

Instructions for Group Leaders

Included in this lesson plan are notes and resources for you. The questions listed are to be used as a help to guide and encourage your group conversation. You are free to improvise through the questions as the conversation takes you. Do your best to involve everyone in the discussion as some may dominate conversation and others may hide.

Teaching will be a natural element of discussion, but allow the questions to move your members toward understanding the concept of the passage and message. Your role is not at teacher, but a facilitator.

Remember to review your resources for leading a discussion. Those techniques will help you to build an involved and caring atmosphere as well as challenge you as you serve and lead your group.

Attached is an outline of the study for the semester. Listed first is a set of passages for you to read before your first meeting. Studying these passages will help you to know the context of the passage and prepare you to respond to questions.

Your outline will show you the passage for the week and the themes to be discussed. Be sure to review the passage and questions before each meeting.

Your lesson each week is only expected to last 30-40 minutes. These study discussions should be only one element of your group community. Make sure to also allow time for laughter, history telling (getting to know each other), prayer, service, etc.

After the outline, you'll find your weekly breakdown of passages and questions. Each lesson will list the passages to read for that meeting as well as a list of questions to ask the group. For your convenience, the questions will be marked as what type of question they are. Each type of question serves a unique purpose.

Observation Questions: Helps the group discover context, people, actions that are literally taking place in the passage. Helps the group set a foundation to discuss the themes. These questions are great for involving individuals who are typically quite or cautious about sharing.

Interpretation Questions: Helps the group discover what is meant by the writer. Understanding what the writer was saying to his audience is an invaluable element of understanding the message being given. It cannot mean something to us today that it did not mean to the audience it was written to. It can however be applied uniquely to each reader. (See Application Questions)

Application Questions: Helps the group make the passage being discussed personally relevant to current circumstances. These questions move the reader beyond knowledge to a place where they can let the Holy Spirit transform their life.

Each question is abbreviated as: Obs., Int., or App.

Life of Joseph | Genesis 37-50

Group Leader Pre-Read:

- Genesis 35-36
- Genesis 37-50 (If you'd like to read the whole story before you begin)

Basic Context: Prior to this, we learn that Jacob, also known as Israel, had met and fallen in love with Rachel. When pursuing her for marriage, her father insisted that Jacob work 7 years before he could marry her. After 7 years of work, Rachel's father gave Jacob Leah instead of Rachel to be his wife. He then worked 7 more years so that he could marry Rachel. After all of that, Rachel was barren. Leah had many children, but Rachel had none. Rachel and Leah also gave their servants to Jacob and he had children with them. Finally, Rachel was able to give birth and had Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph was Jacob's favorite child because he was the firstborn of Rachel whom he had loved.

This is set in a time before God had set apart a people as his own. Joseph was the great grandson of Abraham. (Abraham > Isaac > Jacob > Joseph) Moses leads the Israelites out of Egypt several hundred years after Joseph's death.

Lesson 1: Genesis 37:1-10 | Objective: To see that God gave Joseph a dream and he often gives us big dreams. We are to discuss what to do when God gives us big dreams and how to react to the dreams that God gives to others.

Lesson 2: Genesis 12-36 | Objective: To see the difference between living in the now and being long-term focused

Lesson 3: Genesis 39:1-6 | Objective: To better understand the favor of God

Lesson 4: Genesis 39:7-23 | Objective: To understand what it means to flee from temptation

Lesson 5: Genesis 40:1 – 41:40 | Objective: To discuss Joseph's spiritual gifts and see how God can give gifts to fulfill His purpose.

Lesson 6: Genesis: 41:41-57 | Objective: to see how Joseph honored God in a foreign land and to discuss how we can faithfully honor God

Lesson 7: Genesis: 42:1 – 43:34 | Objective: To see that God wants to give us blessings and to fulfill his promises

Lesson 8: Genesis: 44:1-34 | Objective: To observe how Joseph chose to show mercy and to discuss how we could show mercy to others.

Lesson 9: Genesis 45:1–28 | Objective: To see how Joseph extended grace and forgiveness to his brothers and to discuss how we could practice grace and forgiveness in our lives.

Lesson 10: Genesis 46-47:12 | Objective: To see how God extends blessings through the generations of family and to discuss what values and blessings we would like to pass on to following generations.

Lesson 11: Genesis 50:1-26 | Objective: To discover how the Lord can restore broken relationships and to see our need for reconciliation.

Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 1

Genesis 37:1-10

Lesson 1 Objective: To see that God gave Joseph a dream and he often gives us big dreams. We are to discuss what to do when God gives us big dreams and how to react to the dreams that God gives to others.

Read Genesis 37:1-10

Observation: Why did Joseph's brothers hate him?

Obs: What did Joseph's two dreams imply about future family dynamics?

Interpretation: Knowing that his brother's disliked him, why do you think Joseph shared his dreams with his brothers?

Int: Why do you think God gave Joseph these dreams?

Application: How do you see God revealing his plans in your life?

App: In what ways might you benefit from sharing your God given dreams with others?

App: How could you encourage and support others to pursue the purpose God has for them?

Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 2

Genesis 37:12-36

Lesson 2 Objective: To see the difference between living in the now and being long-term focused

Read Genesis 37:12-36

Obs: Why did Joseph's brothers want to kill him?

Int: What did Joseph's brothers hope to gain by removing Joseph from the family?

Obs: What were the short term consequences of selling Joseph?

Int: What were the long term consequences of selling Joseph? Do you think that Joseph's brothers carefully considered the long-term consequences of their choices?

App: Why might it be unwise for us to concentrate of our current circumstance and not the long term outcome?

App: Can you think of a situation in which you tried to change the outcome by changing the circumstances?

App: How might we become more kingdom minded and less short-term focused?

Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 3

Genesis 39:1-6

Note: We are skipping Chapter 38 in our study because it is about Judah and Tamar and is not relevant to the life of Joseph. You should encourage group members to read it on their own.

Lesson 3 Objective: To better understand the favor of God

Read Genesis 39:1-6

Obs: Why was Joseph so prosperous?

Obs: In what ways did the Lord show favor to Joseph?

App: What are the different ways that God has shown you favor in your life?

Int: Why is it significant that God favored Joseph while he lived in Potiphar's household?

App: Why do you think God chooses to favor those who follow him?

App: How could we continue to walk in the favor of God?

App: How could you share your blessings with those who don't know the Lord?

Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 4

Genesis 39:7-23

Lesson 4 Objective: To understand what it means to flee from temptation

Read Genesis 39:7-23

Obs: In what ways did Joseph resist being put in a tempting situation?

Obs: What was the outcome of Joseph refusing to fall into temptation?

Int: How do you think Joseph felt about choosing to do the right thing in this situation?

App: There are many ways to handle temptation in your life. Why is it most appropriate to flee from sin?

Int: How was Joseph punished or rewarded for resisting temptation?

App: How can resisting temptation strengthen our walk with God?

App: How can resisting temptation show the character of Christ to others?

Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 5

Genesis 40:1 – 41:40

Lesson 5 Objective: To discuss Joseph's spiritual gifts and see how God can give gifts to fulfill His purpose.

Read Genesis 40:1-41:40

Obs: Which gifts do you see present in Joseph's life?

Obs: Who was Joseph able to minister to with his gifts?

Int: Why do you think God chose to use these gifts in Joseph's life?

App: Why does God give gifts to his people?

Int: What is the significance of Pharaoh's dream in fulfilling the purpose that God had for Joseph?

App: What is a gift that you see present in your own life?

App: What is a gift that you see present in the life of someone else in this group?

App: How has God used your gifts to help you fulfill your purpose?

Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 6

Genesis 41:41-57

Lesson 6 Objective: Objective: To see how Joseph honored God in a foreign land and to discuss how we can faithfully honor God

Read Genesis 41:41-57

Obs: What names did Joseph give his sons?

Int: What is significant about these names?

Int: In what ways did Joseph maintain his Hebrew faith while in Egypt?

App: When do you find it most difficult to honor God?

App: Why do you think God is sometimes forgotten in the midst of a success?

Int: Based on what we have read up to this lesson, why is it important that Joseph maintained his faith in God?

App: Share a time in your life when glory was given to God?

Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 7

Genesis 42:1 – 43:34

Lesson 7 Objective: To see that God wants to give us blessings and to fulfill his promises

Read Genesis 42:1-43:34

Obs: What did Joseph make his brothers do before he would give them grain?

Int: Why do you think Joseph required so much of his brothers before he would give them more grain?

App: Why might God ask for obedience before giving us a blessing?

Obs: How did his brothers respond to Joseph's treatment?

Int: Why was Jacob hesitant to let Benjamin go?

Int: What is the significance of Joseph's brother's bowing down before him (Gen 42:6 and 43:26)?

App: How has God fulfilled a long time promise to you?

App: How could members of this group encourage you to keep praying on a promise that God has given you?

Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 8

Genesis 44:1 - 45:7

Lesson 8 Objective: To observe how Joseph chose to show mercy and to discuss how we could show mercy to others.

Read Genesis 44:1 – 45:7

Obs: How did Joseph test his brothers?

Int: Why did Joseph frame his brothers?

Int: How did Joseph use this opportunity to show mercy to his brothers?

App: Where do you need to show mercy to someone in your life?

Int: How did Joseph's brothers posture themselves to receive mercy?

App: How could you posture yourself to receive mercy from God?

Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 9

Genesis 45:1–28

Lesson 9 Objective: To see how Joseph extended grace and forgiveness to his brothers and to discuss how we could practice grace and forgiveness in our lives.

Read Genesis 45:1–28

Obs: How did Joseph feel about reuniting with his brothers?

Int: Why was it important that Joseph release hurt and bitterness toward his brothers?

App: Why is it important that we release bitterness in our lives?

Int: How did this visit from his brothers give Joseph an opportunity to show forgiveness?

App: Joseph showed his brothers grace by forgiving them when they didn't deserve it. How could you extend grace and forgiveness to someone in your life?

App: How has someone showed you grace?

App: In what ways has God shown you the power of his forgiveness?

Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 10

Genesis 46-47:12

Lesson 10 Objective: To see how God extends blessings through the generations of family and to discuss what values and blessings we would like to pass on to following generations.

Read Genesis 46-47:12

Obs: Based on what you've read in Genesis and in this passage, what do you think about Jacob's family?

Int: How do think Jacob and the family might have felt traveling to Egypt with so many people?

Int: Why is it important that the family of Jacob is documented in this passage?

App: Who is someone in your family who has made a positive impact on your walk with God?

Int: What kinds of values were established in Jacob's family from the life and actions of Joseph?

Int: God used one family to establish an entire nation. Why do you think God chooses to pass blessings through family?

App: What kinds of values would you like establish for your family so that future generations will be blessed?

Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 11

Genesis 50:1-26

Note: We are skipping Chapters 48 and 49 in our study because it addresses more about the life of Jacob and his relationship with his sons.

Lesson 10 Objective: To discover how the Lord can restore broken relationships and to see our need for reconciliation.

Read Genesis 50:1-26

Obs: How do Joseph's brothers feel about their brother now that Jacob has died?

Obs: How does Joseph respond to his brother's message?

Int: Why do you think it was important to Joseph's brothers that they were reconciled to Joseph? (Reconcile: to reestablish a close relationship between; to settle or resolve)

App: Share about a relationship that has been reconciled in your own life.

Int: Why is it significant that God sent Jesus to reconcile our relationship with Him?

App: If you were to send a message to God asking for reconciliation (as Joseph's brother's did) what would you say? (It's okay to take a moment to think about this one)

App: Why is it important that we reconcile with people in our lives?