



God Gives Joseph Dreams

(based on Genesis 37:1-11)

Jacob had twelve sons and one daughter. The two youngest sons were named Joseph and Benjamin. Their mother was Rachel, who was Jacob's favorite wife. Of all his children, Jacob loved Joseph most. His brothers did not like Joseph; they were jealous of Jacob's favorite son.

Even worse, Joseph was a tattletale. When he turned seventeen, Joseph went to work with his brothers. Every night, he told his father when they made mistakes or didn't do their work properly. Joseph's brothers disliked him even more.

Even worse, Jacob had a new coat made for Joseph. It had long sleeves and came all the way down to his ankles. It was a lot nicer than any of the clothes his brothers had. Joseph wore it just to show off.

After they saw the coat, Joseph's brothers were convinced that their father liked Joseph best. They were mad and hurt. They really began to hate Joseph. In fact, they couldn't even talk to him nicely.

Even worse, Joseph had a dream and he told it to his brothers.

"I dreamed that we were out in the field, tying bundles of grain together. All of a sudden, my bundle stood up all on its own. Your bundles gathered around mine and bowed down to it!"

"Oh right!" jeered Joseph's brothers. "You think that one day you will be our king and we will bow down to you? Fat chance!"

Even worse, Joseph had another dream. Of course, he told his brothers.

"Last night, I dreamed the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me!" he explained.

Joseph told his dream to his father, and even his father became angry with him.

"What kind of dream is this?" snapped Jacob. "Do you really think you will become our ruler? Are we going to bow to you? What nonsense!"

His brothers were pleased that Joseph had been scolded. The second dream made them really mad.

Even when things became worse and worse, God was watching over them all. God's love surrounded Joseph and his brothers. God had a plan to turn all that jealousy into something good, not only for Joseph and his family, but for all people. God was going to bless them all.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your child—imagine and wonder.
- Invite everyone to act out the story. Let someone be the narrator, Joseph, his brothers (or sister), and his father. Switch parts and act out the story again until every person experiences being the different characters in the story. Invite participants to share what they think it was like to be each person in the story.
- Practice making “I statements” for each character in the story; for example, “*My name is Jacob. I feel blessed when . . .*” “*My name is Joseph. I feel proud when . . .*” “*I am Joseph’s sister. I feel sad when . . .*” “*I am Joseph’s older brother. I feel mad when . . .*”
- Invite everyone to make an “I statement” for one of the feelings they have had recently. After each person makes his or her statement, invite the group to say, “It’s OK to feel that way.”



Responding to God's Grace

- Help your child create an acrostic poem by using each letter in the word *dream* to begin a line. Here is one example:

*Dreams can be strange.
Remember or not?
Each one is different.
Amazing or plain?
Make notes.*

- Joseph was a tattletale. Use today’s story to explore when it is important and when it is not important to tell a grown-up. Brainstorm everyday situations. Invite your child to shout “tell” or “don’t tell” for each situation. Help your child establish guidelines for communication.
- Consider making a communication covenant: a promise to honor God’s good creation by telling a trusted adult when you witness or experience something that may seriously harm you, another person, or other living things.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Invite everyone to dream big. Challenge each person to name one dream to accomplish by the end of the month; for example, “*I hope to collect \$10 in loose change to donate to the church.*” “*I hope to ride my bike without training wheels.*” “*I hope to collect four bags of canned goods for the food pantry.*” Work together, helping each person meet his or her goal.
- Pray this prayer each day this week:

God of dreams, help us to pay attention to our dreams and to know when to use our gifts for others. Amen.