

JOSEPH

A story of forgiveness Written for children's church & audience participation

by Janelle Clendenon

Cast:

Jacob

Reuben

Judah

Joseph

Extras – designated to lead in dream enactment; also designated as other family members;
including Simeon and Joseph's steward

Audience – as other brothers, Egyptians, and dream enactment

Bible MV – a designated group who recites a Bible verse

Narrator

Scene 1 – A Typical Day at Home Sweet Home

This scene is optional

Setting: Biblical home or tent on stage left. A pasture of green grass/blanket and a tree is on stage right. (For the well part, have either a door or box well or something to hide behind). Off to one side have a brown sheet/blanket/felt on the ground for the field.

Audience Leader: We need some volunteers. (*Divide volunteers in half.*) You (*point to half the volunteers*) will follow Reuben and do what he tells you to do. And the rest of you (*speak to the other half*) will follow Judah and do what he tells you to do.

Jacob: Reuben, you will be in charge of the fields. It's time to plant. Here is the seed. You can take these brothers and servants to help you. Judah, you will be in charge of the sheep. Take them to the lower pasture today. You can take these other brothers and servants with you. Joseph, you will stay home with me.

Reuben: (*Takes volunteers and together they toss seeds [dry rice/beans] onto sheets that are laid out on the floor.*)

Judah: (*He and his volunteers go get the stuffed sheep and take them to the designated pasture [a green blanket on the floor and a tree nearby].*)

Reuben (*When the planting is done, he tells the volunteers thank you and to return their seats and then reports back to Jacob.*) Father, we are done with the planting.

Jacob: Good, Reuben. Thank you. (*Reuben leaves*)

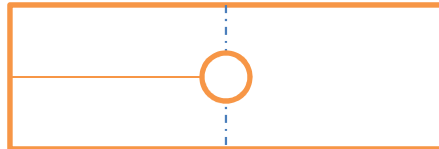
Judah: (*At the end of the day he and the volunteers bring the sheep back home. He tells the volunteers thank you and that they can return to their seats, then he reports back to Jacob.*)
Father, the sheep enjoyed the pasture and are not back at home.

Jacob: Good, Judah. Thank you. (*Judah leaves*)

Scene 2 – Not a typical day at Home Sweet Home

Bible MV: (*Recite Philippians 4:13*) “I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”

Jacob: (*Thinking out loud*) Hmmmmm. I want to do something special for Joseph. I will make him a coat. A coat of many colors! (Go gets a rectangle of white paper that has been folded in half. A neck hole has been cut out in the middle and the front has been cut from the neck hole to the bottom like this: When done, tape edges from the arms down)



Audience leader: We need some volunteers to help Jacob with Joseph’s coat. (*Gives each volunteer some squares [about 3”x3”] of colored paper and a glue stick.*) Here are some pieces of paper. We need you to glue them to Joseph’s coat. You can glue them wherever and however you want. (*Give them time to finish.... then*) Thank you! That is beautiful and so colorful! You may go back to your seats.

Jacob: (*Calls*) Joseph, come here! (*Joseph comes*) Joseph, I’m impressed with how quick you learn and with your work around here. I made a special coat for you. Come try it on!

Joseph: (*puts on coat*) Thank you Father! It’s gorgeous! (*hugs father*) Thank you! Good night father. (*Goes to side of stage and lays down.*)

Jacob: Good night son. (*leaves*) (*lights dim*)

Extras: (*Stand in a circle. 1 goes to the center. All the others bow to the center one. Then they all leave. They come back. One holds up a moon. One holds up a sun. The others hold up stars. They all bow down to the sleeping Joseph. Then they leave.*)

Jacob: Good morning family! Rise and shine! There’s work to be done!

Reuben, Judah, Joseph (*wearing robe*), and Extras: (*Come in, greet Jacob, and sit down near him*) Good morning father!

Joseph: May I tell you all something father?

Jacob: Sure son. Come here. Family, Joseph is wearing the new robe I gave him. Joseph you are one special kid!

Joseph: Thank you Father. I had an interesting dream last night. My brothers and I were out in the field harvesting wheat. Then their sheaves of wheat bowed down to mine.

Reuben & Judah: (*sneer*) Are we going to bow down to you?

Joseph: Then I had another dream. The stars, moon, and sun bowed down to me.

Jacob: (*wondering, reflective*) Will I bow down to you? Hmmmm? Will anyway, it’s time to get to work. Boys, take the sheep to the upper pasture. Joseph, I’ll send you with some food in a couple of days.

Reuben, Judah, & some extras go get the sheep and walk around behind the audience and back up on the stage while everyone else leaves the stage.

Judah *(Sits watching the sheep and talking to Reuben)* I'm not going to stand by while Joseph gets all the honor! It's not fair!

Joseph: *(walks in wearing the coat and carrying a bundle)* Hey brothers! Dad sends his greeting. How is it going? I brought you some fresh food!

Reuben: *(takes food and leaves)* Thanks!

Judah & extras: *(grab Joseph and tear off his coat)* Thanks for nothing. You little dreamer! Throw him in the well over there. *(throw him out a door or behind the set or into a box)*

Joseph: *(talks into a water bottle to get the well echo effect)* Help! Help! Get me out! Help!

Judah: Well, look who's going by. *(points off in distance)* The Ishmael traders are coming this way on their way to Egypt. ... Now there's a solution! Let's sell him to the traders! We'll get some money and won't have to listen to that dreamer ever again! *(grabs Joseph and leaves)*

Extras: We'll tear the robe like an animal attacked Joseph. *(tear robe)* Rub in some blood of the lamb.

Judah: *(returns with money jingling in his hands)* Deed is done! We're rich! *(looks at robe)* Great idea!

Reuben: Where's Joseph? *(Sees robe and money & gets angry)* Oh no! What will you tell Dad!

Reuben, Judah, & extras take sheep, walk around audience and 'head home' while Jacob comes onto the stage

Jacob: *(Sitting on the stage when Judah and the others come in. They show him the coat)* *(Cries bitterly)* My son! My son! He's been eaten by wild beasts!

Scene 3 – Changes....

Setting: Replace the pasture setting with a palace on stage right.

Joseph: *(While the narrator reads, Joseph stands center stage while extras give and take away items to represent the narration)* *(He stands with his hands and feet in chains)*

Bible MV: *(recite Hebrews 13:6)* So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

Narrator: Joseph was taken to Egypt and sold to Potiphar the captain of Pharaoh's guard. His work impressed Potiphar and he put Joseph in charge of his household. God blessed him. Potiphar's wife also noticed Joseph. However when Joseph didn't give into her wiles and do what she wanted, she accused him of wrong doing. Potiphar put him in Pharaoh's prison. Joseph impressed the prison guard. The guard put Joseph in charge of the prisoners. A couple of those prisoners were the Pharaoh's chief baker and his butler. They each had a dream. With God's insight, Joseph interpreted the dreams correctly. The baker died. The butler was reemployed and tested the Pharaoh's drink. One night Pharaoh had a dream. No one knew what it meant. Then the butler remembered Joseph. He told Pharaoh about him. Pharaoh called for Joseph.

Extras: (Do the following while the narrator reads) Joseph was taken to Egypt and sold to Potiphar the captain of Pharaoh's guard. [Give Joseph a broom.] His work impressed Potiphar and he put Joseph in charge of his household. [Take off chains. Take away broom. Give him a clipboard.] God blessed him. Potiphar's wife also noticed Joseph. However when Joseph didn't give into her wiles [Turn Joseph around.] and do what she wanted, she accused him of wrong doing. Potiphar put him in Pharaoh's prison. [Take away clipboard. Put chains back on Joseph's hands and feet.] Joseph impressed the prison guard. The guard put Joseph in charge of the prisoners. [Give Joseph a clipboard.] A couple of those prisoners were the Pharaoh's chief baker and his butler. They each had a dream. [One extra, baker, comes in with baskets and bread on his head. One extra, butler, comes in squeezing grapes into a cup.] With God's insight, Joseph interpreted the dreams correctly. The baker died. [Baker falls dead] The butler was reemployed and tested the Pharaoh's drink. [Butler goes out happy.] One night Pharaoh had a dream. No one knew what it meant. Then the butler remembered Joseph. He told Pharaoh about him. Pharaoh called for Joseph.

Scene 4 – A New Home Sweet Home

Audience Leader: I need some volunteers (*Divides volunteers into 4 groups.*) **Group 1** will be big healthy cows. Look big and healthy and say a loud, MOOOO! **Group 2** will be skinny cows. Look thin and sickly. Say a pitiful moo! When I say to, you can give the big cows a hug. And (*turns to talk to the healthy cows*) when they give you a hug, fall down, dead. **Group 3** will be tall healthy stalks of corn. Stand on you tip toes. Reach your arms up and out. Say "lots of corn for you!" **Group 4** will be short wimpy stalks of corn. Squat down to make yourselves short. Say "that's corny" When I say to, you can give the tall corn stalks a hug. And (*turns to talk to group 3*) when they give you a hug, fall down, dead. (*While Pharaoh tells his dream, the audience leader directs the groups to portray the dream. Designated extras help lead and demonstrate what they are to do.*)

Pharaoh: Joseph, I'm told that you can interpret dreams.

Joseph: Not I, but the Lord. God will tell me what your dreams mean.

Pharaoh: As I was sleeping, I saw seven big healthy cows and seven thin and sickly cows.

Group 1 Extras & volunteers: MOOOO!

Group 2 Extras & volunteers: moooo

Pharaoh: The healthy cows ate up the sickly cows, but they still looked sickly.

Group 2 Extras & volunteers: moooo (*Give the big cows a hug*)

Group 1 Extras & volunteers: (*fall down, dead*)

Pharaoh: Then I saw 7 tall healthy corn stalks and 7 short wimpy stalks of corn

Group 3 Extras & volunteers: Lots of corn for you!

Group 4 Extras & volunteers: That's corny.

Pharaoh: The 7 short wimpy stalks of corn ate the tall healthy corn stalks!

Group 4 Extras & volunteers: Give the healthy corn stalks a hug.

Group 3 Extras & volunteers: *(fall down, dead)*

Joseph: The 2 dreams have the same meaning. God is saying the message twice because it will indeed happen. There will be 7 years of lots of food. Then there will be 7 years of no food. Whatever you plant won't grow. Think hungry.... very, very hungry! So choose someone wise to collect extra food during the 7 years of lots of food so that it can be distributed during the 7 years when there is no food.

Pharaoh: That's a fantastic idea! I choose you. You are wise and God is with you. Do what you said should be done. You can tell anybody and everybody what to do, except for me, of course! Wear this collar. Asaneath will be your wife.

Bible MV: *(recite Romans 8:28)* And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Narrator: Joseph had people build places to store the grain. At harvest time he collected the extra food.

Audience Leader: We have a snack for you. There is plenty for everyone! You will be given 2 bags. 1 is extra. Bring it to Joseph. Then you can eat the other one.

Extras: *(Bring sacks of grain [pillows] to Joseph)* Here is our extra grain.

Joseph & helpers: Thank you. *(gives them money)* *(He does the same for the audience participants – each give 1 bag and get 1 coin.)*

Narrator: Seven years went by. There was lots of food! There were so many bags of food, it couldn't even be counted! The next year there was no rain. The Nile was low. The ground was dry. The plants didn't grow. The famine had started! People started getting hungry!

Extras: We're hungry, can we have food? *(Give coin and get a bag of food.)*

Reuben, Jacob, and Judah enter stage left near the tent/home in Canaan

Reuben: The garden is dry. Nothing is growing. The sheep can't find any grass to eat. All of our kids are hungry.

Judah: Us, too! What shall we do?

Jacob: I hear there is food in Egypt. Take this silver that I've been saving and go buy us some food.

Reuben, Jacob and extras (brothers) go on left side of audience, behind, and back up right to palace in Egypt. They follow this route each time going and the reverse for coming back.

Reuben, Jacob and extras (brothers): Enter and bow down to Joseph

Joseph: Where have you come from?

Reuben: Canaan. We have come to buy food.

Joseph: You are spies!

Reuben: Sir, we are honest men. We aren't spies. We are 12 sons of one man. The youngest stayed with our father. The youngest is no more.

Joseph: To prove you are not spies, you must bring your younger brother to me. I will hold him (*points to Simeon*) in prison until you return. Here's some grain, now GO!

Brothers: (*brothers head back, except Simeon*) (*At home they open their sacks of grain.*) Oh no! My money is in top of my bag! They will think we are thieves!

Audience Leader: If you want some more snack, and you have a (*gold*) coin, you can come get a snack from Joseph. (*Continue to dismiss kids by the color of their coins – purple, blue, pink, silver*)

Jacob: Reuben, Judah! Come here! We need more food. There is no other way. You must go back to Egypt.

Reuben: We must take Benjamin.

Jacob: I do not want to lose another son!

Judah: If anything happens to Benjamin, you can hold me personally responsible.

Jacob: So it must be. Take some special gifts with you: pistachio nuts, almonds, spices, and myrrh. And take the silver which was in your sacks plus more to buy more grain. If he dies, (*sobs*) he dies (*sobs*).

Brothers: (*Gather items and leave*) (*When they get to the palace, they bow before Joseph*)

Joseph: Sit down at the table over there and let's eat

Brothers: (*look surprised, unsure, and then scared*)

Reuben: When we opened our bags after leaving last time, we found our silver. We have brought it back along with these gifts, and extra silver to buy more grain. Here also is our younger brother.

Joseph: (*wipes tears from his eyes after seeing Benjamin*) I have already received payment. Here is your brother who stayed with me. Let's eat. (*They eat*) (*Gives cup to steward, who puts it in Benjamin's bag of grain*) Take your grain and go.

Brothers: (*leave with bags*)

Narrator: Did you see that? After the brothers left with their grain, it wasn't too long when they were chased down by a guard who accused them of stealing Joseph's cup! They denied it and said whoever had stolen it would die and the rest of them would be slaves. The guard found it in Benjamin's sack! The guard said only Benjamin would be a slave. But all the brothers returned. They weren't going to let another brother die! They weren't going to return without him. In fact Judah told Joseph to make himself the slave and let Benjamin go free! Do you think they were sorry and had learned to love one another? Guess what Joseph did?

Joseph: (*brothers come back to palace*) Come close to me. I am Joseph. You threw me in the pit and then sent me as a slave. You wanted to harm me, but God had other plans. God sent me here to save you and to save many nations. Come, I forgive you! (*Joseph hugs the brothers and cries.*) You must go get Dad and all your families. Come live in Egypt. There are still 5 more years of famine. I forgive you.

God loves you. God made it possible for us to store lots of food. There's plenty for everyone! Come live here.