

A Good Shepherd Sacred Story

Joseph's Coat

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JOSEPH'S COAT ... MATERIALS

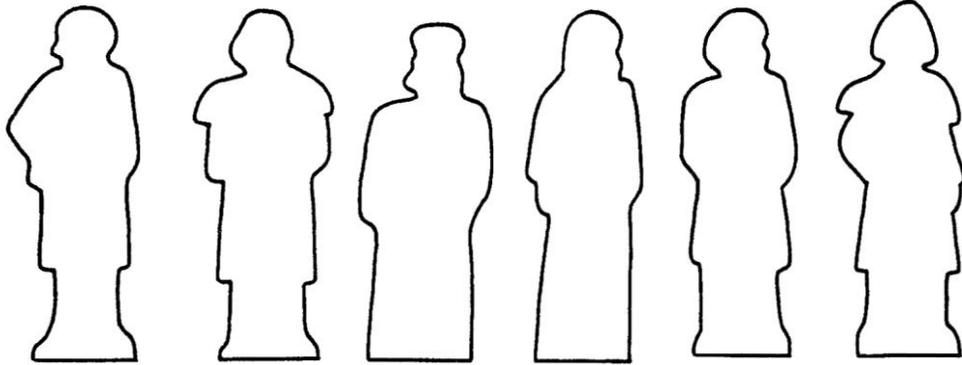
- medium wicker basket to hold:
 - wooden figure of Jacob
 - wooden figure of Joseph
 - 6 wooden figures of Joseph's brothers
 - 4 wooden figures of men who buy slaves



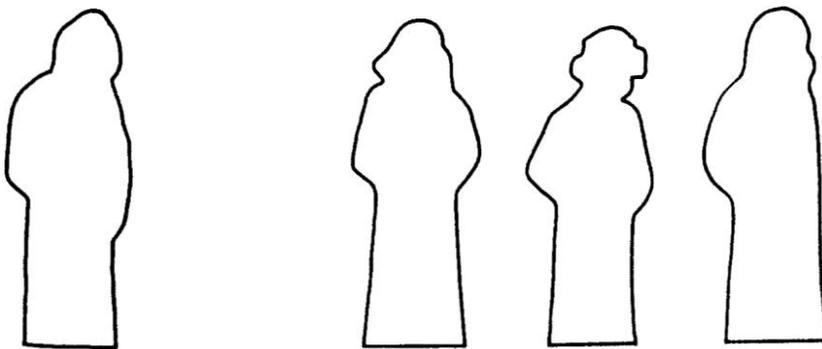
Jacob



Joseph



Brothers



Men

JOSEPH'S COAT GENESIS 37:1-36

ACTIONS

After speaking, stand and go to the shelf holding the story. Using two hands, carry it back to the circle and sit down with the basket beside you.

After speaking, allow 10-15 seconds of silence while you center the children by reverently touching one of the wooden pieces.

Place Jacob at the lower left of the storytelling area. Take each son out of the basket one at a time and place to the right of Jacob. Remove Joseph, the smallest, last and place him to the left of Jacob. When you say Joseph's name let your hand rest on him as in blessing.

Move each of the older brothers a little to the right.

Bow from the waist slightly as you say "and yours was the one bowing down".

WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

All of the words to this story are inside of me. Will you please make silence with me so I can find all the words for the story?

After Isaac and Rebekah had been married for many years they had twin sons. The sons were named Jacob and Esau. Both of the sons grew and had families of their own.

One son, Jacob, married and had many sons. Jacob loved all of his sons. But his favorite son was named Joseph.

Joseph's older brothers became very angry that their father liked Joseph best. And Joseph didn't help at all. When he went to see his brothers in the field he told them, "Last night I had a dream. In the dream there were eleven bundles of wheat all bowing down to one bundle of wheat. My bundle was the one standing up and yours was the one bowing down."

Then Joseph's brothers hated him even more.

Move as though you are putting a coat on someone. Then holding the Joseph figure, move your hand slowly toward the bottom of the coat. Move Joseph to the center of the storytelling area.

Gather the brothers together as though talking in a huddle.

Move the brothers toward Joseph at center and have them knock him face down. Pretend you are removing the coat from the figure.

Place the four men who buy slaves at the upper left of the storytelling area. Move them toward the brothers at center.

Have two brothers move to "talk" to the men.

Move Joseph in the middle of the four men who buy slaves. Then move Joseph and the four men to the upper right of the storytelling area.

Move the six brothers to the lower left to be with Jacob.

Nod slowly as you touch the Joseph figure.

One day Jacob gave Joseph a long beautiful coat. The coats that the brothers wore were short and didn't have sleeves. But Joseph's coat went all the way to the ground and had long sleeves.

When Joseph went out to see his brothers in the field, they became very angry with him. They said, "Here comes the dreamer. Let's kill him and throw him into a pit and say that a wild animal killed him." But the oldest son, Rueben, said, "Let's not kill him; let's just take his coat and throw him into the pit." Rueben was thinking that he would like to come back and rescue Joseph.

So they did just that. They took Joseph's long coat and then threw Joseph into a large dry pit.

Some of the brothers sat down to eat. They saw some people coming. They knew that the men coming were people who bought slaves.

So some of the brothers decided to sell Joseph and get some money.

Joseph was sold to become a slave to work for other people in Egypt.

The brothers lied to their father. They killed an animal and put blood on Joseph's coat. Then they told Jacob that Joseph was dead. Jacob cried and cried. He loved Joseph very much.

Joseph had many adventures while he was in Egypt. There were times that he was sure he would die. There were times he was scared. But God was always with Joseph.

In another story we will hear more about Joseph and what happened to him.

WONDERING QUESTIONS:

I wonder if Joseph felt bad when his brothers didn't like him?

I wonder if Joseph was scared when he was thrown into the pit?

I wonder if the brothers felt sad when Jacob cried and cried because he thought Joseph was dead?

Carefully put the wooden figures into the basket one at a time.

Watch carefully how I put these materials away so you will know how to use them if you choose to make this your story today or another day.

After speaking, stand and carry the story back to its shelf. Return to the circle.

Watch carefully where I put this story so you will be able to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

Dismiss the children to their work ONLY when you've gone around the circle and everyone has chosen their work.

What will you make your work today? Will you paint, or do the craft? Will you work with this story or another one? Let's begin.

JOSEPH'S COAT ...• TEACHER HELPS

I've chosen to divide the Joseph story in two parts. It becomes a very long saga and I believe the children have a difficult time following the story line if it's all told at one time. This story ends with Joseph being sold and being brought to Egypt. The second story begins with Joseph's life in Egypt.

Perhaps the hardest learning in this story is for the adults who understand that Joseph's coat, according to the scriptures, is not a coat of many colors. We read in Genesis 37:3 that Jacob made him "a long robe with sleeves". David Downing tells us that "Among today's Bedouin tribes, this type of long-sleeved tunic is worn only by the head of a tribe and by the man chosen to be his heir." (J:What You Know Might Not Be So, David Downing, Michigan:

Baker Book House, 1987, p. 44) So the reason the brothers were jealous of Joseph then was not because his garment was more beautiful than theirs. Rather, they believed that the long robe was a sign that Jacob intended to pass over them and make Joseph the head of the tribe. This makes their jealousy much more realistic. It also makes their action make more sense. It seems extreme to us that anyone would consider killing someone else over the matter of a pretty tunic. But, the issue of power over an entire tribe of people is another matter.

The children will identify with this story rather easily. They all know the feelings of someone loving another person more than them. Those with brothers and sisters will know about being envious of a sibling or a parent's love for that sibling.

The wondering questions center on Joseph's feelings and the feelings of his brothers. In the first question we explore how Joseph felt about not being liked. All children experience not being liked at some point in their lives. They may respond that Joseph felt sad, or angry. They may believe that Joseph shared his dreams with the brothers so he would get their attention.

The second question deals with Joseph's fear when he was thrown into the pit by his brothers. We're not told in the story about Joseph's feelings. That's why this is a wondering question. It is natural for the children, and ourselves as well, to project our own fears onto this situation. Our responses will be how we think we would feel. It's important to help the children understand that it's OK to be afraid. It doesn't mean that we don't trust God to be with us and help us. Fear is a normal and healthy feeling. It helps us be on guard and be careful when we need to. Notice that toward the end of the story we reassure the children that God was always with Joseph. That doesn't take away Joseph's fear, or ours either. It simply reminds us of God's constant presence.

The third question deals with the feelings of the brothers as they told their lie to Jacob. The youngest children in the class may struggle with this a bit. Very young children sometimes tell untruths because they want us to be happy. For instance, if we ask a child if he or she broke an object, the child may understand that we will be angry or hurt if he/she did that. So they may say, "No", believing that will make us happy. The older children will be much more articulate. They may verbalize that the brothers probably were ashamed, or didn't want to look at their father or that they felt very bad about what they were saying.

It is suggested this story be followed closely with the story "Joseph in Egypt". In this way the children understand the very special sentences from Genesis 45:5, "do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life"; and Genesis 50:20, "As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

If Joseph was your brother how would you feel about him?

Do you think your parents love one of you more than the others? How does that make you feel?
Do you think God loves some people more than others? Who would that be? What do you think of God, if that is the case?

Do parents ever make big mistakes by treating one of their children differently from the others?
Why do you think they do that? How can they correct those mistakes? Do you think they realize what they are doing?