

**READ:** Genesis 37:3-8 (NirV)

Israel [Jacob's new name] loved Joseph more than any of his other sons. That's because Joseph had been born to him when he was old. Israel made him a beautiful robe. Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them. So they hated Joseph. They couldn't even speak one kind word to him. Joseph had a dream. When he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. He said to them, "Listen to the dream I had. We were tying up bundles of grain out in the field. Suddenly my bundle stood up straight. Your bundles gathered around my bundle and bowed down to it." His brothers said to him, "Do you plan to be king over us? Will you really rule over us?" So they hated him even more because of his dream.

ENTER THE STORY:

Abraham had Isaac, and Isaac had twin boys - Jacob and Esau. God chose to use Jacob's family to bring his really BIG promises to the world. Jacob had 12 sons, but he loved *ONE* son more than all of his other sons... Joseph. And to show his love for Joseph, he gave him a special, colorful coat. This made Joseph's other brothers really mad.

Have you ever gotten mad when your brother or sister got something that you didn't? Well, it's kind of like that.

Joseph's brothers were SO mad at him that they decided to throw him in a pit, but later they decided it would be better to sell him for a few pieces of silver money. When the men who bought Joseph took him away, his brothers thought they would never see him again. "Good riddance to that dreamer," they said.

But Joseph's story was only getting started. God had BIG plans for him, and even though it was going to take a *LONG TIME* and lots of bad things were going to happen to Joseph along the way, God was right by his side, helping him and protecting him through it all, and Joseph *KNEW* it. This was his *SECRET* power! He knew God was was up to something big because of his dreams, so he chose to *TRUST* God and have a good attitude no matter what.

Eventually, Joseph got a chance to see his brothers again. Let's see what happens.

READ: Genesis 50:15-21, (NirV)

Now that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers were worried. They said, "Remember all the bad things we did to Joseph? What if he decides to hold those things against us?"... So they sent a message to Joseph. They said, "Your father gave us directions before he died. He said, 'Here's what you must say to Joseph. Tell him, "I'm asking you to forgive your brothers. Forgive the terrible things they did to you. Forgive them for treating you so badly." '... When their message came to Joseph, he wept. Then his brothers came and threw themselves down in front of him. "We are your slaves," they said. But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Do you think I'm God? You planned to harm me. But God planned it for good. He planned to do what is now being done. He wanted to save many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I'll provide for you and your children." He calmed their fears. And he spoke in a kind way to them.

CHRISTMAS CONNECTION:

There is another story in the Bible about a man who was mistreated by his family and sold for a few pieces of silver, and he too trusted God and had a good attitude no matter what - but there was *ONE* key difference. Joseph went through bad things and eventually reached a place of power where he could save people from a physical problem. This other special person left a really, really wonderful place and gave up his place of power so he could go through bad things, and eventually die to save people from a much bigger problem... their sin.

Do you know who this special someone is? It's Jesus... the Serpent Crusher, and Abraham's special offspring!

- **PRAY:** *Heavenly Father, thank you so much for being with us through all of the bad things that happen in our world.*
- ⋮ *Will you help us to be like Joseph and trust you no matter what ? And thank you for Jesus, who left his place in heaven*
 - ⋮ *to come to earth and be betrayed and mistreated so that he could save us? Amen.*