

This works well with three voices: one for each colour.

Have you ever wondered what life's all about? Ever tried to make sense of why sometimes things seem so great ... and at other times when everything goes horribly wrong?

That's just what Joseph was doing, all the way through the story we're going to hear today: trying to make sense of it all. And Joseph's life had more ups and downs than a rollercoaster ride.

Sometimes, Joseph was really, really happy. Can you show me the happy face that you've made?

But sometimes Joseph was really, really sad. Can you show me the sad face you made?

Every now and then, during our story, I'm going to ask you what you think Joseph was feeling. If you think he was having a great time and felt really happy, then show me the happy face. But if you think he was having a horrible time and felt really sad and worried, then show me the sad face. Are you ready?

Jacob lived in the land of Canaan and had twelve sons, but Joseph was his favourite.

One day, he gave Joseph a new coat. It was a beautiful coat. It had many colours.

The coat made Joseph's brothers jealous. They hated him because their father loved him the most.

But Joseph didn't seem to notice how his brothers felt. And when he had a couple special dreams, which showed him that one day he would be much more important than all his brothersand even his parents..... he told his brothers all about them!

How do you think Joseph was feeling, with his special coat and special dreams? Happy - or sad?

His brothers were jealous of Joseph and they did not like his dreams.

One day, when they were all looking after the sheep a long way from home, Joseph's brothers took his coat from him and sold him to some merchants who were on their way to Egypt.

They covered his coat with goat's blood, and when they got home they lied to their father. They showed him Joseph's coat covered in blood and said that a wild animal had killed him.

Joseph's own brothers had sold him as a slave. How do you think he was feeling? Happy - or sad?

Jacob felt very sad too cos he believed his favourite son Joseph was dead.

Joseph wasn't really dead - but he was having a bad time, far away in Egypt.

Even though he was good, someone told lies about him, and he was put in jail.

But God was looking after Joseph. He had made Joseph very good at telling people what their dreams meant, and he explained the other prisoners' dreams to them.

After Joseph had been in jail for two years, Pharaoh had two strange dreams.

He asked his wise men to tell him the meaning of his dreams - but they couldn't! Then someone remembered that Joseph was good at working out what dreams meant. So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and God helped Joseph to understand the Pharaoh's dreams.

“Your dreams mean that Egypt will have seven good years when there will be plenty of food to eat. Then there will be seven bad years when no food will grow.”

So Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of all the food stores of Egypt. In fact, the only person in Egypt more important than Joseph was Pharaoh himself!

How do you think Joseph felt about that? Happy - or sad?

For seven good years, when there was plenty of food for everyone, Joseph made sure the extra grain was stored away. Then, when the seven bad years came, Joseph had plenty of food to sell to the people.

In Canaan, where Joseph's family lived, no food was growing there and they had nothing stored away. So when they heard that there was plenty of food left in Egypt, Joseph's father sent his sons there to buy some.

In Egypt, the brothers asked the ruler if they could buy some food. They didn't realise that it was their brother Joseph they were talking to.

How do you think Joseph felt about seeing his brothers again? Happy - or sad? Or maybe a mixture?

Joseph sold his brothers some food, but he also wanted to test them, to see if they had changed. So before they set off home again, he secretly told his servant:

“Hide this silver cup in Benjamin's bag.”

Then he sent his guards after them - and when they searched the brothers' things, of course they found the silver cup in Benjamin's bag. They marched the frightened brothers back to Egypt and took them to Joseph. Joseph pointed at Benjamin.

“You are all free to go home, except this man here, who stole my cup. He must stay here, as my slave.”

But Joseph's oldest brother begged him to let Benjamin go. “Please, sir,” he said, “take me as your slave. Don't take Benjamin. It would break our father's heart to lose Benjamin as well as our brother Joseph.”

Then Joseph knew that his brothers were really sorry for what they had done to him all those years before.

And how do you think he felt? Happy - or sad?

“Don't you know who I am? I'm your brother Joseph! But don't be afraid! I'm not angry with you. God sent me to Egypt to save lives. So don't be sad. It was not you who sent me here, but God.”

Okay, so who made a cake in a cup today?

Can you remember the ingredients you put into it?

If you ate them on their own, some of them would be nice, wouldn't they - like the sugar. Some of them would be pretty nasty on their own - like the raw egg. And who likes milk?

So some of the things you put into your cake were nice,..... some were nasty,..... and some we're not sure about.

But when you mixed them together and cooked them, what you got was a fantastic cake.

Joseph knew that his life was like that, too. He knew that if he hadn't been in Egypt, so that God could help him to tell the Pharaoh what his dreams meant, then all the people would have starved to death.

Even though he had a hard time at first, God had a plan for him and was watching over him all the time.

So in the end,..... despite everything that had happened,..... he was able to say to his brothers:

“It was not you who sent me here, but God.”

Let us pray.

Father God,

when we can't make sense of our lives,

help us, like Joseph, to trust you and do our best to obey you,

so that we too can look back and say:

“It was God who brought me here.”

We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.