

Session 1

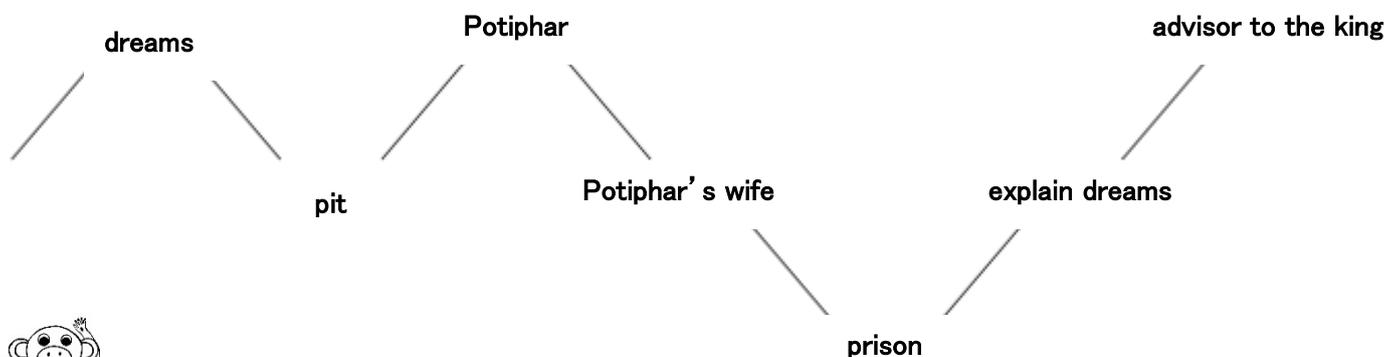
The ups and downs of Joseph's story

Children learn about Joseph.

Scripture: Genesis 37-41

Supplies:

- **For Joseph's brothers:** 11 hangers with a t-shirt on. Hang the hangers on a pole or a clothes line
Make a multi-coloured belt to tie around a child's waist.
Stick a name onto each shirt for each of Joseph's brothers: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin.
- **To make an obstacle course:** The obstacle course can be the highs and lows of Joseph's story. You'll need a thick rope, one carabiner or rope, material, or some sort of safety hook and a few tables and chairs.
When there is a low point in Joseph's life, the rope must go under a chair or table. For a high point the rope goes over the table or chair.
The order of the obstacle course can be as follows: High (dreams), low (pit), high (Potiphar), another low (Potiphar's wife), even lower (prison), high (explain dreams), high (advisor to the king)



Welcome

Play tag: The person who is "it" sticks a red sticker or hat on the person who is tagged. That person is then "it"

Obstacle course: Let the children compete in groups and see who can do the obstacle course fastest. They can alternatively go under and over the chairs until everyone has completed the course.



Worship

Settle down ritual: Children lie on the ground and hold each other's hands. The leader says: "Remember, God binds us together as his children and also to our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Squeeze each other's hand to confirm this and get up again.



Word

Who can remember what Jacob's two wives were called? How many sons and daughters did he have?

Move to the clothes rack/line and show the brothers with their names. Point at Joseph.

Of all his sons, Jacob loved Joseph most. He made Joseph special clothes. It made the other brothers very jealous and on top of that, Joseph kept telling on his brothers.

Joseph once dreamt that he and his brothers were busy tying bundles of wheat. His bundle was upright and the others were bowed before his. Another time he dreamt that the sun, moon and 11 stars bowed before him. The 11 stars were his brothers. His brothers thought he was very full of himself. *(Move Joseph onto a chair)*

One day Jacob sent Joseph to fetch his brothers in the field. He went immediately. His brothers saw him coming from afar and told each other: "Here comes the dreamer again, let's kill him and chuck him in the pit nearby. We can always tell Dad that a lion ate him!" Reuben, the eldest brother, thought that was too harsh. He said: "No, we can't kill our own brother. Throw him into the pit while he's still alive; then we can make a plan later." They caught Joseph, took his special clothes, and chucked him into the pit. *(Move Joseph underneath the obstacle course)* Luckily the pit was dry and without any water. A group of merchants came by who were on their way to Egypt. Judah got an idea. He said: "Let's sell Joseph to the merchants. They can take him to Egypt and sell him as a slave." The other brothers agreed and sold Joseph.

They took his special clothes and smeared it with blood from a lamb. They showed it to their dad, Jacob, so that he would think a lion killed Joseph. Jacob was terribly sad and cried a lot. He said he would mourn Joseph until he died.

In Egypt an important man named Potiphar bought Joseph. Joseph worked in Potiphar's house and everything was well. Potiphar saw that he could depend on Joseph and promoted him. *(Move Joseph to the top of an obstacle)*

Potiphar's wife saw how well Joseph worked. She also saw that he was strong and attractive. Then she did something wrong – she wanted Joseph to be her husband, but Joseph knew that it was wrong in God's eyes and refused. He tried to get away from her, but she tore a piece of his clothes. She called the other slaves in the house and said: "Look what he's done!" She pretended that Joseph wanted to hurt her. No one would listen to Joseph because he was a slave. They thought she was telling the truth. Potiphar had Joseph arrested and thrown in jail. *(Joseph is at the bottom of the obstacle again)*

Even in prison, God was with Joseph. He felt God's love every single day. God also made the prison guard very friendly towards Joseph. He appointed Joseph to oversee the other prisoners. Everything was in Joseph's hands because God was good to him. God gave Joseph the gift of being able to explain people's dreams. When the pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had a strange dream, Joseph was called to the palace to explain his dreams. *(Joseph moves up the obstacle)*

The pharaoh's dream was a warning that it all would be well for 7 years in Egypt, but the next 7 years would be very, very difficult. Joseph knew that God was the one who used the dream to warn the pharaoh. Joseph had the wisdom to make a plan. He suggested that they save up the extra wheat from the 7 good years to prepare for the 7 bad years. The king was so impressed with Joseph's advice that he appointed him as his advisor.

Far away in Canaan, Jacob didn't know that Joseph was still alive. He had been mourning him this whole time, and his brothers kept the secret. Not one of them knew that God had made Joseph an important man. They would only find out years later.

Children reflect on the story:

1. I wonder which character you'd like to be in the story.
2. I wonder which part of the story you'd like to leave out when telling someone else.
3. I wonder which parts of your life make you think of Joseph's lows.
4. I wonder which parts of your life make you think of Joseph's highs.



Working and Playing

- (Smaller children) Give children the colouring picture of Joseph's dreams
- Graffiti coat: Older children can draw elements of Joseph's story on the coat

Closing prayer to end the session

