

GOD'S COMMANDMENTS: JEALOUSY

Exodus 20:17; Genesis 37:1-11

Teachers Dig In

Dig In to the Bible

- Read:Exodus 20:17; Genesis 37:1-11
- In This Passage:God commands his people not to want other people's stuff. Joseph's brothers are jealous because their dad likes Joseph best and gives Joseph a fancy coat. Plus, Joseph brags about dreams in which his brothers bow to him.
- Bible Point:We're not jealous.
- Summary Verse:"Jesus replied, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind' " (Matthew 22:37).

Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching:*We're not jealous.* Of all the Ten Commandments, this one describes what feels most like a harmless, inward emotion...not a sin. And yet God gave this commandment because he knew the harm that can come in our own hearts when we're jealous. Plus, as in the case of Joseph's brothers, jealousy can lead to breaking other commandments, like lying or hurting others. Use this lesson to show kids the dangers of jealousy.
- Think About:When have you been really, *really* jealous? What damage did it cause to your heart? your relationships?

Dig In to Prayer

- Ask God to help kids be content with what they have.

Quick Tip

Be careful not to foster a culture of jealousy in your ministry. Statements like "Why can't you pay attention like Jayden?" or "Why didn't you bring your Bible like Cade?" promote the comparison game. When you hear kids making their own comparisons to others ("I wish I could draw as well as you..."), help kids pause and thank God for what they have

OPENING

Welcome

Introduce the Lesson

Say: We're learning about God's Commandments. Now you might think that sounds like a bunch of rules, but God's Commandments are like street signs, showing us the best way to go. Today we're going to learn that we're not jealous. Instead, we can have a good attitude.

Share

- Tell kids about a time a friend or sibling got to do something *you* wanted to do.
- Ask kids to share about when a friend or sibling got to do something *they* wanted to do.

Summarize

Open a Bible to Exodus 20 and **say:** When other people get what we want, it's easy to feel jealous. But God's Commandments tell us we're not jealous. Let's take a closer look in the Bible to explore why. We know everything in the Bible is true and is from God, so let's take a moment to talk with God as we get started.

Pray, asking for God's help not to be jealous.

TALK-ABOUT VIDEO

Gift's Story

Discuss and Watch "Gift's Story"

Say: Today we're learning that we're not jealous. *Jealousy* is when we're more focused on what *others* have than what *we* have. When Joseph's brothers were jealous, it hurt their own hearts, and it hurt Joseph.

Ask: • Tell about a time you wanted something you didn't have. Share your own example first.

Say: It's okay to want things, but when we're focused on wanting what other people have, that's jealousy. Let's watch a boy named Gift who doesn't have very much but isn't jealous.

Watch "Gift's Story." <https://vimeo.com/345117472>

Ask: • What do you have that Gift doesn't?

- What did Gift have to be jealous about?
- Why do you think Gift wasn't jealous, even though he didn't have what the other kids had?

Say: We're not jealous. Whether we have a lot or a little, we can be thankful for what we have instead of comparing ourselves to others. We'll be much happier!

MUSIC VIDEO

All That I Am (Psalm 103:1)

"All That I Am" (Psalm 103:1) (watch or download [here](#))

"Thankful" (watch or download [here](#))

"Let's Go!" (Ephesians 2:10) (watch or download [here](#))

CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

God's Commandments: Jealousy (Exodus 20:17; Genesis 37:1-11)

Supplies

Bible

tasty snacks (enough for about ¼ of the kids)

fun game or YouTube video

crumpled paper and scraps of paper

colorful crepe paper

tape

pool noodles (1 per child for about ¾ of the kids)

star stickers

Easy Prep

Litter your room with crumpled paper and scraps of paper. You might also flip over some chairs, mess up a supply shelf, or find other things you can get out of order.

- Place the snacks in a corner of your room.

Pick Favorites

Say: I'm so glad to see you all today! But I'm especially glad to see my *favorite* kids. I have a special surprise, just for my favorites.

Choose about a quarter of the kids as your "favorites," and have them gather in the corner of the room where you have the snacks stored. (To avoid having kids think you genuinely don't like them as much, ham it up and be obviously random. You might choose your favorites by drawing an imaginary line across the room or having kids count off.)

Say: **Everyone else, this room is a mess! I'm going to spend time over here with my favorites while you clean up. Make sure you get every scrap of paper and throw it in the trash.** If you made additional messes, tell kids what to clean up. Then gather with your favorites and eat snacks with them while you watch a fun video or play a game together. Occasionally "nag" the other kids to keep cleaning. Make sure there's a lot of laughter in the "favorites" group!

When the room is clean, gather everyone back together.

Ask: • **How did you feel about being, or not being, one of my favorites?**

• **Tell about a time you felt like a teacher or parent was playing favorites.** Share your own story first.

Say: **When people play favorites, our natural reaction is to be jealous. But listen to today's commandment from God.**

Read Exodus 20:17.

Say: **Coveť** might be a word you aren't familiar with, and it means to be jealous. So according to this commandment, **we're not jealous**. Let's see how some brothers reacted when their dad played favorites like I just did.

Act Out the Bible Story

Read Genesis 37:2-3.

Say: **What a great idea! I'm going to make colorful coats for my favorites!**

Have the "non-favorite" kids help you tear long strips of colorful crepe paper and tape them to the favorite kids' shoulders to make colorful "coats."

Ask: • **Tell about a cool gift you've gotten from your parents.** Share your own example first.

Say: **Joseph's brothers weren't so happy about Joseph's present. God's commandment says we're not jealous, but we can understand why they were!**

Read Genesis 37:4.

Say: **After that, Joseph had a dream, and their jealousy got worse.**

Read Genesis 37:5-7.

Have the non-favorite kids wave pool noodles before the favorites, pretending the noodles are stalks of grain.

Say: **When Joseph's brothers heard about that dream, they were even more jealous. Their jealousy led them to hate Joseph!**

Read Genesis 37:8.

Say: **And then Joseph had another dream.**

Read Genesis 37:9. Give the non-favorite kids star stickers, and have them stick them all over the favorites.

Say: **God commands us not to be jealous, but it was a tough situation not to envy Joseph. He was the clear favorite, and God gave him dreams about his brothers bowing to him! They didn't like that.**

Read Genesis 37:10-11.

Be Grateful

Say: **Today's commandment sounds like a negative one...what *not* to do. And we can understand how Joseph's brothers failed miserably. So let's flip it.**

Ask: • **Call out some words that are the *opposite* of jealousy.** Welcome kids' responses.

Say: **One word that's the opposite of jealousy is *gratitude*. When we're grateful for what we have, we're not jealous of what *other* people have.**

Ask: • **What could Joseph's brothers have been grateful for in this story?**

Say: **Joseph's brothers had a big, wealthy family and animals to provide food and clothing. Now, let's make it personal.**

Close your eyes and think of a situation where you've been jealous. Pause. Now replay that situation, and think of all the things you could've been grateful for. Call out your ideas as they come to you. Allow time for kids to think and call

out

Ideas.

Say: **When we focus on what everyone else has, it's only natural to be jealous. But when we focus on God's blessings to us, we're not jealous.** Instead we're focused on being thankful for everything God has given *us*. There's always something to be thankful for!

One last thing: I don't really have favorites! I'm equally thankful for each of you. You're all my favorites! Give each child a high-five and say: [Name], you're my favorite!

DEEPER BIBLE

Does It Really Hurt Anybody if I'm Jealous?

Supplies

Bibles
paper
crayons or markers
sticky notes

Set It Up

Say: **For the past couple of months, we've been learning about God's Commandments. Most of them are about things we would *do* that would be wrong, like disobeying our parents, killing, or disrespecting God's name. But jealousy is a little different. Jealousy is more of a feeling. Does it really hurt anybody if we're jealous? Let's dig in to that.**

Color and Cover

Say: As we've started thinking about jealousy, we've also talked about being thankful instead. So draw something you're thankful for.

Set out paper and crayons or markers, and allow time for kids to draw. As kids draw, have them share about who gave them what they're drawing. It might be God, or it might be a person.

Say: Now let's think about stuff we *don't* have but we want.

Set out sticky notes. Have kids each write on a sticky note one thing they want and stick it on top of their pictures. Allow a couple of minutes, and encourage kids to fill out as many sticky notes as they can, using one sticky note for each thing.

Ask: • What happened to your picture as you thought of more and more stuff you wanted?

- How does this look in real life? Think about times you *were* happy but then jealousy made you ungrateful.
- If you lost sight of being thankful for something someone gave you, how could that hurt the person who gave it to You?

Say: Jealousy is all about focusing on what other people have. And gratitude is about focusing on what God has already given us! When we focus on what other people have, we lose the focus on what we have. Eventually, we don't see anything to be thankful for...only things to be jealous of.

And when that happens, it hurts *us*. Jealousy hurts *our* hearts because it makes us unhappy. Plus, it can lead to more sins. Listen to this.

Dig Deeper

Read James 4:1-2.

Ask: • Tell about a time jealousy led to a fight for you. Share your own story first.

- What else can jealousy lead to?

Say: Let's check out some other verses about how jealousy can grow into other sins.

Read James 3:15-16.

Say: Yikes! These verses say that where there is jealousy there's evil of every kind! Jealousy does some *serious* damage to our hearts and our relationships.

Read Proverbs 27:4.

Ask: • Why do you think God says jealousy is more dangerous than anger? As kids answer, continue asking "why" to keep drilling down and get to the heart of jealousy.

Say: **It's clear why God has a command against jealousy. Jealousy destroys our hearts and leads us to more and more sin. Just listen to where it led Joseph's brothers! In today's story, they were jealous. But the next thing that happened was they decided to kill him! That's against another one of God's Commandments. In the end, they didn't kill him, but they sold him into slavery and then lied about it to their dad. Not lying is another one of God's commandments. Plus, they weren't putting God first; they were putting their own interests first. Their jealousy did just what the verses we read said would happen—it led to evil of every kind.**

When we're not jealous, it can look like this!

Tell kids to tear the sticky notes off their papers and throw them away as they listen to you read. Then read 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

OBJECT LESSON

Soured

Supplies

1 cup of milk
bottled lemon juice
well-insulated travel mug
liquid measuring cup
tablespoon measuring spoon
tall, clear cup
3-ounce disposable cups (1 per child)

Easy Prep

Warm the milk to nearly boiling, and then pour the milk into a travel mug to keep it warm.

Make Milk Sour

Say: **In today's Bible story, we saw how Joseph's brothers' jealousy made their relationships with Joseph turn sour. Jealousy can make friendships go sour, kind of how milk can turn sour.**

- Give each person a disposable cup. Pour a tiny bit of milk into each child's cup, and let kids drink it.
- Place the tall cup where everyone can see it, and pour the remaining milk from the travel mug into the cup.
- Say: **Right now this fresh milk is like a good, joyful friendship. But then one of the friends starts to feel jealous toward the other.**
- Add a tablespoon of lemon juice to the milk and stir it a bit.
- Then pour a little bit of lemon juice into each person's cup, and allow kids to dip a finger in the lemon juice and taste it.
- Kids can call out words to describe the flavor.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What do you think the lemon juice is going to do to the milk?**

Say: **Within just a few minutes of adding the lemon juice to this milk, it's going to make the milk taste sour. Lemon juice has a lot of acid in it, and it reacts with a protein in milk that's called *casein*. If we let it sit longer, the chemical reaction can even make the milk curdle—that means it'll form clumps that look like cottage cheese—and it'll taste even more sour. The milk will go bad, and it took only a little bit of sour lemon juice.**

Ask: • **How can even a little bit of sour jealousy make a friendship go bad?**
• **How can jealousy sour our hearts?**

Say: **We can't really stop the lemon juice from making the milk go bad now that it's in there, but we *can* stop sour jealousy from making our friendships go bad by being thankful instead of jealous. When we're thankful for our blessings *and* our friends' blessings, we're not jealous.**

CRAFT

Gratitude Jars

Supplies

“Gratitude Jars” handout (1 per child, printed on card stock) (download [here](#))

scissors

markers

staplers

transparent tape

slips of paper

pens

Easy Prep

Make a sample craft to show kids



Make Gratitude Jars

Say: **We're learning that we're not jealous. One way to keep our attitudes from being jealous is focusing on thanking God for what we *do* have. We're going to make gratitude jars to help us do that.**

Show kids the sample craft you made. Give each child a “Gratitude Jar” handout. Set out the remaining supplies to share, and have kids follow these directions to make gratitude jars.

- Cut out the gratitude jar template, leaving the circle attached to the rectangle.
- Decorate it with markers.



- When you've finished decorating it, roll up the rectangle so it makes a cylinder the same size as the circle on the template.
- Staple the two ends of the paper to hold them in place.



- Use transparent tape to secure the circle to the bottom of the cylinder to form a jar.
- On the slips of paper, write things you're grateful for, and put them in the jar.

Talk About It

- Ask:
- Tell about some of the things you put in your jar. Why are you thankful for those things?
 - How does it help you to focus on what *you* have instead of what *others* have?

Say: There will always be people who have things we don't have. But we also have a lot of things other people don't have! Instead of comparing what we have and what others have, we can be thankful that God gives us what we need. That way, we're not jealous.

Have kids take their gratitude jars home and have their families help them continue to add slips of paper to the jars until they're full.

LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Thank You, God

Supplies

paper
Pencils

Thank God

Say: We've been learning that we're not jealous and that we can be thankful instead. Let's try an exercise in thankfulness.

- Give each child a pencil and a piece of paper, and have kids each write 5 to 10 things they're thankful for.
- Have kids form pairs and trade lists.
- Kids will then pray with their partners, thanking God for what he's given the *other* person.

Wrap Up

Say: When we see people with something we want, we're not jealous. Instead, we can be thankful that God loves and cares for those people and takes care of them. Let's ask for his help to do that.

Pray: God, help us focus on thanking you for what we have and for what others have so we're not jealous. In Jesus' name, amen.