



"This is the Story..."

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Week 6: Shepherds, Slaves and Jealous Sons

Genesis 37-47:12

Intro Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8qWKDn40BI&list=PLiSIfKtmhnBYNdDKZqJJ2xS8wuUH7JJH3&index=8&t=0s>

Review the big story: God created the cosmos and humans and called it all good. We were created to live in harmony, but sometimes we miss the mark. Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and all of humanity missed the mark, and they had to live with the consequences, but God stuck with them and continued to love them. Then God called Abraham and Sarah to be in a covenant relationship with God. God continued God's work with Isaac and Rebekah and with their sons Jacob and Esau, who quarreled a lot and eventually reconciled. Like the humans before them, they often missed the mark, but God kept God's promises to make them a blessing to the whole world.

- **Key verses:** Genesis 37:4, Genesis 39:2, Genesis 39:21, Genesis 41:38, Genesis 45:3-5

Tell the story: Jacob, often called "Israel," had many children. He had a favorite son, Joseph. Joseph had dreams that one day his brothers would bow down to him, and his brothers didn't like that very much. One day, they sold him to some slave traders. They lied to their father and told him that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. God stuck with Joseph as he was taken to Egypt and sold to a powerful man named Potiphar, who saw Joseph's abilities and put him in charge of the household. But when Joseph refused the advances of Potiphar's wife, she had him thrown in prison. Even in prison, God stuck with Joseph. His gifts were quickly noticed, including his knack for dream interpretation. One day, Pharaoh had a dream, and Joseph was brought before him to interpret it. Joseph foresaw years of plenty followed by years of famine. Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of stocking up the surpluses of food so that the region could survive the coming famine. The famine also affected Joseph's family in Canaan, who eventually came to Egypt for food. God stuck with the family as they were brought before Joseph. Just like in his dreams, they bowed before him. He recognized them, but they didn't recognize him. After testing them to see if they had changed since the days when they sold him, he revealed to them who he was. Jacob and his whole family moved to Egypt and settled in the land of Goshen, and Joseph was reunited with them.

- Read Genesis 37:1-8, 18-28; Genesis 39:1-6, 19-23; Genesis 41:1-13, 25-40; Genesis 42:1-2, 6-8, 18-25; Genesis 43:11-13, 19-34; 44:1-5, 11-34; Genesis 45:1-14
- Read pages 37-39 in the *Shine On* story Bible

Prime the pump:

- This story is packed with emotion. Genesis 42:23-24, Genesis 43:26-31, Genesis 45:1-2, Genesis 45:14-15 - and more. The humans of this story are becoming more and more empathetic for us. Read this story and map its emotional curve.
- Notice the many times it looks like the story is going to end in despair for Joseph and for the rest of his family. And notice the refrain of God sticking with them. Maybe you want to track these highs and lows.

- Where does the family of God end up at the end of this story? Given what you know already about the Bible, why might this be an important set-up for what comes next?
- The Joseph narrative is really a saga, and it can be experienced through multiple perspectives. Choose one of the following or one you come up with, and read the story with that lens. Then have a conversation or do some journaling or doodling about how you experienced the story.
 - A gifted leader
 - Family conflict
 - God is with the prisoners
 - God's faithfulness
 - Reconciliation
 - Trust and distrust
 - Betrayal and healing
 - Dreams

Microsong: "Shepherds, slaves and jealous sons" (Listen: <https://youtu.be/ZkitYfyQXil>)

A favorite son of a favored wife becomes a slave when his siblings sell him. In Egypt he forgets his pain, the land is saved from famine. His mother gone, his father old, the blessing meant for everyone now blossoms in a family of shepherds, slaves and jealous sons

Sing the big song: (Listen: <https://youtu.be/p4d2N-6SdA>)

This is the story of how it all began. God made matter, and chaos shattered.

Eve and Adam, they tried to hide.

The world got violent and God replied with a mark and flood and a rainbow sign, God's love
written on skin and sky,

And then God called a family to be a blessing to the earth, ahhhhhh

A mother and her favorite son wrestle for the blessing, another son becomes a slave, the land is
saved from famine.

God loves every one of us, it's true, and God loves the universe.

Go do your household project!