

PREPARING AT HOME

August 7-13, 2017

Focus reading: Genesis 37:1–4, 12–28 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=366353040>).

Other lectionary readings: Psalm 105:1–6, 16–22, 45b; Romans 10:5–15; Matthew 14:22–33

Theme: Jealousy

History repeats itself in the saga of Jacob's family. Jacob, like his father before him, has a favorite son, Joseph; and sibling rivalry is tearing the family apart. Jacob makes no attempt to hide the favoritism, even giving Joseph a "long robe with sleeves" (verse 3), a garment that would have been associated with royalty. Jacob, who stepped in front of his own older brother to claim a position of privilege, is setting the stage for Joseph to do the same. Joseph has dreams that appear to support the notion that he is superior to his brothers and becomes a "snitch," carrying bad reports about his brothers to their father. When Jacob sends Joseph into the fields to do some spying on his siblings, the brothers decide to get even with the "dreamer" and act on their rage. There is a plot to kill Joseph, but brother Rueben persuades the others to leave him alive in the bottom of a pit. Unknown to them, Rueben plans to return later and rescue Joseph. So the brothers take the famous coat and leave Joseph in the pit; but before Rueben can rescue him, Judah convinces the brothers to sell Joseph to a group of slave traders who are headed to Egypt. It is this plot twist that puts Joseph in position to eventually bring salvation to his people.

FAMILY MATTERS

For weeks now we have been hearing stories about family tensions and outright conflicts. This is a Genesis version of reality television! Families are imperfect. These stories provide an opportunity to talk about your own family relationships and to work to improve those relationships. Are there sibling rivalries? Is there favoritism? Is there jealousy? Is there bickering? Hopefully murder plots are beyond comprehension! What needs to be done to strengthen family relationships? In Active Parenting, we say "Every day a little play." It is amazing what a little fun and laughter can do for a family! Plan some positive family times this week - nothing stressful for you or costly. Play games or do something your children enjoy. Laugh together! If you need to have a family meeting to work on resolving some family tensions, plan to do that and end the meeting with something positive, like a special dessert.

PRAYER

Loving God,
We thank you for families.
Forgive us when we are not as kind to one another as we should be.
Help us to love one another
and look after one another,
treating each other with love and kindness.
Amen.

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