

Projects – Bereshit 37

The Brothers on Trial

After students have learned the story of Yosef's sale, review together, as a class, the approaches of Rashi and Rashbam to the sale. See [Who Sold Yosef](#) for details. Then have the students stage a trial to determine if the brothers really sold Yosef or not.

- Divide the class into two groups, those who will work for the prosecution (Rashi) and those who will work for the defense (Rashbam).
- Provide each with "evidence" in the form of verses and commentaries that support either side. These can relate to:
 - a) The character of the brothers and their relationship to Yosef
 - b) The role of Reuven
 - c) The relationship between the Midianites, Medanites and Yishmaelites
 - d) Later statements by either Yosef or the brothers that relate back to the sale.
- Each group will choose someone to act as lawyer, others to be witnesses, others to prepare "evidence" such as a bill of sale or the like.

The trial should include the following components:

- An **opening speech** where each side presents the main facts of their case
- **Calling of witnesses** - Students can choose whomever they want: Reuven, Yosef, Midianites, Yishmaelites, Bilhah, character witnesses, Yaakov, and/or whomever else you think of
- **Cross examination** of the other side's witnesses
- **Presentation of evidence** wherever relevant
- A **closing speech** where each side summarizes and reacts to points brought up in the trial