be our leader now! (*Child's name*) is IN CHARGE." (*Finish activity.*)

After the Activity: "You are all awesome at being in charge! Today, we'll hear a Bible story about someone who was IN CHARGE! Our Bible story sounds so exciting! I cannot wait!"

2. Hard Puzzle

What You Need: Preschool puzzles with template boards

NOTE: Be sure the puzzles are different with different colors and shapes. If possible, try to have puzzles that are about three different subjects, for example: transportation, food, and animals.

What You Do:

Before the Activity: Remove all of the pieces from the puzzles and place them in a pile together. Place the three puzzle templates near the pile.

During the Activity: Challenge the children to work together to sort the pieces and decide what pieces go with what puzzle.

After the Activity: Encourage the children to then put the three puzzles together. Sanitize puzzles before passing to new group of children.

What You Say:

Before the Activity: “We get to play with puzzles today, but it looks like it might be a hard job! We will have to work together!”

During the Activity: “Oh, no! It looks like all of our pieces are mixed together! (*Point.*) We will have to sort the pieces before we can put our puzzles together. It looks hard, but I know we can do it!”

After the Activity: “Way to go! You did a great job! You did a hard job. We’ll hear a Bible story, today, about how God always has a plan, even if it’s hard!”

Transition: Move to Worship and Story time by naming hard things as you walk to the story area. Examples include: learning numbers, taking care of pets, cleaning your room.

LARGE GROUP (20 minutes)

WORSHIP: Inviting people to respond to God

- Play dance or music video
- “Really Awesome Plan”
- “God Loves Me Specially”

STORY: Communicating God’s truth in engaging ways

- Bible Story video
- Hand motion Memory Verse

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (25 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect through activities that are written to reach every learning style while reinforcing the Bottom Line that was introduced during the Bible Story and applying it to real life experiences. In addition, these activities provide preschoolers with an opportunity to build relationships with their Small Group Leader.

Offer as many of the following activities as your time, facilities, resources, and leadership allow. You may want to lead one activity at a time. Or, offer two activities at once and allow half the children to participate in each. Then switch groups and repeat the activities.

3. What Happened Next? - Bible Story Review

What You Need: “Big Story Pictures” and “Little Story Pictures” Activity Pages, cardstock, scissors, and smiley face stickers

What You Do:

Before the Activity: Copy “Big Story Pictures” onto cardstock, one set for the Leader. Copy “Little Story Pictures” onto cardstock and cut apart, one set per child.

During the Activity: The leader will use the “Big Story Pictures” and the children will use the “Little Story Pictures” as they put the story pictures in a row as they happened in the story.

What You Say:

Before the Activity: “Hey! I want everyone to come sit in front of me. I have something fun for us to do!”

During the Activity: “First, each of you needs your very own story cards. *(Pass out the story cards.)* Now, we’re going to put our story cards in the order they happened in the story.

(Hold up the picture where Potiphar is happy with Joseph.) “Look for this picture and lay it in front of you. This is Potiphar. He’s smiling at Joseph because Joseph always worked hard and did what Potiphar told him to do. What happened next?”

(Lay the picture down facing the children so they can see it left to right. Hold up the picture of angry Potiphar with Joseph.) “Look for this picture and lay it in front of you. This is Potiphar again, only this time he has an angry face. Someone told him that Joseph had done something wrong, even though he didn’t do anything wrong. Potiphar got mad and sent Joseph to jail! What happened next?”

(Lay the picture down beside the first picture, facing the children, so they can see it left to right. Hold up the picture of Joseph in jail.) “Now, look for this picture and lay it in front of you. This is Joseph in jail. It was a very hard time for Joseph, but he still trusted that God loved him and had a plan for him. So, instead of being mad or sad, Joseph helped everyone he could while he was in jail.

(Lay the picture down beside the second picture, facing the children, so they can see it left to right. Hold up the ‘God has a plan for me’ card.) “Okay, we have this card left. Do you see a picture? No. But it does have some very important words. This card says, **[Bottom Line] ‘God has a plan for me.’** Lay it down at the end of your row of story pictures. I have smiley face stickers for you to put on this card.”
(Give each child smiley face stickers to go around the words on their last card.)

After the Activity: “Look at your story pictures! You put them in the order that they happened in the story! Way to go! Joseph’s story shows us that we can trust God’s plan, even when it’s hard. God loves you, and He has a plan for you! **Who has a plan for you? [Bottom Line] God has a plan for me.**”

4. Moving Plans-Activity

What You Need: “Movement Cards” Activity Pages, cardstock, scissors, and timer/phone

What You Do:

Before the Activity: Copy “Movement Cards” onto cardstock and cut apart, one set per small group. Shuffle the “Movement Cards.”

During the Activity: Gather the children around your activity area. Draw a movement card from the stack and lead the group in that movement for ten seconds. Call for everyone to freeze when the ten seconds are up then select another friend to draw a card. Continue until you’ve drawn all of the cards and completed the movements.

What You Say:

Before the Activity: “Friends, come over here with me. Everyone spread out a little so you have plenty of room. I have some cards here with different movements. This is our plan to follow: I will pick a card and show us the movement, then we’ll all perform that movement for ten seconds. At the end of then seconds, I’ll say, ‘FREEZE!’ What does ‘FREEZE’ mean? (*Pause.*) That’s right, you stop and stand completely still. Then, I’ll draw another card, and we’ll keep going. Are you ready? Here we go.”

After the Activity: “Whew, that was fun—and tiring! You did a great job of following the plan on each of these cards. God has a plan for each of us, and we can always trust that His plan is the best. **Who has a plan for you? [Bottom Line] God has a plan for me.**”

5. Sundae Scoop-Craft

What You Need: “The Scoop” Activity Page, cardstock, crayons, cotton balls, red pom poms, and glue sticks

What You Do:

Before the Activity: Copy “The Scoop” onto cardstock, one per child.

During the Activity: Together, read the words on the scoops and sundae dish. Encourage children to stretch out the cotton balls a little bit and glue to the top of the ice cream for whipped cream, then glue a red pom pom to the top of the cotton for a cherry. Write child’s name on their paper.

After the Activity: Talk about how God had a plan for Joseph and God has a plan for us.

What You Say:

Before the Activity: “Friends, come sit with me. We heard another story about Joseph today and how God had a plan for him. God has a plan for you and me, too!”

During the Activity: “Look at your paper, what do you see? *(Pause.)* That’s right! It’s an ice cream sundae! Can you read the words with me? *(Point to the words on the first scoop.)* God has . . . *(point to the words on the second scoop)* a plan . . . *(point to the words on the third scoop)* for me. Under the ice cream dish, it tells you where to find our story about Joseph in the Bible. Let’s color in our ice cream. *(Pause.)* Wait! Ice cream sundaes usually have whipped cream on top of the ice cream. Do you see anything you can use for whipped cream? *(Pause.)* The cotton balls are white like whipped cream. Watch, when you pull them apart a little . . . *(demonstrate)* ta-dah! Do that, then glue it to the top of your ice cream scoops. *(Pause.)* Great! What about a cherry on top? Do you see anything you could use as a cherry? *(Pause.)* These red pom poms will work great! Glue a cherry to the top of the whipped cream. *(Pause.)* Super job!”

After the Activity: “In our story, Joseph trusted God’s plan. Joseph worked for a man named Potiphar and did whatever Potiphar told him to do. One day, somebody said Joseph did something very wrong! Joseph didn’t do it, but he was put in jail! Joseph knew God loved him. And Joseph knew God was always with him. So, even though things were hard, Joseph trusted God’s plan. We can trust God even when things are hard because God loves us, God’s with us, and God’s got a plan for us! **Who has a plan for you? [Bottom Line] God has a plan for me.**”

6. Prayer

What You Need: Paperclipped “Memory Verse Card” in Bible

SMALL GROUP LEADER (SGL): “It’s prayer time!

Okay, let’s sit down and talk about today’s Bible story. One, two, three, sit down with me! (*Open the Bible and lay it in front of the children.*)

“Things didn’t go so well for Joseph in our Bible story today. He worked hard and did the right thing, but Potiphar still put him in jail. Did Joseph give up, or did he keep trusting that God had a plan for him? (*Pause.*) Yes! Joseph trusted that God had a plan for him, even when he was in jail.

“The Bible verse we’re learning will help us remember that God has a plan for you, and **[Bottom Line] God has a plan for me**, too! It says . . . (*Turn the pages of your Bible to the Memory Verse Card.*)

“*‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ says the Lord, Jeremiah 29:11. (Close Bible and lay it down.)*

“Let’s stand up and say that together with the motions.”

CHILDREN and SGL: “*‘For I know (point to head) the plans I have for you,’ (march) says (hands to mouth like yelling) the Lord, (Point up) Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT).*” (*Open your hands like a book.*)

(*Repeat the verse with motions a few times.*)

SGL: “You sound awesome! (high fives) I want you to always remember that God loves you, and He has a plan for you. **Who has a plan for you?**”

CHILDREN and SGL: **[Bottom Line] “God has a plan for me!”**

SGL: “That’s right! And no matter what happens, you can trust that God loves you, and He has a plan for you.

“Okay, let’s sit down so we can pray and talk to God.

“Sometimes things are just hard, right? Maybe we have to clean our room or learn something new. Maybe we get really sick or we don’t get to do something we want to do.

“Today, we’re going to make a list of hard things—things that make you sad or mad, or things that you don’t like to do but you have to do. So think about it, and when I say your name, I want you to tell me one thing that is hard.”

(*Say each child’s name.*)

SGL: “Thank you for doing this. Now, let’s use the list we made when we talk to God. Would anyone like to pray before I pray?”

(Give each child who wants to pray the opportunity to do so.)

Prayer

SGL: “Dear God, thank You for *(name each child)*. I know You have a plan for each of them, because you love them. I pray they will always trust that You have a plan for them. And when hard things happen like *(read the list the children made)*, help them to wait on You, do the right thing, and trust in Your plan for them. We love You, God. In Jesus’ name, amen.”