

Joseph Sold Into Slavery

Genesis 37



The Story

Jacob and his family lived in Canaan. Jacob had twelve sons and loved them all, but he loved Joseph more than his other sons. Jacob gave Joseph a special present - a beautiful coat! This made Joseph's brothers jealous of him and angry with him.

One night Joseph had a dream. In his dream he and his brothers were tying the grain together into sheaves. Joseph's sheaf stood tall and the sheaves his brothers had made bowed down to his. Joseph's brothers were even more angry with Joseph when he told them his dream.

Joseph had another dream and again he told it to his brothers. He had dreamt that the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed down to him. His family was upset by this dream. Jacob, his father, asked Joseph if he thought even his father and mother would have to bow down to him? Jacob was confused by Joseph's dreams, but remembered them.

Joseph's brothers watched over the flocks of animals that belonged to their family. Sometimes they had to travel a long way to find enough food and water for them. One of the times they were away Jacob sent Joseph to check on them. Joseph traveled to find his brothers.

When Joseph's brothers saw him coming they remembered how angry they were with him and wanted to kill him. Reuben was the oldest brother and did not want Joseph to be killed;

he told his brothers to throw Joseph into a pit. Later on he would come back to the pit and help Joseph get out.

When Joseph reached the flocks, his brothers took off his coat and threw him into the pit. His brothers saw some traders coming and, knowing that the traders also bought and sold slaves, Judah suggested that they sell Joseph for money.

Reuben was very upset when he returned to the pit and Joseph was gone. He asked his brothers how he could explain it to his father? So they took Joseph's coat and dipped it in the blood of one of their goats.

When the brothers returned home to Jacob they showed him Joseph's coat. Jacob thought that a wild animal had killed Joseph. Jacob was very sad about losing Joseph and cried for him.

The traders that had bought Joseph took him to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, who worked for Pharaoh.

Joseph is envied by his brothers and sold into slavery in Egypt.

Activity One - Draw a picture to complete the sentence.

1. Jacob gave his son, Joseph, a

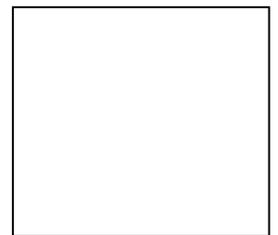


2. Joseph had two dreams. In one of them the stars bowed down to him.

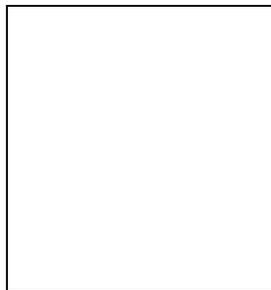


, moon and

3. Joseph went to check on his brothers who were watching



4. The angry brothers sold



and he was taken to Egypt.

God begins His plan to rescue the family of Israel and keep His promise to send the Savior through their descendants.

Passage

Psalm 27:14 Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart.

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When Joseph's brothers saw him coming they remembered how angry they were with him and wanted to kill him. Reuben was the oldest brother

and did not want Joseph to be killed; he told his brothers to throw Joseph into a pit. Reuben left the camp, and planned to return later on to help Joseph get out of the pit.

When Joseph reached the flocks, his brothers took off his coat and threw him into the pit. His brothers saw some traders coming and, knowing that the traders also bought and sold slaves, his brother Judah suggested that they sell Joseph for money.

Reuben was very upset when he returned to the pit and Joseph was gone. He asked his brothers how he could explain it to his father. So they took Joseph's coat and dipped it in the blood of one of their goats.

When the brothers returned home to Jacob, they showed him Joseph's coat. Jacob thought that a wild animal had killed Joseph. Jacob was very sad about losing Joseph and cried for him.

The traders that had bought Joseph took him to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, who worked for Pharaoh.

Joseph is envied by his brothers and sold into slavery in Egypt.

Activity One - Draw a happy face (beside each sentence that makes you feel happy. Draw a sad face ; beside each sentence that makes you feel sad.

1. Jacob loved Joseph very much. (
2. Joseph's brothers did not like him. (
3. Joseph had two special dreams about his family. (
4. Joseph's brothers sold him to the traders. (
5. The brothers lied to Jacob about Joseph being killed by a wild animal. (
6. Joseph did not go to Egypt alone because God was with Him. (
7. God is with you too! (

Activity Two - Discuss the following questions and then use the code to find out what the passage from God's Word in [Luke 6:27](#) tells us.

Have you ever been angry with someone? Did you forgive that person?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
A	B	D	E	G	H	I	L	M	N	O	R	S	T	U	V	W	Y

2 15 14 7 13 1 18 14 11 18 11 15 17 6 11 6 4 1 12 :

1116 4 1811 1512 4 10 4 9 7 4 13 3 11 5 11 11 3 8

14 11 14 6 11 13 4 17 6 11 6 1 14 4 1811 15 :

God begins His plan to rescue the family of Israel and keep His promise to send the Savior through their descendants.

Passage

Psalms 27:14 Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart.

Hymn - TLH #424, v. 1

My God, my Father, make me strong,
When tasks of life seem hard and
long, To greet them with this triumph
song: Thy will be done.

Prayer

I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus, trusting only
Thee; Trusting Thee for full salvation, great and
free.
I am trusting Thee to guide me; Thou alone shalt
lead, Every day and hour supplying all my need.
Amen.

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YOUR MISSION:

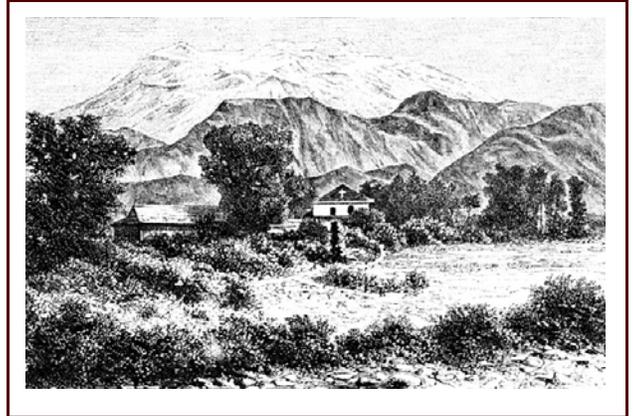
Find your way to Ecbatana.

Restrictions: You may not use a map, compass, or travel agency. You may take only one person with you to help you in your journey. No one else may be contacted.

Time limit: One lifetime

Reward if completed: Beyond belief

1. How would you get there?
2. Who would you take with you?
3. Would you trust that person to make the right decisions for you?



In today's story Joseph is uprooted from his home, taken to a foreign land and forced to work as a slave. Who was making the decisions for him? Did you choose that person to go with you?

Prayer

Dear Lord,

As we study today about Joseph's frightening experience of being sold by his own brothers into slavery, help us to understand Your reason for it by seeing how Joseph and all of Your children benefitted from his situation. Help us also remember that You are constantly our guide. Amen.

The Story - Genesis 37

Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

{2} This is the history of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.

{3} Now Israel loved Joseph more

than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors. {4} But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

{5} Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. {6} So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: {7} "There we were, binding



sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."

{8} And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

{9} Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."

{10} So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" {11} And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

{12} Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. {13} And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them."

So he said to him, "Here I am."

{14} Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me."

So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem. {15} Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?"

{16} So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks."

{17} And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'"

So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan. {18} Now when they saw him afar off, even before he

came near them, they conspired against him to kill him.

{19} Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! {20} "Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

{21} But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him." {22} And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"; that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.

{23} So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. {24} Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.

{25} And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt.

{26} So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? {27} "Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened.

{28} Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

{29} Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. {30} And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?"

{31} So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. {32} Then they sent

the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?"

{33} And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces."

{34} Then Jacob tore his clothes, put

sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. {35} And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

{36} Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

Outer Aim

Joseph is envied by his brothers and sold into slavery in Egypt.

What the Story Tells Us - Draw a line to match the actions with the people who did them. You may use the name more than once.

had a dream about the sun, moon and stars +	+ brothers
grieved for Joseph +	
threw Joseph into the pit +	+ Jacob
lied to Jacob +	
were envious of Joseph +	+ Joseph
went to check on his brothers +	
gave Joseph a beautiful coat +	+ God
wanted Joseph in Egypt +	
loved all of his children +	+ Reuben
wanted to send Joseph back home +	+ Judah
wanted to kill Joseph +	
suggested selling Joseph to the Midianites +	

What the Bible Tells Us - What would you say? Look up the following Bible passages and match them to the situation in which they would be most helpful.

A. Psalm 27:14

C. Matthew 5 :44

B. Colossians 3:9

D. Isaiah 40:31

- _____ 1. Peter's sister had just told their mom she was going to the library. Peter knew she was going to see a movie with her friends.
- _____ 2. Timothy's mother had been sick for many years. It was getting very hard for him to watch her suffer.
- _____ 3. It made Sue sad to see how tired her father was each night after a long day at work. She wished she knew a passage that would help him feel better.
- _____ 4. Paul didn't want to go to school. He was angry about being teased so much.

Inner Aim God begins His plan to rescue the family of Israel and keep His promise to send the Savior through their descendants.

Passages

Colossians 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.

Isaiah 40:31 But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Matthew 5:44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

Hymn/Prayer - TLH #424, v. 1, 3

My God, my Father, make me strong,
When tasks of life seem hard and long,
To greet them with this triumph song:
Thy will be done.

With confident and humble mind
Freedom in service I would find,
Praying thro' ev'ry toil assigned:
Thy will be done. Amen.

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What do these things all have in common?

Could anything good come out of being in these circumstances?

Who makes sure good things come out of bad situations?

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

Whenever something unfortunate happens to me in this life, help me to think about Joseph and all of the difficult things that happened to him. Remind me that just as You never abandoned Joseph, so You will always be with me. Help me to remember that You will allow in my life only that which You will also work out somehow for my spiritual good. Let me never stop trusting in You alone. In Jesus' name I ask this. Amen.

Broken Arm
Science Test ✓ D-
Not Enough \$\$\$
Argument With Friends

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sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."

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meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt.

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{34} Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. {35} And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

{36} Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

Outer Aim

Joseph is envied by his brothers and sold into slavery in Egypt.

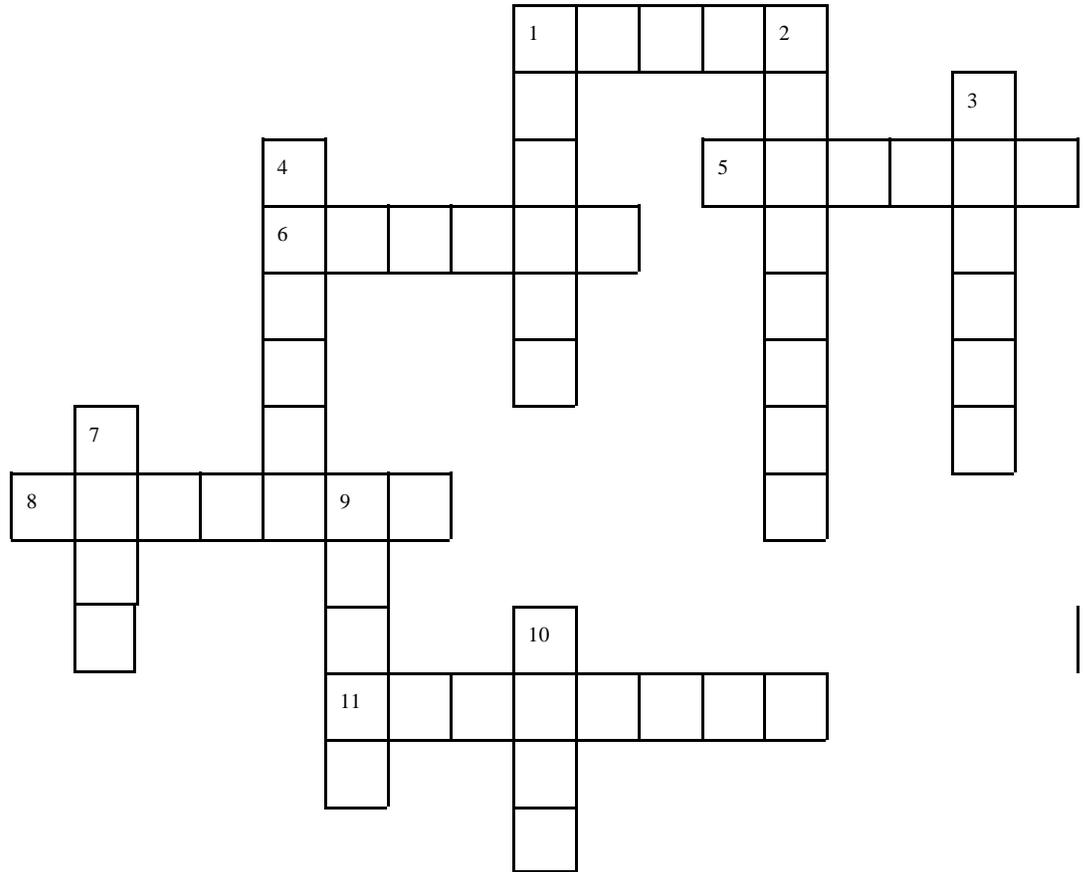
What the Story Tells Us - Complete the Crossword Puzzle below using words from the lesson.

ACROSS

- 1. ___ had 12 sons.
- 5. He gave one son a tunic of many ___.
- 6. The other sons e ___ this son.
- 8. After the father heard of his son's death he ___ for him and refused to be comforted.
- 11. This person bought Joseph as his slave.

DOWN

- 1. ___ was loved the most by his father.
- 2. His ___ hated him.
- 3. Joseph had 2 ___ where his family bowed to him.
- 4. ___ saved Joseph from being killed by the other brothers.



- 7. The other brothers ___ him for 20 pieces of silver.
- 9. The Midianites sold Joseph in ___.
- 10. The brothers' jealousy led them to want to ___ Joseph.

What the Bible Tells Us - What would you say? Look up the following Bible passages and match them to the situation in which they would be most helpful.

A. Psalm 27:14

B. Colossians 3:9

C. Matthew 5 :44

D. Isaiah 40:31

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- _____ 4. Paul didn't want to go to school. He was angry about being teased so much.

Inner Aim God begins His plan to rescue the family of Israel and keep His promise to send the Savior through their descendants.

Passages - Discuss how these passages apply to Joseph's life and your own life.

Colossians 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.

Isaiah 40:31 But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Matthew 5:44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hymn/Prayer - TLH #424, v. 1, 3

My God, my Father, make me strong,
When tasks of life seem hard and long,
To greet them with this triumph song:
Thy will be done.

With confident and humble mind
Freedom in service I would find,
Praying thro' ev'ry toil assigned:
Thy will be done. Amen.

**STORY**

6/26/06

Joseph Sold into Slavery - Genesis 37

TEACHER PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, there are times in my life when I am timid and fearful. I feel at times that my life is out of control and that I am powerless to help myself. I pray that You would use these occasions to remind me that I am *never* in control of my life, You are. Teach me never to trust in my own power or wisdom, but always and only in You. When "bad things" happen to me, grant that I might always acknowledge Your wisdom and goodness and seek to recognize Your love in all that You allow to come into my life. Help me also now to present this vital truth to the students You have placed under my care. To this end bless my presentation of this lesson, in Jesus' name I ask. Amen.

VOCABULARY

Bilhah - Rachel's maidservant, Jacob's concubine, the mother of Dan and Naphtali

Zilpah - Leah's maidservant, Jacob's concubine, the mother of Gad and Asher

binding sheaves - tying the stalks of grain into bundles at harvest time

Shechem - a city at the foot of Mt. Gerizim north of Jerusalem where Jacob first bought land and resided after having worked for his Uncle Laban in Horan

Dothan - an ancient city about 15 miles north and west of Shechem, noted for its excellent grazing land. This was also later the site where Elisha was surrounded by the army of Aram and where the hills beyond were filled with fiery chariots and horses of God (2 Kings 6).

Ishmaelites - nomadic descendants of Abraham's son Ishmael by Sarah's maid, Hagar

Midianites - also at times translated Medanites. Midian and Medan were also sons of Abraham by his wife Keturah.

Shekel - monetary unit used in Israel. Twenty shekels equaled about 8 ounces, and later was set as the amount paid for a youth of Joseph's age who was dedicated to the Lord (Lev. 27:5).

Sackcloth - coarse, rough cloth worn as a symbol of mourning or repentance.

OUTER AIM

Joseph is envied by his brothers and sold into slavery in Egypt.

INNER AIM

God begins His plan to rescue the family of Israel and keep His promise to send the Savior through their ancestors.

BACKGROUND

Jacob showed obvious favoritism among both his wives and his children. Joseph was clearly his favorite, and Jacob's preferential treatment contributed to the sin of his sons. At this time Jacob was living in "the Valley of Hebron." He evidently moved there from Bethlehem after the death of his father Isaac. Jacob had extorted the birthright from his brother Esau and had thus inherited the land previously owned by his grandfather Abraham and father Isaac.

Verses 1-4

- Joseph at this time was 17 years old. It is hard to judge the character of the young man at this point in his life. He was obviously gifted and handsome, trustworthy and well loved by his parents. It is also true, however, that Jacob used the boy to keep tabs on his other sons. Some have condemned Joseph as a tattletale for "bringing a bad report" to his father about his brothers. Yet we have no way of knowing if Joseph was simply carrying out his father's command to observe and report back the truth. The fact that he would report back to Jacob obviously alienated Joseph from the rest of his brothers.
- The bad report Joseph brought to Jacob involved Dan, Naphtali, Asher, and Gad.
- The subject of the "coat of many colors" is widely misunderstood. It has long been thought that Joseph's brothers were simply envious that he had received a handsome coat from his father and that they had not. The brothers were not that petty. The term translated "coat of many colors" is more literally translated "long tunic that reached to the ankles and wrists." Such a garment was worn by royal children of nobler rank, which explains why it angered the brothers so much. By giving Joseph such a garment, Jacob was placing him over the brothers as their superior. This also served to exacerbate Joseph's later dreams of supremacy, as well as his "spying" and reporting back to Jacob.
- "*Hate*" is often best translated as "to love less." In this case, however, it seems clear that the brothers hated Joseph in the more modern understanding of the term, since they could not even "*speak peaceably to him.*"

Verse 5-11

- It is hard to determine if Joseph was simply immature and naive in telling his dreams to his brothers, or if he was exhibiting some cruelty by "rubbing it in" concerning his favored position. The youth was probably naive rather than cruel.
- Though all eleven of Joseph's brothers eventually *did* bow down to him, we have no record that his father and mother ever did so. It is certainly true, however, that Joseph was later honored by all for saving the family from starvation.

Verses 12-17

- Though Jacob and his family had moved (fled) from Shechem after the shameful incident with Dinah, Jacob evidently maintained ownership of the land he had purchased there and used it to pasture his extensive flocks and herds. He may also have purchased land around Dothan, about 15 miles to the northwest, since he also pastured his flocks and herds there.
- Jacob, placing great trust in Joseph, sends him out again to check up on his brothers and the flocks and to report back. Jacob thus causes great stress in the relationship between Joseph and his older brothers. He also takes something of a risk in sending a 17-year-old boy out alone to make the dangerous 45-mile trip to Shechem.
- Joseph is not quite up to the task, for he is found wandering in a field near Shechem and must get help from a stranger. A more experienced man would probably have known to search in Dothan when he did not find the brothers in Shechem.

Verses 18-28

- The hatred of most of the brothers toward Joseph is very great, even to the point of plotting to murder him. It is hard to imagine what family life among Jacob's sons must have been like for the brothers to hate Joseph that much. Perhaps all of the years of favoritism, the ranking in order of affection enroute to meet Esau, etc., were all coming to a head there in the remote fields around Dothan.
- Reuben, both now and later, displays some strength of character and tries to rescue Joseph from his brothers. He was apparently not present when the others sold Joseph into slavery. In fact we have no record that Reuben was ever told exactly what the others had done to Joseph.
- It was Judah's idea to sell Joseph. He was obviously loath to kill his own brother, but despised him

enough to sell him into slavery. We know from their words later (Genesis 42:21) that Joseph, "in great anguish of soul," pleaded with his brothers for his life—to no avail. The hatred and resentment of the brothers ran deep, but so did their guilt after selling him.

Verses 29-36

- Perhaps the greatest cruelty of all was when the brothers allowed their father to believe (for many years) that his beloved Joseph was dead. Jacob mourned for Joseph for several reasons. Not only was he his favorite, Jacob also very likely felt blame and guilt for sending his young son to his death.
- The fact that Jacob refused to be comforted was an indication not only of his love for Joseph, but also of a weakness of faith on his part. It is not right for even a parent to choose to refuse the comfort of knowing that a dearly loved child is safe and at peace with the Lord. Such a prolonged rejection of comfort can easily become a rebellious rejection of the will and wisdom of God.

STUDENT PRAYER

Dear Jesus, whenever something unfortunate happens to me in this life, help me to think about Joseph and all of the difficult things that happened to him. Remind me that just as You never abandoned Joseph, so You will always be with me. Help me to remember that You will allow in my life only that which You will also work out somehow for my spiritual good. Let me to never stop trusting in You alone. In Jesus' name I ask this. Amen.

PRESENTATION

This account is short enough to read in its entirety during the class. Certain parts lend themselves well to acting out (such as when the brothers sold Joseph into slavery and he pleaded for his life).

APPLICATIONS

1. Playing favorites seldom does any good. Those that are preferred can become arrogant and haughty; those who are loved less can develop serious emotional problems and learn to resent those that are loved more. Help the children to apply this truth to their own friends and family. (How would your dad feel if you told him you loved your mom much more than him?)
2. Discuss the difference between a tattletale and a conscientious friend. It is not always wrong to "tell on" someone when it is done out of loving concern. Matthew 18 also applies to children. A tattletale, on the other hand, enjoys seeing others get into trouble. Motive is key. Discuss what a child should do or say when a friend says, "I'll tell you something if you promise not to tell." (In general, encourage your students to never accept such conditions. Love might dictate that they do tell.)
3. Show the students that although the dreams Joseph told his brothers were true and real, he showed tactlessness by sharing them. Lead the students to think about others before they speak— to consider how their words might unintentionally hurt someone else.
4. It is never good to let anger turn to hatred nor to allow that hatred to fester in our hearts. Discuss with your students various ways to deal with their anger. (Prayer, talking to the person who has wronged you, getting help from parents or your pastor, etc.)
5. Most importantly, lead your students to recognize that God allowed hardship to come into Joseph's life because He had a master plan in mind. Joseph could not at first see that plan. We often cannot see God's plan. The only solution is to trust God at all times and to constantly remind ourselves that God knows what is best.

PASSAGES

Lower

Luke 6:27 - *But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.*

Colossians 3:9 - *Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.*

Psalms 27:14 - *Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart.*

Middle any of the above and...

Luke 6:27 - *But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.*

Colossians 3:9 - *Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.*

Psalms 27:14 - *Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart.*

Upper any of the above and...

Matthew 5:44 - *But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.*

Isaiah 40:31 - *But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*

Romans 6:22, 23 - *But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

HYMN CHOICES

"Jesus, I My Cross have Taken" (TLH #423:1-2)

"I Am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus" (TLH #428:1-3)

"My God, My Father, Make Me Strong" (TLH #424:1-4)