

Joseph and the Coat of Many Colors

Teacher Pep Talk: Joseph was called a “dreamer” by his brothers. But are you really a “dreamer” just because God chooses to speak to you in a dream? Joseph’s brothers hated him, to the point that some of them wanted him dead: Jacob was their father’s favorite and he had a fancy coat of many colors to prove it. In addition, he had dreams which predicted that all of his brothers, and even his mother and father, would one day bow down to him. *(No wonder they hated him! ☺)*

‘Push came to shove’ as they say one day when they found him out away from the house and all alone. If it hadn’t been for a passing caravan, some of Joseph’s brothers would have left him to die in a hole. But what they intended for evil, God meant for good. Joseph, (as we will discover in our next few lessons) would become ruler over all Egypt, under Pharaoh. And he would save the lives of his whole family, and preserve the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; through which God would one day bring the Messiah (Jesus!)

You will need: Bible
A chart showing all 12 of Jacob’s sons’ names

Major Points: Jacob’s Favorite Son was Joseph
Joseph’s Brothers were Jealous of Him
God Talked to Joseph in Dreams
They Sold Him into Slavery in Egypt
Jacob Believed that Joseph had Died
God was with Joseph in Egypt (God Meant it for Good)

Scripture Ref: Genesis 37 and Genesis 39:1-6

Memory Verse: Genesis 39:2 *The LORD was with Joseph...*

Lesson: **Jacob’s Favorite Son was Joseph**

- *[Be sure to start with your Bible sitting on your lap. Also have the chart showing all 12 of Jacob’s sons’ names.]*
- *[Review the Timeline in the classroom, if available – See series lessons instructions.]*
- Jacob had 12 sons. Here are their names. *(Show chart.)*
- Two of these sons were born in his old age (and of his beloved wife, Rachel). They were Joseph and Benjamin.
- Of all Jacob’s sons, Joseph (Rachel’s oldest) was his favorite.
- Wow. What do you think of that? When you are a parent, is it a good idea to have a favorite child? *(Probably not!)*
- Let’s remember that, no matter what, God loves each of us!

Jacob gave Joseph a Coat of Many Colors

- Jacob (their dad) loved Joseph so much that he had a special coat made just for him.
- It had lots and lots of pretty colors in it, which meant it was hard to make and probably very expensive.
- Wow! What do you think? Is it a good idea for a dad to give his special favorite kid a special favorite gift? That's tricky, isn't it? How do you think all of Joseph's brothers felt about that? (*Wait for answers. Answers might include: Angry. Jealous. Sad.*)

Joseph's Brothers were Jealous of Him

- Joseph's brothers (as you might imagine) were jealous of him!
- The Bible tells us that they even began to hate him!
- (*Uh oh! That's really bad! But wait... it gets worse...!*)

God Talked to Joseph in Dreams

- Joseph began to have dreams
- God was sending him dreams about the future.
- Joseph told his parents (and his brothers) about his dreams
- The dreams said that one day all of Joseph's brothers, and even his mother and father, would bow down to him and honor him!
- Now, how do you think Joseph's brothers felt? (*Wait for answers.*) Right! Now they were madder than ever at Joseph!
- The Bible says that they began to hate him even more!

They Sold Him into Slavery in Egypt

- When Joseph was about 17, his dad sent him to check on his brothers, who were far away taking care of the family sheep
- His brothers saw him coming down the road!
- They made a plan to kill him!
- They grabbed him, took off his pretty coat of many colors, and threw him into an empty cistern (*a deep hole with no water*)
- They were going to leave him there to die, but...
- Just then a caravan of merchants came by on their way to Egypt
- Joseph's brothers decided not to kill him, but to sell him into slavery in Egypt. So they sold him to the merchants in the caravan for ½ a pound of silver! (*In today's market, about \$280.*)
- Most of Joseph's brothers were really glad he was gone! "Now we'll see what comes of his dreaming" they said.
- But WHAT were they going to tell their father?

Jacob Believed that Joseph had Died

- The brothers took Joseph's coat of many colors and tore it
- Then they poured goat blood on the coat
- THEN they took the coat back home to their father, Jacob

- And THEN... they told their father, Jacob, that they had FOUND this coat and asked him to look at it to SEE if it was Joseph's Coat of Many Colors (*when, of course, they KNEW it was!*)
- Jacob, faced with this lie of a torn coat with goat blood on it, thought that his son Joseph must have met up with a wild animal on the road and been killed.
- Jacob was very, very sad. He cried for Joseph, his son, because he thought he was dead.

God was with Joseph in Egypt (God Meant it for Good)

- Meanwhile, back at the caravan... Joseph was being carried off to Egypt by the merchants who had bought him
- I wonder how Joseph must have felt. What do you think? (*Wait for answers.*) Maybe he felt sad, or angry, or even scared.
- But then... something wonderful happened. Even though Joseph had been betrayed by his brothers, and sold into slavery... Even though he was on his way to a foreign country, where he had never been before... Even though all of these bad things had happened... **God was with Joseph.**
- God (the One who had given Joseph all those dreams about the future) had not left Joseph.
- God was with Joseph... even though Joseph got hauled off to Egypt... and even though he got sold as a slave...
- The Bible says that God was with Joseph in Egypt and gave him success in everything he did!
- Later on we will learn that (even though Joseph's brothers meant all of this for evil) **God meant it all for good**
- Because through all of this, God would end up saving many people's lives (including the lives of all of Joseph's family – even his brothers!)

Let's pray and thank God that He can work through even the bad things in our lives to bring about good.

Prayer: Dear God,
Thank you that you can bring about good in our lives.
Thank you that you were with Joseph.
Thank you that you are with us!
Thank you for loving us!
We love you back!
Amen.

Suggested Activities: (Choose 1 or 2 that will work with your group.)

Joseph's Coat of Many Colors – *The children will color the Coat of Many Colors*

NOTE: *This is one of my very favorite activities. I have seen some very colorful coats produced in class. I have always had the children use crayons, which work very well... but you might try watercolors! Be sure to display the pictures for a while. Have fun!*

Before Class: Provide copies of the Coat of Many Colors activity page for the children in class. Provide a variety of crayons or markers. You may choose to use watercolors.

During Class: Hand out the activity sheets to the children. Explain that Joseph's Coat of Many Colors needs some color... Ask the children to use their markers, crayons or watercolors to make Joseph's Coat as colorful as possible. Display these in class or send home with the children.

Meanwhile Back at the Well – *The children will act out the parts of the Bible Story.*

Before Class: Bring items to class to help the children act out the parts of the Bible Story you heard today. You will need some "plain" outfits for the brothers and at least one "fancy" outfit for Joseph. Large pieces of fabric work well to drape across shoulders for robes. You may also use things like towels, pillowcases, or even sheets. Create an empty "well" by turning a card table upside down (with its legs up in the air). You can put paper (or a sheet) around the legs to make it seem more like a well. You will also need a small sack of silver coins (such as quarters, dimes or nickels) to pay for Joseph.

During Class: Retell the story of Joseph and his Coat of Many Colors. Read back through the lesson, if you like, or retell it in your own words. Allow the children to dress up as the different parts. Allow them to do different parts each time you do the skit.

Memorize the Bible Verse – *The children will learn today's Memory Verse.*

Before Class: Familiarize yourself with the memory verse. Genesis 39:2-3 **The LORD was with Joseph...** and gave him success in everything he did.

During Class: For younger children, help them learn the first part of the verse "The LORD was with Joseph." Older children may want to learn the entire verse.

Explain that even though Joseph was in Egypt, God was with him. God didn't abandon Joseph! And, even though it seemed like some pretty bad things had happened to him, God meant all of it for good! God had a plan to help Joseph and his whole family, and to save many lives! *We will learn more about that in the next few lessons.*

To help with memorization, say the first two words (The LORD...) and have the children repeat the next words back to you (...was with Joseph.) Practice saying Joseph's name

Say: The LORD... (Point to the sky)
Was with Joseph (Clasp your hands together)

And gave him success... (Shake your clasped hands together in front of you)
In everything he did. (Continue shaking your hands together overhead)

