

The Ballad of Little Joe



What is the STORY about?

You've heard the story of Joseph and his coat of many colors before, but we reckon you've never heard it told as a Western... until now! Join Little Joe (Larry the Cucumber) and his rootin' tootin' French pea brothers on an adventure that will take them from an abandoned mineshaft all the way to Dodge Ball City—with Little Joe's faith being tested every step of the way. It's a Wild West adventure that teaches kids to keep the faith when facing hardship because, in the end, God can work all things out for good.

- A Lesson in Facing Hardship
- Key Passage: Genesis 37-50
- Running time: 25 minutes



What do you THINK?

- Why were Little Joe's brothers jealous of him? (Because their father favored him, and he told them that he had a dream about their bowing down to him)
- How did Little Joe get to Dodgeball City? (His brothers sold him to desperadoes who took him there)
- Miss Kitty lied about Little Joe stealing money. Why? (She was jealous because he was popular and had just been named Employee of the Month)
- How did Little Joe earn his freedom from jail and become the second most powerful man in Dodgeball City? (By interpreting dreams)
- When Joe's brothers came to Dodgeball City for food, how did he react? (He realized they were sorry for what they had done and he forgave them)



What does the BIBLE say?

The account of Joseph's life is found in Genesis 37-50. Read select portions of those scriptures in a translation that is easy to understand OR tell the story in the following condensed version.

Jacob lived in the land of Canaan with his twelve sons. Joseph was born when his father was old, and so his father loved him more than his other sons. He even made a special brightly-colored coat for him to wear. Of course, this made the other brothers jealous. Now Joseph was a dreamer... not of ordinary dreams. God sent important dreams to Joseph that had special meanings. When Joseph told his brothers of the dreams that meant his brothers would someday be bowing down to him, they became very angry, took his special coat, and threw him into a pit. Soon a group of traders on their way to Egypt happened by, and the brothers sold Joseph to them. The brothers dipped Joseph's coat in goat blood and returned to their father to tell him a lie... that Joseph had been killed by a savage animal. Jacob was very sad and could not be comforted. Joseph was sold to Potiphar, the Egyptian captain of the palace guard. He realized how wise Joseph was and witnessed how hard he worked, so he placed him in charge of his house. When Potiphar's wife lied about something Joseph had done, he was sent to prison. But God was with Joseph and gave him the ability to interpret dreams, which eventually gained him a position with the king as ruler of all the land in Egypt. As Joseph predicted from the dreams, there were seven years of good crops and then seven years of famine. When his brothers came to Egypt during the famine in search of food, they did not recognize Joseph. When they discovered who he was, they were afraid because of the terrible things they had done to him. But Joseph forgave his brothers, brought his father to Egypt, and gave them everything they needed. What Joseph's brothers intended for harm, God used for good!

The Story of Joseph



ACTIVITY

Scatter several green paper cacti (or other obstacles) in a designated area. Ask for a volunteer to be blindfolded and placed at one end of the area. The rest of the group will direct him to the other end of the cactus desert with verbal commands. He must TRUST the group for directions—just as we must TRUST God for direction in our lives. See if anyone can make it to the other side of the desert without touching a cactus!



What can we DO?

As you talk about Joseph and how the bad things that happened in his life turned out for good, ask the children to think of a time when something bad happened to them. Next, ask them if they can think of any good that came out of that situation. (Example: Broke an arm and wasn't able to play basketball for the season, but spelling grades improved because of extra time spent on homework.)

Additional questions to encourage discussion:

- *Have you ever felt that God isn't listening to you?*
- *Are you aware of any disaster or unpleasant situation from which God has protected you?*
- *When is the last time that you relied on God to see you through a difficult time?*

Help the children find these Bible verses to read aloud.

- **ROMANS 8:25** *"But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently."*
- **1 CORINTHIANS 13:4** *"Love is patient, love is kind."*
- **PSALM 40:1** *"I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry."*

3 Things to remember about Joseph

1. God gave Joseph the ability to **INTERPRET DREAMS**
2. His father gave him a **COAT OF MANY COLORS** that caused his brothers to be jealous
3. Joseph **FORGAVE** his brothers for the terrible things they had done to him

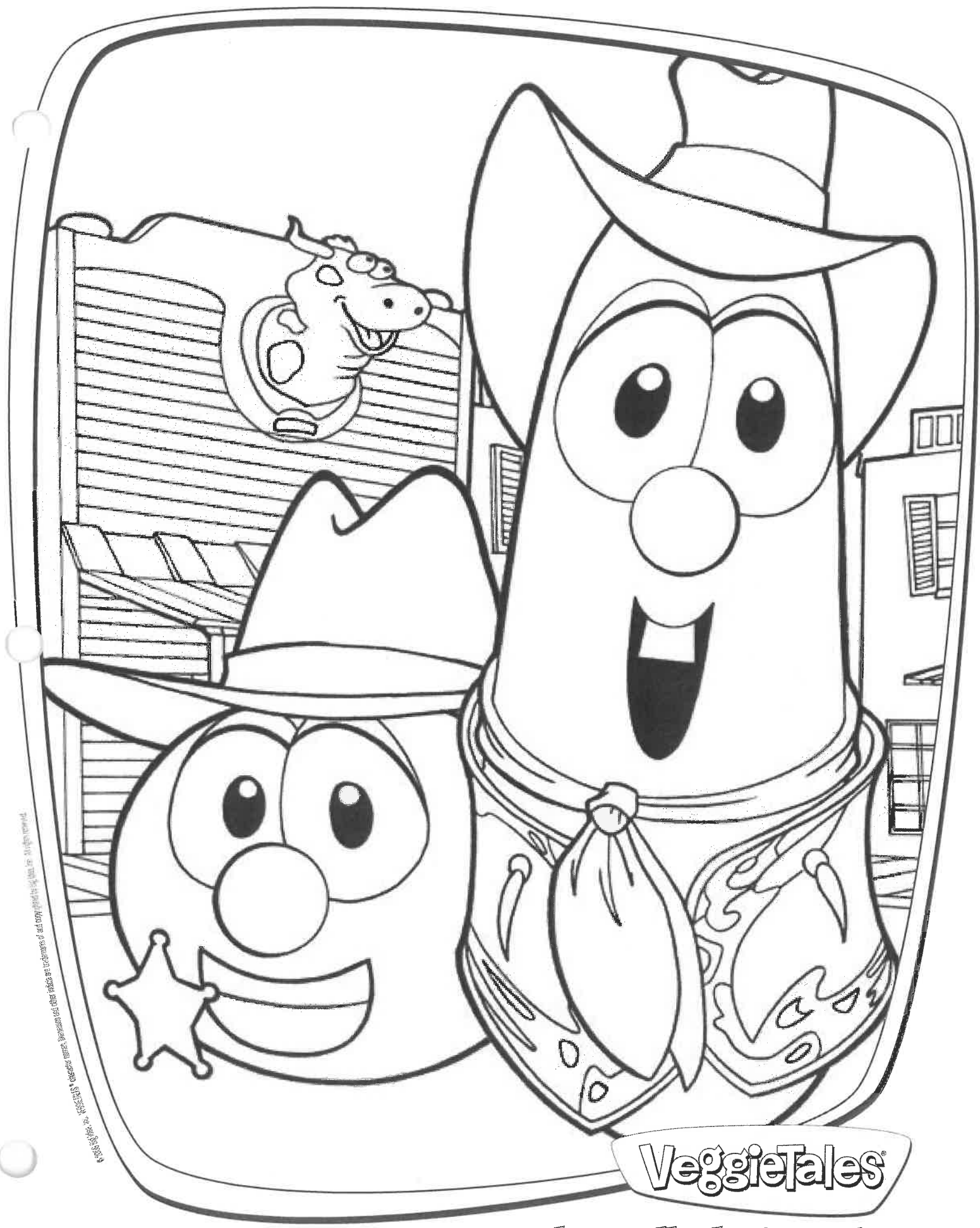
KEY VERSE

(Romans 8:28) "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him."

KEY NUGGET

Trust God and his purpose for everything that happens in our lives.





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DIRECTIONS:

Match the numbers on the right with the correct statement on the left. Look up the Bible verses in parentheses for some help! Then when you're finished, add up all the numbers to find out the total!

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1) Joseph was ____ years old at the beginning of the story. (Genesis 37:2) | 300 |
| 2) In Pharaoh's dream, the vine had ____ branches. (Genesis 40:10) | 3 |
| 3) There were ____ years of "great abundance". (Genesis 41:29) | 5 |
| 4) There were ____ years of famine. (Genesis 41:30) | 7 |
| 5) ____ of Joseph's brothers came to see Joseph during the famine. (Genesis 42:3) | 17 |
| 6) Benjamin's portion was ____ times the size of the other brothers. (Genesis 43:34) | 20 |
| 7) Joseph gave Benjamin ____ shekels of silver. (Genesis 45:22) | 5 |
| 8) He also gave Benjamin ____ sets of clothes (Genesis 45:22) | 66 |
| 9) He sent his father ____ donkeys. (Genesis 45:23) | 7 |
| 10) ____ people eventually went to Egypt with Jacob. (Genesis 46:26) | 10 |



Did You Know?

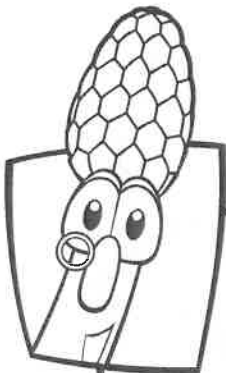
Joseph's father, Jacob, had twelve sons!

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad and Asher

Can you imagine what all of these brothers would have been called if they all had VeggieTales character names? Have fun trying to come up with your own nicknames for each one!



ANSWERS: 1) 17, 2) 3, 3) 7, 4) 7, 5) 10, 6) 5, 7) 300, 8) 5, 9) 20, 10) 66
TOTAL: 440



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MEMORY VERSE

"And we know that in all things God works together for the good of those who love him."

- Romans 8:28