

Gem Seeking

LITTLE GEMS STORY

Parent/Teacher Preparation:

Please see the [Instructions for the Little Gems Story](#) on the YMTOI website. This will help you to understand how to prepare for the story.

I Spy

Shalom children! We've been following Yoseph since he interpreted Pharaoh's dreams and was made second ruler of all Mitsrayim. All his words to Pharaoh are proving to be true. It's now the second year of dry and empty fields, and without all Yoseph's stored-up grain, the people of Mitsrayim would be in big trouble.

In the land of Kena'an, everyone is getting skinnier and weaker. But Ya'aqob heard the good news that there was grain in Mitsrayim (**place older Ya'aqob on board**), so he gathered his sons together (**place 10 brothers on board**) and sent them all down to Mitsrayim to buy a whole bunch of grain so they won't starve to death. That is, he sent them all—except Binyamin! (**Place Binyamin on board next to older Ya'aqob.**) The journey could be dangerous, and now that Yoseph was gone, Ya'aqob couldn't bear the thought of losing Binyamin, too! (**Remove older Ya'aqob and Binyamin from board.**) So off went the 10 brothers to Mitsrayim, with donkeys and silver money to buy the grain. (**Place pyramids on board.**)

As the brothers stood in line to buy grain from the governor of Mitsrayim, Yoseph looked up at and couldn't believe his eyes. (**Place Yoseph as governor on board.**) Why, there were his 10 brothers who sold him! And then as they got closer to him, they all bowed down before him with their faces to the ground to show him respect. (**Remove 10 brothers from board and place 10 brothers bowing on board.**) Yoseph remembered the dream he had many years earlier about the 11 sheaves bowing to his sheaf and here it was all coming true. (**Place bowing sheaves dream scene on board.**)

When he looked closer, his heart skipped a beat. He didn't see Binyamin among them. Had his brothers done something to his younger brother as well? Because Yoseph was not happy with his 10 brothers, he decided it was time to put them all to a hard test.

When the sons of Ya'aqob reached the governor, they looked him right in the eye and didn't recognize him at all! (**Remove 10 brothers bowing from board and place 10 brothers on board.**) It dawned on Yoseph how much he had changed since they had sold him as a young, frightened, teenage slave. He was now a full-grown man wearing expensive royal clothing. His headpiece and jewelry sparkled in the sunlight—signs of his wealth, power and authority. Not only that, but Yoseph had learned to speak perfectly in the language of Mitsrayim. No wonder his brothers didn't recognize him—Yoseph looked and sounded just like a rich Mitsrite!



But in his heart, he was very different from the Mitsrites. Can you guess why? Yes, Yoseph bowed only to Yahweh, trusting in the Elohim of his fathers, Abraham, Yitshaq and Ya'aqob. **(Remove pyramids from board and place 3 patriarchs on board off to the side.)** He refused to serve any of the false gods of Mitsrayim; that's why we all admire him so much!

(Remove all characters from board except for 10 brothers and Yoseph as governor.)

But when those brothers of his didn't recognize him, he decided to give them some of their own medicine and play a few tricks on them. "You are spies!" he shouted. "No, no!" cried the brothers. "We are all sons of one man, and honest people." But Yoseph kept on accusing them and questioning them about their home and family. By now the brothers were shaking with fear. They told him that there were 12 sons of their father Ya'aqob, but one had died, and the youngest had stayed home with their father. Still, Yoseph pretended not to believe them. "No, but you are spies!" he said.

Now, let me ask you something. When you've been bad or disobedient, does your mother ever make you go to your room or sit in a corner, so you can think about it and decide not to do it again? Well, that's exactly what Yoseph did with his brothers. **(Place prison on board next to brothers.)** He shut them all up in prison for 3 days so they could think about it. And maybe Yoseph also needed a couple of days to find out what his heavenly Father wished him to do. He knew that Yahweh is a merciful Elohim, ready to forgive anyone who is truly sorry for their sins. So, he needed some way to test them, to see if their hearts had changed.

On the third day, the governor came to let them out. He sternly told them that if they did not return with their youngest brother, they would all die. The frightened brothers huddled together and talked about how guilty they felt about the evil things they had done to their younger brother Yoseph. Elohim must be punishing them for all that! And because they believed the governor was a Mitsrite, they had no clue that Yoseph actually understood every word they were saying. Hearing them confess their guilt made tears come to his eyes. He had to step away and secretly have a good cry. When he returned, he singled out Shim'on and had him tied up and thrown back in prison. Yoseph strictly warned the rest of them: "If you don't bring back your youngest brother the next time, your life is worth nothing." Whoa, double trouble!

(Remove all characters from board.)

Then Yoseph played another trick on them. When his servant was ready to load the grain sacks on their donkeys, Yoseph secretly commanded him to put their silver inside their grain sacks and tie them up. **(Place loaded donkeys on board.)**

When the brothers stopped later to eat some grain, why, there was their money, sitting in their sacks! Oh no, now the man would probably accuse them of stealing, let alone being spies. What was Yahweh trying to do to them?



When the 9 sons arrived home and told everything to their father (**place older Ya'aqob on board**), he was also alarmed. "Look what you have done!" he moaned. "Yoseph is gone, and now Shim'on is gone, and on top of that you want me to send Binyamin back with you and make me lose him, too? If I let him go down there and something bad happens to him, I will just lay myself down and die!"

Well, time went by, and all of them—including their animals—were eating up the grain from Mitsrayim. Soon they would have to go back there and get some more. (**Remove loaded donkeys from board.**) Ya'aqob's sons tried to convince him to please let Binyamin go with them (**place Binyamin on board**), as the governor had strictly commanded them. But Ya'aqob kept refusing. "Why on earth did you even tell the man that you had another brother?" he wailed. "No, I will NOT let him go with you!" So, day after day they just sat around, listening to each other's stomachs rumble. It was awful! Finally, Yehudah spoke up. "Look," he said, "If we go and don't have Binyamin with us, we could all be put to death as spies. And even if we're not arrested for spying, the man won't even see us without our youngest brother. If we stay here—well, without food we're all going to die anyway!" I think Yehudah was pretty smart to point that out, don't you?

So, at last Ya'aqob gave in and agreed to let Binyamin go with them. He sent his sons with some sweet treats to present the governor. If you were Ya'aqob, what would you have packed for the governor? Gummy Bears, maybe? How about some Twix bars? Well, Ya'aqob didn't have anything like that. He did have some treats for special occasions, and gave his sons some dried fruits, along with a little honey, some spices and some almonds. (**Place presents on board.**) He gave them double money, too (**place 2 sacks of silver on board**)—some for the new grain, and the rest to pay back what they had found in their sacks on the first trip. Last of all, he hugged his son Binyamin and said to be sure to text him and let him know how he was doing. (*Oops! Sorry, I forgot...cell phones weren't invented yet.*) There was nothing Ya'aqob could do but wait and pray that Yahweh would change the governor's heart so that all his sons could return safely. (**Remove Ya'aqob, presents and silver from board.**)

In a few days, there were the brothers, back in Mitsrayim, waiting in line to buy grain. (**Place Yoseph as governor on board**) Just imagine how excited Yoseph must have felt to see Binyamin standing there beside them! And how surprised the brothers must have been when the governor had his overseer take them all to his house and prepare a special lunch! (**Place overseer on board.**)

When they arrived, the frightened brothers wanted to return the money they'd found in their sacks, but the overseer just smiled. "No problem!" he said. "I got your money the first time, so maybe your Elohim wanted to give you a present in your sacks!" Then he brought Shim'on out to them, looking healthy and very happy to see his brothers. I'll bet they just hugged him to pieces! Then they went into the house to have their feet washed (**place foot washing scene on board**) and to enjoy a refreshing drink before their meal.

(**Remove all characters from board and place feast table scene on board.**)



When Yoseph, the governor, got home at noon, he kindly asked how their old father was doing, if he was still alive. The brothers told him that he was in good health and still alive. Then they bowed down before him just like the dream he had years ago when he was 17 years old and still living at home. **(Place 11 brothers bowing on board.)** He looked right at Binyamin who was about the same age he was when he was sold into slavery and said, "Is this the younger brother you told me about?" He gave the young man his best wishes and hoped that Elohim would be good to him. But suddenly the governor turned around and ran out of the room. Can you guess why? **(Place crying emoji on board.)** Yes, he was crying again. Yoseph hadn't seen his dear little brother since Binyamin was only a boy. It was just too much for him. So, he went to his room, cried out all his tears, then washed his face and came back with a command for his servants to serve the food. **(Remove crying emoji from board.)**

As their meal was being served, the sons of Ya'aqob began to notice something very strange. They had been seated in the exact order of their birth! How on earth could the man have known? Re'uben, the oldest, was served first, then Shim'on, the second-born, then Lewi, then Yehudah, and on down the line. Binyamin, the youngest, was seated at the end. And he was served 5 times as much of the delicious food than any of the others. **(Point to Binyamin's food on feast scene table.)** To get 5 times more was a great honor. Binyamin must have been absolutely stuffed! I wonder if maybe Yoseph was giving them little hints about who he really was.

Do you think that any of the brothers have guessed Yoseph's secret yet? **(Let children answer.)** We will have to find out in another lesson. But see how differently Yoseph treated his brothers on their second visit. He was no longer angry, but had decided to forgive them and be kind, no matter what they had done to him. He wanted to do things Yahweh's way. Oh, if only they would be humble and truly sorry for doing wrong! **(Place praying emoji on board.)** Then, just maybe, they could be a family again.

Well children, we have come to the end of our story for today. We will see you next week for another exciting Little Gems story!

