

Genesis 37

Jacob raised sheep and goats and cattle, which kept him very busy. However Jacob had lots of help because he had 12 sons. His sons started with grown-up Reuben and ranged in age down to little baby Benjamin. Out of all these sons, Jacob had one favorite son that he loved more than the others. This was his 17 year old son named Joseph. Joseph was very clever, he helped his father and he loved God and tried to do what's right. One day Jacob made a very special coat for Joseph. The coat was not brown...it was not white ... and the coat wasn't even black, like many coats in that day. This coat was sewn and decorated with richly colored threads, making it very beautiful. None of the other sons had a coat as beautiful as Joseph did and they were angry that Joseph got something they didn't have. They were also angry at Joseph because he kept track of them and would tell his father when they did something wrong, like cheating when they sold the sheep, or keeping money that belonged to their father. These older sons began to hate Joseph.



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Do you think we should be mad because someone has a prettier coat or a better toy or a bigger house than we do? It's sometimes hard not to want what your friends have, but God wants us to be happy with what He's give us. We should be glad if our brother or sister or friend has nice things, shouldn't we? Can you name some of the nice things that YOU have that they don't? We should always tell God "thank you" for the things he gives us.

One night Joseph had a strange dream. He dreamed that he and his brothers were tying up bundles of wheat and standing them upright in the field. Suddenly his brother's bundles of wheat all bowed down to Joseph's bundle. When Joseph woke up he wondered why he had such a strange dream. When he told his father and his brothers about the dream, the brothers were even more angry. "Do you think we will ever bow down to you?" they shouted.



A few nights later Joseph had another strange dream. This time he dreamed that the sun and the moon and the stars all bowed down to him. These were funny dreams, weren't they? Joseph told his father and brothers about this dream also. This time even his father got angry with him. "Do you really think that your mother and I and your brothers will all be bowing down to you?" His father asked. Poor Joseph, he couldn't help what he dreamed! One day when Joseph was older these dreams really did come true, for there was a time when his brothers and his father and mother bowed down to him...but that's a story for another time.

Jacob decided to keep Joseph home and to send his older sons away for awhile for they really were mad at Joseph. They took the sheep and goats to a pasture far away and were gone for a long time. Finally Jacob began to get worried about them and he called Joseph and told him that he needed to go see how his brothers were doing. Jacob gave Joseph some food for the journey and told him that his sons should be near a town called Dothan, so Joseph put on his beautiful coat and set out to find his brothers.




Joseph traveled for several days before he finally found his brother's camp. There in the distance were all the sheep and goats and his brother's tents. Joseph happily hurried toward them. "Here comes that dreamer," one of the brothers said. "Let's kill him," another brother said. This was very bad, wasn't it? We should never hate anyone and never ever want to kill them or even hurt them, should we? If we ever have bad thoughts about another person we should pray that God will forgive them and forgive us also. Then we should try our best to be kind to them, even if we don't like them. This is what the Bible tells us to do, isn't it?

Reuben, the oldest son said, "Let's not kill him, let's just put him in that dry old well, instead." Reuben planned to go back later and let Joseph go free, but he was afraid to tell his brothers. So the brothers seized Joseph, tore his special coat off of him and threw him down into the well. Joseph yelled and cried for help but his brothers ignored him and sat down to eat their supper. We'll tell what happened to Joseph in our next lesson.



Even if someone has been very mean to you, it isn't right to hate them, is it? Was Joseph ever very mean to his brothers? No, he only did what was right and told his father when they did wrong things. However they hated him because they were "jealous." Jealous means to be angry because someone has something you don't, or someone is a little better at something, like a boy who plays ball better than you do, or a girl who has more Barbie dolls than you do. It isn't good to be mad at others is it?

Joseph's brothers were jealous because he was Jacob's favorite son and jealous because he had a fine coat and jealous because he had special dreams. That was no reason to be so cruel to Joseph, was it?

Jesus tells us that we are to: **"Love your enemies,...and ... do good to those who hate you"** (Matt.5:44) Can you learn this verse? Think about this verse and if you lean it, have mom or dad put a check mark here. Good job! 

It would please God to try and show kindness and love even when we might feel bad because a friend has more things than we do or you think a little brother or sister gets better treatment, and we do want to please God, don't we?

Question Page

1. How many sons did Jacob have? (A) 3 sons (B) 1 son (C) 12 sons
2. What was the name of the son that Jacob loved the most?
3. What special thing did Jacob give to his favorite son?
4. What made the coat special? Was it extra warm or extra colorful or extra long?
5. Joseph had a dream about wheat ... what did his brother's wheat do?
6. Joseph had another dream about something in the sky ... what did he dream about?
7. In his dream, did sun, moon and stars bow to Joseph or did the birds bow down to him?
8. Did Joseph's brothers hate him because they were jealous of him and of his special coat or because Joseph was mean and unfair to them?
9. Is it wrong to hate your brothers or sisters or friends? Is it wrong to hate your enemies?
10. If someone has something special that you don't have should you hate them?
11. Can you name 5 -10 extra special things that YOU have that God has given you?
12. What did the brothers do to poor Joseph when he showed up at their camp?
13. Which brother planned on rescuing Joseph? (A) Reuben (B) Simeon (C) Benjamin

Make a beautiful coat for Joseph to wear - use lots of pretty colors on it

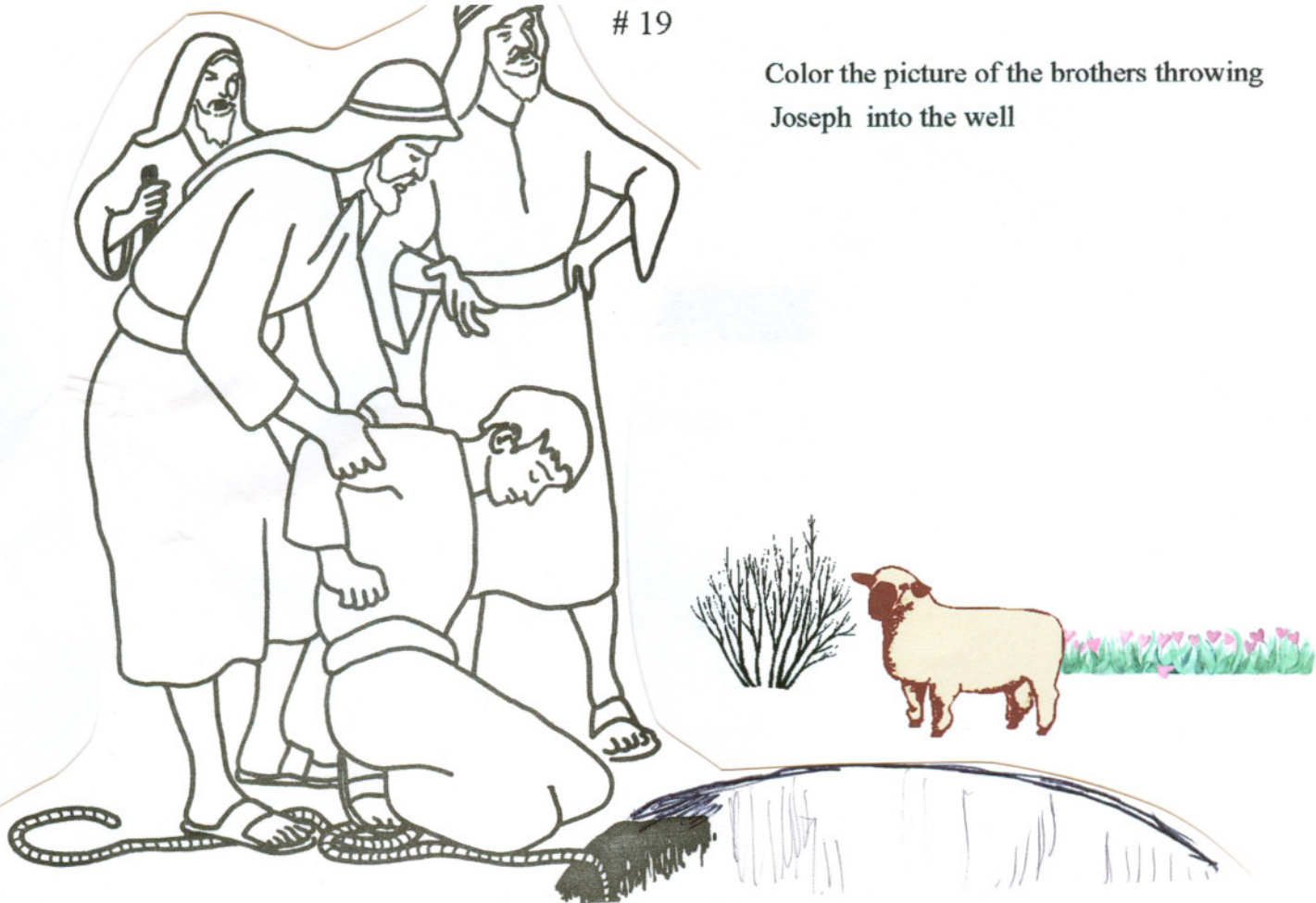


Even if a friend or your brother or sister has something special, you have some special things too, don't you? God gives us good things to eat, a warm bed to sleep in, some nice clothes to wear and parents that love you. Those are special, aren't they?

In the space below draw your bed, your favorite food and your favorite toy or pet

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Color the picture of the brothers throwing Joseph into the well



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Circle the things that Joseph dreamed about, then put an X on the things you would like to dream about

