

Sermon of the Week

Joseph's Brothers Are Jealous



Theme: Jealousy can lead to terrible sin.

Object: Different color swatches of fabric - one per child; stapler

Scripture: Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28

Give each child a swatch of fabric before you begin. Explain that when you point to them, you want them to bring their swatch of fabric to you. When they bring their swatch to you, staple each swatch one to another to make a long chain of swatches.

Hold up what you each have in your hands so everyone can see it. Oh my! Look at all of these pieces of brightly colored cloth; red, blue, green, yellow, purple, and orange. There's just about every color you can imagine. Wouldn't it be beautiful to take all of these pieces of cloth and sew them together into a shirt or a dress? I imagine that if you had a shirt or dress with so many beautiful colors, everyone who saw it would be very jealous and wish that they had one, too. Listen closely and when I point to you bring your swatch up to me.

All these beautiful colors remind me of today's Bible lesson about Joseph. There was a man named Jacob. He was Joseph's father, and he had twelve sons. Of all his sons, Jacob loved Joseph best because he was born to him in his old age. (Point to a child to bring their swatch to you.) To show how much he loved Joseph, Jacob made him a beautiful coat that had many colors. (Point to a child to bring their swatch to you.) Joseph's brothers were jealous because it showed that he was his father's favorite son. (Point to a child to bring their swatch to you.)

A few days later Joseph's father said to Joseph, "Your brothers are out tending my sheep. I want you to go check and make sure that they are ok." Joseph did what his father told him to do, but when his brothers saw him coming, they made plans to kill him. (Point to a child to bring their swatch to you.)

"Let's kill him and throw him into a pit and say that he was eaten by a wild animal." (Point to a child to bring their swatch to you.)

When Reuben, the oldest of the brothers heard of their scheme, he came to Joseph's rescue. "Let's not take his life. Instead, let's throw him into this pit here in the desert, but don't harm him. Then he'll die without laying a hand on him." Reuben said this because he planned to come back later and rescue Joseph and take him back to his father. (Point to a child to bring their swatch to you.)

When Joseph arrived, his brothers grabbed him, ripped off the beautiful robe he was wearing, and threw him into the pit. Then they sat down to eat their dinner. As they were eating, they looked up and saw a caravan of merchants coming their way. (Point to a child to bring their swatch to you.) The merchants were on their way to Egypt. The brothers asked, "What will we gain if we kill our brother? Let's sell him to these merchants instead." So when the merchants came by, Joseph's brothers pulled him up out of the pit and sold him for twenty pieces of silver. (Point to a child to bring their swatch to you.)

The brothers began to make up a story to tell their father. They killed a goat and smeared its blood over Joseph's coat of many colors. (Point to a child to bring their swatch to you.) They took the bloody coat back to Jacob and said to him. "We found this bloody coat in the wilderness. Look at it and see if it is Joseph's coat." (Point to a child to bring their swatch to you.)

"It is my son's coat!" Jacob cried. "Surely some ferocious animal has eaten him." (Point to a child to bring their swatch to you.)

What a terrible thing for Joseph's brothers to do -- just because they were jealous of their brother. I hope that we would never do anything terrible, but we can learn from the Bible that jealousy can cause us to do things that will hurt other people. Jealousy is something we should guard against. We have to learn to be happy with whatever our Heavenly Father has given us. (Point to a child to bring their swatch to you.)

Before we close, I must tell you that this is not the end of the story of Joseph and his brothers. The story does have a happy ending and Joseph is reunited with his father and brothers. But for today, we learn the lesson of the terrible things that happen because of the sin of jealousy. (Point to a child to bring their swatch to you.)

Dear God, You love all of Your children and You want the very best for them. Help us to guard against feelings of jealousy that might come into our heart. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.