

Joseph's Coat of Many Colors

A Retelling of Genesis 37:3-34



Jacob loved Joseph more than all his children. He made him a tunic (a piece of clothing like a coat) of many colors. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak nicely to him.

Now Joseph dreamed a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. He said, "Please hear this dream.... We were binding sheaves in the field. Then my sheaf stood up and your sheaves bowed down to my sheaf."

His brothers said, "Shall you indeed reign over us?" They hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

Then Joseph dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers. "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me." [This dream showed that he would be greater than his brothers and his parents.]

Then Joseph's brothers went to feed their father's flock. And Jacob sent Joseph to his brothers to see that all was well with them and the flocks [of sheep].

When Joseph's brothers saw him coming, they planned to kill him. "We shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

But Reuben said, "Let us not kill him. Put him in this pit which is in the wilderness." [Reuben planned to save Joseph later and take him back to his father.]

So when Joseph came to his brothers, they took away his tunic of many colors, and they cast him into a pit. And his brothers sat down to eat a meal. Then they saw a group of traders on their way to Egypt. They decided to sell Joseph to the traders for twenty shekels of silver. The traders took Joseph to Egypt.

When Reuben saw that Joseph was gone, he was very sad. Then the brothers dipped Joseph's tunic in blood and took it to their father. Jacob recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces." And Jacob was very sad and mourned for his son many days.

Tell children what happened next:

The traders sold Joseph as a slave in Egypt. Joseph tried to do what was right, and the Lord was protected him. Joseph became a great man in Egypt. Years later there was a famine, and there was not enough food for people to eat. But there was enough food in Egypt because Joseph had prepared for the famine. Joseph's brothers came to Egypt asking for food. They did not recognize Joseph. But he recognized them, and he gave them food. He was happy to help them because he forgave them the evil they had done to him.