**Messy Church – 18th January 2025**

**Joseph as a young man**

Jacob’s wives and their children

**Leah**

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dinah

**Bilhah**

Dan, Naphtali,

**Zilpah**

Gad, Asher,

**Rachel**

Joseph, Benjamin

The activities are:

1. **Joseph’s family** **– Picture or mobile** – Genesis, chapter 35, verses 23 to 26 (for the order in which they were born, see Genesis, chapter 29, verse 31, to chapter 30, verse 24 (all except Benjamin, born chapter 35, verses 16 to 21.))
2. **Joseph’s coat – collage** –Genesis, chapter 37, verses 1 to 4
3. **Joseph’s dreams – bubble picture** – Genesis, chapter 37, verses 5 to 11
4. **The Ishmaelite or Midianite traders –** Genesis, chapter 37, verses 12 to 28
   1. **Beards**
   2. **Camel ornaments** – in the celebration
5. **Joseph in prison –** Genesis, chapter 39, verse 19 to chapter 40, verse 23
   1. **Wine cup**
   2. **Bread rolls**

**6. Pyramids** – in the celebration

**Stories and Activities**

The stories of Joseph are from the very earliest part of the Bible, from the first book in the Bible, and they have become even more famous because of the musical “Joseph and the amazing technicolour dreamcoat”. Joseph was the son of Jacob, who we talked about in Messy Church in April and June 2021, and the great-grandson of Abraham, who was our featured person in June 2020. The material for all three of these sessions is available on our website, the address for which is <https://cliveandtina.co.uk>

1. **Joseph’s family** **– Picture or mobile** – Genesis, chapter 35, verses 23 to 26 (for the order in which they were born, see Genesis, chapter 29, verse 31, to chapter 30, verse 24 (all except Benjamin, born chapter 35, verses 16 to 21.))

Joseph was the eleventh son of Jacob – not the youngest, who was Benjamin. Benjamin was a full brother, but all the others were half-brothers – they all shared the same father, but Jacob had four wives! There was also a sister, but none of the stories of Joseph talk about her!

**You will need:** a piece of paper, a pencil and colouring pencils or felt tip pens. If you want to make a mobile, you will need scissors, string and hole punch or needle and thread, and at least two small garden canes.

Draw round the top joint of your thumb, to make an oval (and do it at least 12 times – one for each brother – if you want to do Jacob and his wives, do 5 more!) Use each oval for a person – draw a face on the oval, and if you want, put a body underneath.

To make the mobile, cut out the figures as you have drawn them, and either use a hole punch and string, or a needle and thread, (this might be best used with small children, as their thumbs are quite small – and they will need help!)

**Talk about:** being part of a family – what is being the oldest (or the youngest) like? Is it different if you are the middle? If you can’t have a discussion with a sibling (brother or sister), try asking your parents. What would it be like to be the only one?

**2. Joseph’s coat** – collage – Genesis, chapter 37, verses 1 to 4

Joseph was one of twelve brothers – but he was his dad’s favourite. Everyone knew this, because Jacob had a special coat made for him. We call it the coat of many colours, but some translations of the Bible say that it was a coat with “full” sleeves (long sleeves, or wide sleeves) or a decorated coat – whatever it was, it was quite different to the clothes everyone else was wearing. When his brothers saw that Joseph was loved more than they were, they were jealous of his relationship to their father.

**You will need:** an outline of a coat on paper, strips of ribbon or paper (we will use fabric), scissors, glue

Cut strips of paper, or lengths of ribbon, or fabric, and glue them to the coat outline.

(If you don’t have fabric or coloured paper, you could paint the strips onto your coat outline.)

**Talk about:** parents having favourite children – and how you might know. How would you feel if you thought one of your brothers or sisters were more loved than you were?

**3. Joseph’s dreams – bubble picture –** Genesis, chapter 37, verses 5 to 11

In the days of Joseph and his family, (and in many other historical times) people believed that dreams meant something. So if you, like Joseph, dreamed that you were more important than other members of you family, you would believe that this would happen in the future. When Joseph told his family about his dreams, they didn’t want to believe that they would come true – they didn’t want Joseph to be more important than they were. Most of the brothers who heard the stories were older than Joseph – they didn’t want their little brother telling them what to do.

**You will need:** a waterproof tray big enough to hold a piece of paper, the piece of paper, a second piece of paper, about half the size of the first, poster paint (in various colours if you like), a little washing up liquid, and a straw.

Put poster paint, mixed thickly (or already made up) on the tray, and mix washing up liquid with the paint. If you are using different colours, do not mix the colours together. Blow through the straw into each colour you are using (you might want to use a different straw for each colour) until it makes bubbles. Carefully lay your larger piece of paper gently on the bubbles, to print them. Lift the paper off again and leave it to dry.

On the second, smaller piece of paper, draw what you would like to be when you are grown up (your dream job, or your dream home, or a dream holiday, perhaps). When the bubble print is dry, stick your dream in the middle of the bubbles, so that they make a frame of your dream.

**Talk about:** having an idea about what you will be when you grow up – do you know what you have to do to achieve your dream? It might include doing special training, and/or getting very good exam results.

**4. The Ishmaelite, or Midianite traders** – Genesis, chapter 37, verses 12 to 28

All across the area where Joseph and his family lived, there were traders – people who bought in one place and sold in another. They may have bought sheep and goats, or camels, or the woven fabric made in one town, and sold it on elsewhere. They were usually from similar tribes to the people who had settled down and farmed. In this part of the story, it is not clear whether Joseph’s brothers got the idea from seeing one group, the Ishmaelites, and sold him to another group, the Midianites, or whether there was just one group, and two different names were being used. Whichever, there is nothing in the Bible to indicate that the traders were bearded, or particularly hairy – this was just poetic licence in “Joseph and the amazing technicolour dreamcoat” “ … some Ishmaelites (a hairy crew) came riding by.” Just as people still decorate their houses (butterflies on the outside walls), their cars (poppies and red noses on their radiator grills), it is quite possible that traders with camels might have decorated the reins and saddles of their camels.

We have two activities in this section.

1. **Beards**

**You will need:** some black fabric, scissors, ribbon, string or elastic. If you have no black fabric, you could use black paper!

Cut the fabric (or paper) into a triangle that goes from below your nose, to completely cover your chin, and hang down a little. Cut out a hole for your mouth, so that you have a moustache and a beard, all in one piece. Make sure that the sides of the beard reach your ears. Make a hole in each side of the beard, by your ears. If you are using paper, you could punch a hole into each side, (you might be able to punch a hole through fabric as well, but not necessarily) Thread a length of the ribbon, or string through the hole on one side, and tie it to itself, and then repeat with the other side, making sure that the strings are long enough to tie behind your head. If you are using elastic, tie one end of the length to each side of the beard, making sure that the elastic is long enough to go round your head, and short enough to keep the beard in place.

1. **Camel ornaments**

**You will need:** some coins (big enough to make a rubbing with), crayons or pencils that will make a rubbing, paper thin enough to make a rubbing, card (coin sized), a hole punch, and some string, scissors, glue.

Put the paper over a coin (or more than one coin), and carefully rub with a crayon or pencil, so that you can see the pattern or picture on the coin on the paper. Turn the coin(s) over and do the other side. Carefully cut out the coin pictures, and stick one on the card. Cut the card out so that it is coin sized, and then stick the picture of the reverse of the coin on the other side – you now have a card coin! You could do this with several coins, or just repeat the process with the same coin again.

Punch a hole in the coin, thread it onto string, tying it in place so it doesn't slip – you could put several “coins” onto one string. You could use the “chain of coins” to decorate your bike, or scooter, or just hang them in your bedroom.

**Talk about:** why people decorate their belongings. Do you draw on plain pencil cases, or the covers of exercise books? Why?

**5. Joseph in prison** – Genesis, chapter 39, verse 19 to chapter 40, verse 23

When the Midianite or Ishmaelite traders arrived in Egypt, they sold what they had brought to sell – including Joseph. He was bought to be a house slave to an important man, the captain of Pharoah’s guard. (Pharoah is the title given to Egyptian kings in history.) Joseph must have been a good slave, because he became quite important in the household, but he would not get into a relationship with Potiphar’s wife – who then had him imprisoned, because she said he had done what he hadn’t done. In the prison, Joseph also behaved well, and became important to the jailers there. (Prisons then were not like prisons now.) Among other things, Joseph had learned to read the meaning of other people’s dreams, and in this part of the story, he tells two different people the meanings of their dreams. Both of them were members of Pharoah’s household, and both found that Joseph was correct in the meanings of their dreams.

We have two activities in this section.

1. **Wine cup**

Pharoah’s wine steward and cup bearer dreamt that he watched a vine grow, and when the grapes were ripe he squeezed them into Pharoah’s cup, which he was holding. Joseph told him that the dream meant that he would go back to working for Pharoah – and asked him to tell Pharoah about Joseph, in the hope that he too would be freed.

**You will need:**  a yogurt pot (or something similar), some cooking foil

Cover the pot with cooking foil, to make it look like a posh cup that a king might use. If you are careful, you could screw up the foil and then carefully unfold it again to cover the pot – the crinkles make it look as if the silver cup has been decorated.

**Talk about:** do you have a favourite cup or glass (or drinking bottle)? Which is more important, the container, or the contents?

1. **Bread rolls**

Pharoah’s baker dreamt that he was carrying baskets of bread on his head – which was not unusual – and a flock of birds came and ate the lot! Joseph said that this meant that, unfortunately, Pharoah would have him executed.

**You will need:** a packet of bread mix – usually sold by supermarkets as their own brand, or Wright’s – they come in white or wholemeal, or other varieties. The packet has instructions on it. Using a bread mix is quicker than starting with flour and yeast, and takes me just over an hour when making loaves. Rolls will cook quicker than a loaf!

Follow the instructions to make the rolls. If you want, before the second rise, you can shape the rolls into plaits, or circles, like a bagel.

**Talk about:** doing things properly – to make good bread, you have to follow all the steps, no skipping bits. How often do we skip steps to do things faster?

Several pyramids in the desert

Description automatically generated**6. Pyramids**

There are no pyramids mentioned in the Bible! However, for most people these days, the pyramids are the most recognisable thing about Egypt, so we thought we could make one each.

The pyramids in Egypt are quite a long way south, some of them so far south that they are in Sudan, not Egypt, and later in Joseph’s story than we are going today, we find out that Joseph’s family come to live in the far north of Egypt, so they might never have seen a pyramid.

**You will need:** a paper plate, or piece of card for a base, the net of the pyramid, printed on paper (or you can copy it for yourself), crayons, colouring pencils or felt tip pens to colour it, scissors and glue.

**Talk about:** how do we recognise places or things? If when we see a pyramid we think of Egypt, what makes us think of the town where we live, or our favourite holiday place? What makes us think of God?

**Celebration**

**Song** Tell me who made all of creation? <https://youtu.be/2Od_qFJ2g50?si=r6KvKXhXue6Mu9SP>

The story starts with two brothers who didn’t get on. One cheated the other, and then ran away out of fear. He went to his uncle’s where he fell in love with his uncle’s daughter. They were going to be married, but his uncle cheated him and married him to her sister, who was older. Now in that country you were allowed to have more than one wife, so Jacob, who was the brother, married the girl he wanted as well! All in all he ended up with four “wives”.

Between them, the four had 12 sons, but Joseph, the eldest son of his favourite wife, was his favourite son. Joseph had dreams. He dreamed that he would be more important than his brothers or even his father. He told his brothers this. They didn’t like him. His father gave him a special coat. The brothers hated him.

One day, Jacob sent Joseph to find his brothers. They thought this was a good chance to get rid of him. They were going to kill him, but sold him to Midianite traders as a slave instead. The tore his coat and covered it with blood and told their father that he had been killed by a wild animal.

The Midianites had camels to carry the goods they were trading. Typically, they would have decorated the camels. We’ll make some camel ornaments as decoration.

Thinking of Joseph being sold as a slave we’ll sing Up times, down times <https://youtu.be/FVJ9mRML5DI?si=RBIh20DpzgeN6P6A>

When Joseph reached Egypt he was sold to an important man called Potiphar. Joseph worked hard, and soon was given an important role in the house, but Potiphar’s wife liked him, and when he didn’t respond she made false accusations against him and he was put in prison. He was there for a number of years, but he worked hard and got as good a position as a prisoner could. Then two other people were sent to the prison. They were Pharoah’s baker and cupbearer. They each had a dream, and Joseph told them what those dreams meant. The baker would be executed, but the cupbearer would be given his job back. This happened, and the cupbearer said he would remember Joseph, but years passed.

When we think of Egypt we think of pyramids. We’re going to make some.

Later we’ll learn what happens next.

We’ll sing One more step along the world I go. <https://youtu.be/7PXV3dwaeNU?si=CM2sp7hrxJ2XXCfc>

Let’s pray.

Lord God, Joseph was not always good, but he learned to work hard and do the right things. Help us to do that too.

Amen

Next Messy Church is 15th February. See you then.

Enjoy our celebration on the Harlington Methodist Church YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTMWR_QCxujkh1zHjTFcoJw>

Then have tea or a treat if it isn’t tea time!

If you send me pictures of anything you do, I can share them on the Church Facebook page or in the Church Monthly (if you want to send pictures that you don’t want shared, just tell me. I’ll only share the one’s you’re happy to share.)

Harlington Messy Church Team

We’ll have a Zoom meeting open for those who can’t come to the church. Our end of Zoom will go on YouTube during the celebration, but we won’t put pictures from your end on. Contact me if you want the link for Zoom. Look out for the broadcast on the Harlington Methodist Church YouTube Channel. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTMWR_QCxujkh1zHjTFcoJw/videos>