

# ■ Joseph's Story: Betrayed but Not Alone

(Genesis 37-40, for ages 9–13)

Joseph's mother, Rachel, died giving birth to his younger brother, Benjamin. Because Benjamin was born when their father Jacob was old, Jacob treated him—and Joseph—very specially. Think about the youngest child in a family. Sometimes the baby of the family gets more attention or is treated differently just because they're the youngest. That can cause problems, especially if it feels unfair to the older siblings.

In Joseph's case, it caused a big problem. He wasn't just treated special—he was sent by their father to spy on his older brothers and report back on what they were doing. That made things even worse. On top of that, Joseph didn't always think about how his words affected others. He told his family about a dream he had where they all bowed down to him. That didn't go over well. It made them angry and hurt.

Then came the coat. Jacob gave Joseph a beautiful, brightly colored robe—something no one else got. Joseph walked around in it proudly. You get the drift. You'd think Jacob would've remembered how it felt when his father favored Esau over him. But people don't always learn from the past. That's part of our human nature. Sometimes we don't see our own attitudes and actions clearly. We ignore how others feel. That's the sin nature passed down to us all the way from Adam.

This led to a mountain of trouble. Joseph's brothers were so jealous, they planned to kill him when they saw him coming—bright coat and all. Instead, they threw him in a dry well. Later, they decided not to kill him but to sell him to slave traders.

Joseph must have been shocked to see how deeply his brothers hated him. He was hurt, alone, and rejected—but not forgotten. God was with him. That's something we should remember too. There's no place we can go where God isn't. Even when it feels dark, or lonely, or like everything is falling apart, God promises to be with us. He will never leave us or forget about us. As we keep reading Joseph's story, we'll see how God stayed close to him, even during the hardest parts of his life—and how God brought him through it all into a place of peace and purpose.

## **Activity: Coat of Many Emotions**

Supplies:

Plain coloring sheet of a coat (or blank paper to draw one)

- Markers or crayons
- Pencil or pen

Instructions:

1. Color the coat in different colors. Let each color stand for a different emotion Joseph might have felt in this part of the story—like jealousy, fear, pride, loneliness, anger, sadness, or hope.
2. On the back of the page, write 3–5 sentences about a time when you felt misunderstood or left out. How did you respond? Did you feel like God was with you?
3. Share your coat with someone in your family or group. Talk about how emotions can be confusing, but God never leaves us—just like He never left Joseph.

## ■ Joseph: Faithful in the Hard Times

(Genesis 39–40)

Joseph was sold as a slave to a man named Potiphar. But Potiphar quickly noticed something special about him—everything Joseph did, he did well. Because of this, Potiphar put Joseph in charge of almost everything in his house. Things were finally going well for Joseph—until something terrible happened. Potiphar's wife tried to get Joseph to do something wrong. She wanted to be unfaithful to her husband and tried to convince Joseph to go along with her plan. One day, she even grabbed his clothes! But Joseph refused. He ran away, leaving a piece of his clothing behind.

Potiphar's wife felt embarrassed and angry that Joseph rejected her. So she lied. She told her husband that Joseph tried to hurt her, and she used the piece of his clothing as fake proof. Potiphar was furious. Since he worked for Pharaoh, he sent Joseph to a special prison—a place where the king's servants went when they were accused of crimes. But the Bible says something important:

“But the Lord was with Joseph.”

### 👣 Life Application

Joseph had done the right thing, but it still seemed like everything was falling apart again. He might have thought, “Lord, why would You let me believe things were getting better just to bring me into more pain?”

Have you ever felt that way? Like God gives you hope—and then takes it away? But here's the truth: God does not enjoy hurting us. The Bible says, “He does not willingly bring affliction or grief to anyone” (adapted from Lamentations 3:33, NIV). Even in the middle of pain and unfair treatment, God was still working a good plan. He would use Joseph's suffering to save his whole family—and even all of Egypt—from a terrible famine. And one day, God would do the same through someone even greater than Joseph—Jesus. Through His suffering on the cross, Jesus made a way for anyone who believes in Him to be saved and have peace with God again. So when life feels unfair, remember this: “All things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to His purpose.” (adapted from Romans 8:28, NIV)

## Activity: "From Pit to Purpose" Timeline

Objective: Help students trace the ups and downs in Joseph's life and see how God was working even in the hardest moments.

Supplies Needed:

Paper or index cards

Pens, pencils, markers

(Optional: string and clothespins or tape to create a visual timeline on the wall)

### Instructions:

#### 1. List the Highs and Lows

Ask students to work individually or in pairs. Have them make a timeline of Joseph's story from Genesis 37–40. They should include at least 6 events:

Some high points (e.g. Potiphar puts Joseph in charge)

Some low points (e.g. being thrown in a pit, sent to prison)

#### 2. Label God's Presence

For each event, have them write a note under it:

"God was with Joseph even here because..."

Encourage them to think about how God was working behind the scenes even when things were hard.

#### 3. Personal Reflection

After the timeline is done, ask them to draw one card or section labeled:

"My Life Right Now"

Ask: Is there anything in your life that feels unfair, painful, or confusing? What do you think God might be doing—even if you don't see it yet?

# Joseph in Prison: God Was With Him

Genesis 39–40 | Ages 9–13

Joseph was stuck in a dark, lonely prison. He had done nothing wrong, but he was still locked up. Even so, God was with him. God made everything Joseph did succeed. The prison warden noticed and put Joseph in charge of the other prisoners. One day, Pharaoh's cupbearer and chief baker were sent to the prison. Joseph was told to take care of them. One morning, he noticed they both looked sad.

“Why do you look so upset?” Joseph asked.

They told him they had both had dreams but didn't know what the dreams meant.

Joseph said, “Only God can interpret dreams. Tell me your dreams.”

The cupbearer went first. Joseph listened carefully, then waited for God to give the meaning. He told the cupbearer that in three days he would be free and have his job back. Joseph kindly asked him to remember him when he was released. Then the baker told his dream. He hoped for good news too—but his dream meant something different. Joseph told him the truth: in three days, he would die. Three days later, it happened exactly as Joseph said. The cupbearer was set free and returned to his job. But he forgot all about Joseph.

Even though Joseph was still stuck in prison, he didn't give up. He didn't sit around feeling sorry for himself. He kept using the gift God gave him—the ability to interpret dreams. His gift helped others, and it helped Joseph grow in faith and character.

Joseph gave God credit for the interpretations. He didn't try to take the spotlight. He trusted God completely.

 What Can We Learn?

God wants to be part of our everyday lives. He doesn't want us to just trust Him when things go well—He wants us to depend on Him all the time. Joseph reminds us that even when life is hard, we can trust that God is with us and working through us.

 Activity: “Even in the Waiting...”

Materials:

Paper or index cards

Markers or colored pencils

Instructions:

1. On one side of the paper or card, write about a time you had to wait for something (a friend to come over, a prayer to be answered, a hard time to end, etc.).
2. On the other side, write or draw how you can trust God during that waiting time.
3. Decorate it with something that reminds you of hope (like stars, rainbows, flowers growing, etc.).

 Optional Class Activity: Post everyone's cards on a "Waiting Wall" to remind each other that God is with us—even when answers are slow.