

**Year A, Week 34 (July 20, 2008)**

**Genesis 37: 12-14, 18-30    Joseph Sold into Slavery**

**Hymn suggestions:** *Father Abraham* (calmly); or *Shout to the North and the South*

**Items Needed:**

- grown Jacob figure
- 12 male figures, of varying sizes, for the 12 brothers. Make Joseph a smallish but easily recognizable figure.
- Cut a colorful piece of cloth or paper that you can tie to the Joseph figure. (There may be one leftover from last week.)
- Sheep
- Patch of black paper to make a “pit”
- Foreigner figure
- camel

*Directions: Set out Jacob with his twelve sons all around him.*

We’ve been talking about how God made a promise with his people. We learned that God chose Abraham and his wife Sarah. He sent them to a new place called Canaan, and he made a promise – or a covenant – with them. He told Abraham that one day he would have as many descendants as there are stars in the sky or grains of sand at the beach.

God told Abraham, “This is my covenant. I will be your God, and you will be my people.”

Even though Abraham and Sarah were old when God made these promises, they did have a boy, whom they called Isaac. Later, Isaac had twin boys, Jacob and Esau. Last week, we learned that Jacob had 12 sons, after whom we name the 12 tribes of Israel.

Of these 12 sons, Jacob loved Joseph the most. He gave him a beautiful, colorful coat that made the other brothers jealous. And Joseph sometimes talked about the dreams he had, in which all his other brothers – and even his parents! – would bow down before him. His brothers grew to hate him.

Jacob sent his 11 sons out to take care of his sheep. (*Add sheep figures and remove Jacob and Joseph.*)

After a while, Jacob – who was sometimes called Israel – told Joseph to go check on his other brothers. When the other brothers heard Joseph coming, they hatched a plan to kill him. (*Place Joseph figure a little ways off.*)

One brother said, “Hey, here comes the dreamer! Let’s kill him and bury him in a pit. Then we can tell Dad that a wild animal ate him up. That would be the end of Joseph’s dreams, all right.”

But Reuben, the oldest brother, said, “Let’s not kill him. Let’s not even shed a drop of his blood! Go ahead and throw him into a pit, but don’t lay a hand on him!”

So when Joseph approached them, the brothers grabbed him and pulled his colorful coat off of him and then threw him into the hole. *(Take off fabric “robe” and place Joseph to the side or in the black paper “pit.”)*

Then they sat down to eat, and along came a caravan of people on camels on their way to Egypt. *(Place foreigner and camel near them.)*

So one of the brothers, Judah, said, “Hey, it doesn’t do us any good just to leave him in this pit. Let’s sell him to the folks on this caravan. That way we won’t exactly be hurting him, since he is our brother.”

The brothers agreed, and they lifted him up out of the pit. *(Take Joseph figure from the pit.)* And they sold him to the foreigners for 20 pieces of silver. *(Take away foreigner, Joseph, and camel.)*

Then they found a goat and killed it. They tore up Joseph’s coat of many colors and dipped it into the blood so that it would look as if an animal had killed him.

They took the robe to Jacob. *(Place Jacob near sons.)*

He recognized the robe and said, “This is Joseph’s robe! A wild animal has eaten him up!”

He was so sad that nobody could comfort him.

### **Questions without Response:**

- I wonder ... if you know of any families who treat each other badly?
- I wonder ... if God is with Joseph even when he gets sold into slavery?
- I wonder ... if God can make anything good come out of this?