



Helping Kids Grow in Self-Control God's Way

When Saying “No” is the Best “Yes”

Lesson Aim:

Children will learn that self-control means saying “yes” to God and “no” to choices that lead us away from Him.

Scripture Focus:

- “How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9, *ESV*)
- “For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” (2 Timothy 1:7, *ESV*)
- “A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.” (Proverbs 25:28, *ESV*)

Connect

- **Connection Point:** Ask: “Have you ever wanted to do something you knew wasn’t right, but it was hard to say no?”

Teach

- Read or retell the story of Joseph Showing Self-Control (Genesis 39-41).

Joseph’s story began when he was a teenager. His father, Jacob, loved him dearly and gave him a beautiful coat of many colors. His brothers were jealous and angry, especially after Joseph shared his dreams about one day being a ruler. Out of envy, his brothers threw him into a pit and sold him to travelers on their way to Egypt. Joseph had every reason to be bitter, but he chose to trust God instead of letting anger control him.

In Egypt, Joseph worked hard for a man named Potiphar and was put in charge of his house. But one day, Potiphar’s wife tried to tempt Joseph to sin. Joseph had a choice: take the easy way or do what was right before God. Joseph said, “How then can I do this



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great wickedness and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9). He ran away rather than give in to temptation. Even though this led to false accusations and Joseph being put in prison, Joseph’s heart stayed faithful.

In prison, Joseph didn’t give up. He served with humility, used his gifts, and waited on God’s timing. Later, when Pharaoh needed help interpreting his dreams, Joseph was ready. God gave him wisdom and self-control to lead Egypt through years of good times “plenty” and hard times “famine.” When his brothers came to Egypt begging for food, Joseph had the power to take revenge, but instead he forgave them and showed mercy.

Joseph’s story shows that true self-control is not just saying “no” to sin but also saying “yes” to God’s purposes and choosing patience, forgiveness, and faith when our emotions want to take over.

- **Discussion Questions:**

1. Why did Joseph run away instead of giving in to temptation?
2. How did Joseph show self-control when he became powerful in Egypt?
3. How does God help us show self-control when we feel angry, tempted, or afraid?

- **Explain:**

- Self-control guards our hearts like walls protect a city.
- Saying “no” to sin is really saying “yes” to God’s best.
- The Holy Spirit gives us strength when our feelings want to take over.
- God blesses those who choose His way, even when it’s not easy.

Model

- **Teacher Shares:** a time you showed self-control.
- **Student Activity:** Invite kids to act out short scenarios through role-play, Charades, or Pictionary, like saying “no” to taking something that isn’t yours, walking away from teasing or gossip; or choosing to share instead of keeping everything for yourself.

Pray

- *“Holy Spirit, thank You for helping us say ‘yes’ to God and ‘no’ to sin. Please give us strength, like Joseph, to choose what is right even when it’s hard. Teach us to trust You in every choice we make. Amen.”*

Craft/Activity

- **“Walls of Self-Control” Craft** – Give each child several paper “bricks.” On each brick, have them write or draw one way they can show self-control (in words, actions, or emotions). Glue or tape the bricks onto a large poster board to form a sturdy wall labeled “God’s Spirit Builds Strong Hearts.” Remind them that Proverbs 25:28 says self-control protects us like strong walls protect a city.

Takeaway

- Self-control is saying “yes” to God and “no” to what leads us away from Him.