

Joseph's Coat

Story Paraphrase of Genesis 37:1-35, 39:1-6a

*Story paraphrase (by Carol Hulbert) to accompany Joseph's Coat Game Lesson written by Beth Pascoe for First United Methodist Church, Ann Arbor, MI
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Jacob and his large family lived in the land of Canaan. Jacob had many sons (eventually 12 in all) and one daughter. Troubles began because Jacob liked his son Joseph the best. Joseph brought bad reports about his brothers to his father.

Jacob loved Joseph so much that he made Joseph an outlandish coat – it is often described as having many beautiful colors. The coat made Joseph proud. He felt special! But it made his brothers...mad! They hated Joseph. They couldn't speak one kind word to him.

One night Joseph had a dream. When he told his brothers about it, they hated him even more. "Listen to my dream," said Joseph. "We were out in the field, tying our bundles of wheat together, when suddenly my bundle rose and stood upright. All of your bundles gathered around mine and bowed down to it." His brothers said, "do you plan to be king over us?" They didn't like what Joseph had to say.

Then Joseph had another dream. He told his brothers. "In this dream the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." Joseph's brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept wondering about the dream. What could it mean? Was God sending Joseph a message?

One day Joseph's brothers had taken the sheep to graze away from home. Jacob asked Joseph to go check on them. So, Joseph went to find his brothers. His brothers saw him coming—it must have been because of the colorful coat. "Here comes that dreamer," said his brothers. "Let's kill him! Then we'll see what comes of his dreams!"

"No, don't kill him," a brother named Reuben said. "Let's only throw him into a pit. There's one over there." Reuben was thinking that at night he would secretly rescue Joseph.

Joseph came up to his brothers. Before he could even say hello, they grabbed him. They took his multicolored coat and threw him into a pit. Then his brothers sat down to eat their dinner!

As they were eating a brother named Judah said, "Look, here come some men on their way to Egypt – Ishmaelite traders. Let's sell Joseph, and then we won't have to kill him. After all, he is our brother." So when the traders came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the pit. They sold him for twenty pieces of silver.

To cover up their deed, Joseph's brothers killed a goat and dipped Joseph's fancy coat in its blood. They took the coat to their father and said, "We found this!" Jacob recognized it. "Joseph must have been killed by a wild animal!" Jacob mourned for Joseph a long time.

Meanwhile, the Ishmaelites took Joseph to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, the king's official in charge of the palace guard. Soon Potiphar realized that God was helping Joseph to be successful in whatever he did! Yes, God was with Joseph.