



Faith Adventures



Youth Resource

Free to use – please acknowledge when using beyond local church children's and youth work so others can find and use the resource themselves.

Embedded in Faith Adventures: Children Together, this youth resource is intergenerational in nature and designed to foster God-connection in church, home and beyond.

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link: www.bit.ly/How-To-FAYR

Title: Genesis 37: 1 – 11

Theme: We are all God's favourite

Contents:

<u>Introduction</u>	1
<u>Together</u>	2
<u>Experience</u>	3
<u>Explore</u>	4
<u>Express</u>	6
<u>Handouts</u>	9

Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

This passage takes us into a very real and raw family story. Joseph is clearly his father Jacob's favourite, and everyone knows it. His beautiful coat is a visible sign of that favouritism, and it stirs up deep emotions among his brothers. Jealousy, resentment, hurt, rivalry — these are emotions many families have faced in one way or another. It reminds us that the Bible doesn't shy away from showing us the complexity and dysfunction that can exist within families.

Let's acknowledge something important: favourites do exist in families and groups. Sometimes it's about personality, birth order, shared interests, or simply who's easiest to get along with. But it's also true that God does not have favourites (Romans 2:11). God's love and grace are offered equally to each person.

Being a "favourite" can mean different things. For Joseph, it brought both privilege and pain. He had a gift, the ability to dream and discern, which made him stand out even more. In life, some people seem to find things easier or receive more affirmation, and others notice. It shapes how they're perceived, and how they experience belonging.

This is a good moment for self-reflection as leaders. Are there “favourites” in our own groups? People we naturally gravitate to, listen to more, or give more opportunities to? How does that affect the wider group dynamic? Are there favourites within the church, those always chosen to read or to be on the welcome team?

God models something very different. God’s love is not limited to a few; it is lavish and wide. Jacob may have favoured Joseph, but God’s plan was for the whole family, for the 12 sons to become the 12 tribes of Israel. What began as a story of favouritism became a story of grace, redemption, and purpose.

This connects closely with our work on emotions. Favouritism can stir up jealousy, insecurity, pride, or hurt. If those feelings come up during discussion, that’s okay — they’re part of the story, if you want to dig deeper into this, please see the sessions for September 2025.

This topic can surface personal disclosures, particularly if participants have painful family experiences. Please respond with care, follow safeguarding guidelines, and seek appropriate support if anything is shared.

As we journey through Joseph’s story, let’s keep in view both the reality of human favourites and the truth of God’s impartial love. God’s grace reaches each person equally. Where Jacob’s favouritism divided the family, God’s plan united a nation.

Together – prayer and games

Let’s start our time with God and each other well

Use this opening prayer or encourage young people to open the session with a prayer of their own.

All mighty God,

Be with us as we learn more about you through stories and people in the Bible.

Help us to walk in your way and follow your path.

Be with us as we make decisions that affect our lives, and the lives of those around us.

Amen

Alternatively, you may use the widgit prayer found in the Faith Adventures: Children together or else the Lord’s Prayer found at the end of this session.

Active game – Stuck in the Mud

This is a game that many will already know, but this week’s version has a twist based on the Bible passage.

Choose a group member to be ‘on’. The rest of the group can run around the space, but if they are caught by the person who is ‘on’, they must stand still with their hands by their sides. They can only become un-stuck if another player bows down to them – like the

sheaves of wheat in the story. If the whole group are caught, start the game again with a different person chosen to be 'on'.

You may choose to stop the game after an agreed amount of time, to allow more than one person the chance to be 'on' during the game.

Quieter game – Tommy

You will need:

- a plate
- bags or lidded pots
- a variety of sweets (be mindful of allergies)

Place 10-12 assorted sweets on a plate, ask one person to turn their back/face the wall etc. Then, in silence, those remaining select one sweet. They call that sweet Tommy (you could call it Joseph to link more with the theme). The person with their back turned now selects sweets off the plate, placing them in a bag or container, until they touch the chosen sweet. When the chosen sweet is touched the group shout TOMMY/JOSEPH! No more sweets can be taken from the plate. Everyone has a go.

Discuss which sweets are the most favourite. Did they pick from the plate the sweet they liked most first? Did the group know the person's favourite sweet. If so, did that affect which sweet they selected to be Tommy/Joseph?

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

This link takes you to New International Version <https://bit.ly/Genesis37NIV>

You may wish to research different versions of this reading on www.biblegateway.com
Recommended versions to try are NRSV, Easy-to-read, The Message, NIRV

Joseph's Dreams

37 Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

² This is the account of Jacob's family line.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

³ Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. ⁴ When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

⁵ Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. ⁶ He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: ⁷ We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

⁸ His brothers said to him, “Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?” And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

⁹ Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. “Listen,” he said, “I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.”

¹⁰ When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, “What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?” ¹¹ His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind

Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Watch: Joseph explained by Kids on the move

<https://youtu.be/8g64jRGLglw?si=ieGreOICpupd3cQx>

Questions for discussion

- Are there favourites in your family?
- What were the issues in Joseph’s family? Its more than his brothers feeling jealous.

Explore

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

A new way to explore the theme

This is a new way to explore the Bible passage and the theme for this week.

Alternatively, you may wish to use the Explore section from this week's Faith Adventures: Children Together to guide your exploration of the theme this week.

Gingerbread people

You will need:

- large gingerbread men
- icing and edible decorations and sweets
- paper plates

What you do:

Invite the group to have fun decorating a gingerbread person. They can be as creative as they want. Make them all different.

Once the gingerbreads are completed, place them all in the centre of the table and gather round to have a look at them all. Encourage the group to get excited about the different tasty treats.

Ask the following questions, encouraging debate in the group, but keep it snappy and brief. Be careful to ensure no one feels bad about their creation.

I wonder if anyone would like to tell us about their gingerbread.

They are all fabulous, we all like different ones for different reasons; its all about perspective and the things you like.

For example, Ask, If you liked colour, which would be your favourite? (the group will choose the most colourful)

If you liked gingerbread, which would be your favourite? (they might choose the least decorated)

If you didn't have a sweet tooth, which would be your favourite? (perhaps the one with less sweets on)

I wonder which one is your favourite, and why.

We all have favourites. It's about perspective, the way we see things and what matters to us most.

Today's Bible reading about Joseph, his father and brothers shows us what happens when favouritism is shown. We too may base our choices on our favourites, but God doesn't. God loves us all equally. We all have the same access to God and all that God offers is open to each and every one of us.

Modern parables

This section includes references to TV programmes, films, books, TED talks, TikTok etc aimed at this age group that will have been widely seen, or where a clip is available to use as a stimulus for discussion. You may also enjoy the picture book recommended for Faith Adventures: Children Together and explore the relevance of the story to the theme of the session in more depth – young people and adults are often well tuned in to the deeper meanings in materials aimed at younger people and the authors are often very aware of the adults reading the books to or with younger ones.



Home Alone 1990: 20th Century Fox Clip by Leviathan Smiles

<https://youtu.be/n05FK5Ms0wE?si=Ssq2LDpcO04QEnJB>

Kevin is really upset, and thinks he's been treated unfairly by the rest of his family. He doesn't think he should be punished, and he says some things that he regrets later in the film.

- Have you ever said anything you regret in the middle of an argument with your family?
- Who usually says sorry first?
- What is the best thing (and what is the worst thing) about being part of a family?

Group discussion

- What would have happened if Jacob loved his family more fairly?
- What would have happened if the brothers had killed Joseph?
- What would have happened if they had all been given a colourful coat?

Personal reflection

- I wonder how you would have handled the situation.
- I wonder where you see favouritism in your life and how you deal with it.
- I wonder if God has favourites.

Express – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

Praying together

Prayers Respond to the theme by writing or saying a short prayer. Alternatively, use the creative prayer from Faith Adventures: Children Together for this session or use the prayer activity below. Alternatively, light a candle and play some music while you listen and talk to God together.

Loving parent,
Sorry for the times when our words have wounded,
and our actions have harmed those in our family.
Sorry for the times we have chosen not to speak kindly,
and the times when we have chosen to ignore others.

Loving parent,
Help us to forgive those who have spoken unkindly,
Siblings or friends, who have made us feel small.
Help us to forgive those who act without thinking,
and those who tease and laugh at us.

Loving parent,
Thank you for all your words of love and encouragement;
that you sing us songs of joy and care.
Thank you for holding us in our sadness,
and celebrate with us in our success.

Loving parent,
Thank you,
that all of us are your favourite.
Amen

Responding together

This is an opportunity for a social justice challenge, some research, craftivism, or a craft or STEM activity. You may have a specific activity chosen but free choice is also an option. Here are some suggestions for this week's theme. Choose whatever will work best for your group.

Family Lines

We know from today's story that Joseph had 11 brothers, did you know that each of them, including Joseph, would go on to lead a tribe each? They are called The Twelve Tribes of Israel. Do a little research to see what happens as each of their tribes develop. What does this tell us about the difference in how God treats us and how we treat each other? It may be worthwhile mapping out the family tree and tribe lines on a very large piece of paper.

Challenge

Discipleship doesn't stop when you walk out of the church door – it is a part of everyday life. Take a challenge with you and try to make it part of your week.

You may think of your own suggestion of what you as an individual or a group might do in the coming week in response to what you have explored today. If not, here are some suggestions:

- Use one of the “conversation starter” questions or the question below to talk with someone of a different generation or from a different setting and share your questions, thoughts, insights together. **Can favouritism ever be a good thing?**
- Research something suggested by JPIT Resources (jpit.uk) or *Commitment for Life* (cforl.co.uk)

Thank you for exploring the **Genesis** passage with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing sharon.lloyd@urc.org.uk or by sharing it on www.bit.ly/FACT_FB



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

+ and forgive us our sins As we forgive those who sin against us

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory

For ever and ever. Amen

