



BENJAMIN AND THE SILVER GOBLET

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When drought envelopes Canaan, Jacob sends his sons to Egypt, where they unexpectedly encounter Joseph, the brother they sold into slavery years earlier. How will Joseph react, now that he has power and authority?

In *Benjamin and the Silver Goblet*, the sons of Jacob are given a chance to redeem themselves after their malicious treatment of their brother, Joseph. You may remember that years earlier Joseph had been sold into slavery by his jealous brothers after receiving an especially beautiful coat from their father. Judah and the other older brothers have an opportunity to protect their younger brother, Benjamin, in a way that they chose not to do with Joseph years before.

The sons of Jacob are members of our ancestral family. With a children's Bible, your youngsters can explore with you the fascinating stories in the book of Genesis that provide the basis for this story.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Some questions you may choose to explore with your children include:

- Does the brothers' correct behavior now make amends for their cruelty to Joseph in the past?
- Do the brothers deserve Joseph's forgiveness?
- Does everyone deserve a second chance?
- How would you feel if you were Joseph?

During your talks, keep in mind the Jewish tenet of *teshuvah* (repentance), which comes from the Hebrew word meaning "return." *Teshuvah* is the concept by which we recognize our errors, ask forgiveness, and make amends as best we can with the intention of improving.

This book provides a beautiful example for children that even in the most desperate of situations, conflict and hurt can turn to resolution, harmony and goodwill. A traditional Hebrew song, inspired by Psalm 133, includes these words: *Hine ma tov umanayim shevet achim gam yachad*. When translated, this passage reads: "How good and pleasant it is when people dwell together in harmony."

THINKING ABOUT SLAVERY

In *Benjamin and the Silver Goblet* we learn that Joseph, Benjamin's older brother, has become a most important Egyptian official. Knowing that Egypt had planned well for the famine taking place, many Israelites left Canaan and made the arduous trek to Egypt; sadly, their strength and perseverance brought about their enslavement to a pharaoh frightened by these attributes. The daughters and sons of the Israelites, including those of this story's Benjamin and his brothers, experienced the harsh realities of slavery.

Many Israelites were born, lived, and died in Egyptian bondage, never knowing freedom and the ability to make decisions and determine their futures. The exodus from this bitter existence is recounted in the story of Passover, a holiday that has been celebrated for many centuries. This book provides an excellent opportunity to think about people around the world still living without freedom and to consider ways in which your family can work toward ensuring the liberties that all people deserve. Pj