

Joseph Forgives his Brothers who Had Sold him as a Slave

About 5 minutes, from Genesis chapters 37 & 39 – 45

Participants (*No need to memorize lines; the aim is to relive sacred events, not to perform*)

Judah

Joseph

Steward

Prompter Shout a brief line, and Echoes repeat it.

Echoes Children and all adults who want to take part. Echoes need no script.

Joseph Listen, Judah. I had a dream; it foretold something about our future,
I would rule over all of you, my eleven older brothers!

Judah You are a hopeless dreamer, Joseph!

Joseph But that's not all. Look!
Our father Jacob gave me this beautiful, multicolored tunic.

Prompter & Echoes A precious gift!

Judah My brothers, Joseph is in the house now, with his father.
Listen. Joseph dreamt that he would rule over us!
Not only that; Jacob favors his youngest son Joseph over us.
We must change that!

Prompter & Echoes This does not sound good.

Joseph My brothers are out tending the flocks today.
I'll go join them.

Judah Look. Here comes that dreamer.
Now is our chance. Let's get rid of Joseph!

Prompter & Echoes Oh, no!

Judah Look. That camel caravan is on its way to Egypt.
Why kill Joseph? Let's sell him to those merchants.
We will put goat's blood on his fancy tunic,
and tell our father Jacob that a wild beast tore him to pieces.

Prompter & Echoes To Egypt Joseph goes!

Joseph In the slave market Potiphar, Pharaoh's captain of the guard, buys me.
My service pleases him, and he puts me in charge of his estate.
While he is away, his beautiful wife coyly tells me to come lie with her.

Prompter & Echoes Watch out!

Joseph I resist, and she is livid. She tells Potiphar that I tried to force her.
He becomes furious and imprisons me.

Steward Listen to me, all you prisoners; I'm Pharaoh's steward.
Pharaoh wants to know the meaning of a scary dream.
Joseph, you have interpreted dreams of Pharaoh's officers. Come.

- Joseph The dream displayed seven sleek, fat cows and seven skinny ones.
The fat cows devoured the seven ugly, skinny ones:
God reveals its meaning to me; seven years of plenty
will precede seven years of famine. Pharaoh is pleased;
he puts me in charge of storing grain during the seven good years.
- Judah The terrible famine goes on and on; here in Canaan we are starving.
Our father Jacob sends us, his sons, to Egypt to buy grain.
- Joseph My brothers come to me to buy grain. They do not recognize me.
I hide my tears when they speak of their father.
I understand their Hebrew speech, but I ask through an interpreter
if they have a younger brother.
- Judah Our younger brother Benjamin stayed home with our father.
- Joseph You are spies! I will keep one of you here;
the rest can go home with the grain.
Return with your brother to prove you told the truth,
and I will free the hostage.
- Judah Back home, we find the money that we had paid for the grain
hidden in the sacks!
- Prompter & Echoes Strange!
- Judah I tell our father Jacob that we must take Benjamin to Egypt,
to free our brother Simeon whom they hold hostage.
Our father Jacob grieves bitterly, and I feel very bad.
- Prompter & Echoes As you should!
- Joseph The famine persists.
My brothers again come to Egypt to buy more grain;
they bring their youngest brother Benjamin as I requested.
I put them to a test. Steward, I have a job for you.
- Steward I am Joseph's Egyptian steward.
As Joseph has instructed, I fill the Hebrew's sacks with grain,
and hide their money in the sacks as I did before.
I also hide Joseph's costly silver cup in young Benjamin's sack.
- Joseph Steward, they will leave with their donkeys in the morning.
Follow them with soldiers and arrest them.
Ask them why they repaid good with evil.
- Judah The next morning outside the city Joseph's steward stops us.
- Steward Open your sacks.
One of you stole a priceless silver cup from my master.
- Judah You are mistaken. We could never do such a thing!
- Prompter & Echoes It cannot be!
- Judah Your servants would never rob from your master!
With whomever of us you find the cup,
let him die and we will all be your slaves.

Steward He who has the cup will become my slave.
(*Pretend to open a sack*) Aha!
Here it is, in the youngest one's sack.
You, Benjamin, will be my slave.

Judah We tear our clothes and return to Joseph.
We fall down before him.

Prompter & Echoes Mercy, Master!

Joseph Get up! What have you done?
After all the kindness I've shown you!

Judah What can we say? God found your servants' crime.
We are my lord's slaves.

Joseph We found the thief, Judah. He will be my slave.
The rest of you, go in peace.

Judah Our father has a child of his old age,
and you forced us to bring him.
Our father said he'd surely die
if he lost his other youngest son,
who was torn to pieces by wild beasts.

Joseph Torn to pieces by beasts? Are you sure, Judah?

Judah I will stay as your slave instead of the lad.
I cannot go to my father without him.

Joseph Everyone! Leave the room, all except these brothers!

Prompter & Echoes Out! Out!

Joseph I am alone with my brothers now, and I can control myself no longer.
I weep loudly, and cry out in Hebrew "I am your brother Joseph!"

Judah What? You mock us!

Joseph Come close. Come!
I am Joseph, whom you sold into slavery in Egypt.
Do not be angry with yourselves;
God sent me before you to preserve life.

Judah My brother Joseph! You've shown mercy!

Joseph Go and bring my father Jacob to Egypt.
I will provide good land for all of you.

Judah Joseph embraces Benjamin and weeps.
Then he embraces all of us.
We are forgiven!

Prompter & Echoes Joseph is like Jesus in many ways!

Steward Now we are back in the present. Let us think over what we learned.
Please mention ways in which Joseph pictured our Lord Jesus Christ.
For example, both were falsely accused. What else?