

simply

GENESIS

a story of hardship, pain, and God's faithfulness

simplifying life
re-prioritizing life
cultivating a deeper walk with God

All Bible verses are taken from the New Living Translation unless otherwise indicated.

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You may copy this resource or any part of it to build up God's Kingdom.
Please include the following reference information:

More studies available at
www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com

simply GENESIS

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Relational Bible Studies

The WORD Among Us

The [Simply Series](#) is a different kind of Bible study. It is not doctrine or life application. It is relational, which means there are no right or wrong answers to the questions in this facilitator's guide.

Relational Bible studies focus on building relationships with God and each other. They create a space for the WORD among us to wash over us, plant seeds in our lives, and change us by the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit.

Relational Bible studies give everyone, no matter what their perspective or depth of Bible knowledge, space to share and contribute to the dialogue as we journey together. They help us discover how our personal story intersects with the Bible story.

These guides are designed to facilitate real and authentic dialogue in such a way that secular and unchurched Truth seekers come away saying, "This is different! This is real."

People need the Everlasting Gospel. Simple Church is about creating a space for Truth seekers to journey together.

May God bless you as you simplify and re-prioritize your life, creating time to "spend" with Truth seekers from all walks of life.

How to Use This Leader's Guide

This leader's guide assumes you have:

1. Read through the www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com web page.
2. Completed the online Simple Church training.

Title

outline

Bible story reference will be listed here.

Message of Hope: Have this idea crystal clear in your mind. This is what you want people to remember for the rest of the week.

Helpful Tip: These tips show up here and there.

The Basic 8: These are covered in the [free online training](#).

1. Collection Box (explained in PhaseONE training videos)
2. Connection Card Envelopes
3. Business Cards
4. Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet
5. a variety of extra Bible translations.
6. Child Safety Poster
7. Blessing Board
8. Email link to online Simple Church Weekly Summary Form (When officially launched this is emailed to your Details Coordinator every Sunday.)

Welcome: We are glad everyone is here. We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us.

Before we introduce ourselves, let's Remember:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of Truth seekers. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Please be sensitive so everyone has an opportunity to share and contribute.
- Cell phones should be put on "vibrate," or turned off.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What is a high-light or a low-light (a headline) from your week?
3. [*Insert rotation question for the week.*]

Visit www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com for more study guides.

Rotation Questions: Rotate through the following three questions:

Week 1: How would you like to simplify your life?

Week 2: How would you like to re-prioritize your life?

Week 3: How would you like to cultivate a deeper relationship with God.

Week 4: How would you like to simplify your life?

Week 5: etc.

At the end of check-in ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate check-in next week. Anyone can facilitate check-in. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

The Quiz: A child asks three questions. They randomly choose from the check-in questions people just answered. Ask everyone to raise their hands and the child picks someone to answer the questions.

For example:

1. What was his (pointing to the person) highlight for the week?
2. What was her name (pointing to the person)?
3. How did she want to simplify her life?

At the end of the quiz ask the child who facilitated to choose another child to facilitate the quiz next week.

This is what page 2 of a typical leader's guide for a given week actually looks like.

Facilitator's Directions:

1. *Talk as little as possible, encourage others to share, and avoid a monologue.*
2. Cut on the dotted lines. Distribute questions around the circle. (✂-----)
3. Keep this top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first)

Bridge: This transitions the group from the Kick-off Question into the Bible story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Bible story reference will be listed here. (Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible during our discussion.)

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

Some helpful pointers for digging questions:

- Remember: there are no "right answers" to relational Bible study questions. Help people contribute their perspective to the dialogue.

- You DO NOT have to "accomplish" all the questions listed. Use them as a resource from which to select during your discussion.
- Spend a maximum of 50% of your Bible study time on these questions.
- Affirm each answer, no matter what is said, by saying something like, "Excellent, someone else"; "Thanks for sharing, someone else"; "Good, someone else"; "How about the rest of you, what do you think".
- Did you catch the common denominator, "someone else"? You are always affirming and always inviting others to give input.
- If someone gets off-focus, simply say (after they have stopped talking), "What was the question? Let's read it again."

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

Some helpful pointers:

- Spend a minimum of 50% of your time on these questions.
- These questions are designed to invite people to share portions of their life story as it interacts with the Bible study.
- At appropriate times affirm confidentiality and offer reassurance that this is a safe place to share and grow spiritually.

Group Prayer:

1. We are blessed by being a part of this group, yet it exists for those who are not yet here.
2. Put an [Empty Chair](#) in the middle of your prayer circle. Pray for the people who are not yet here.
3. Close by saying the [Blessing Board](#) blessing together.

At the end of prayer, ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate the questions for next week. Anyone can facilitate the questions. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Lunch:

1. Keep it simple. Keep it easily reproducible.
2. Hostess (one of the CORE4) provides the beans.
3. During lunch have the [Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet](#) available.

Creativity

outline

Genesis 1:1-13

Message of Hope: God created you with the ability to be creative.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

Welcome: We are so glad that you are here today.

Setting the Context:

- We come from a variety of backgrounds and seek to create a safe place for Truth seekers to grow spiritually.
- You will notice that we try to avoid fancy religious language. We are common people.
- Let's encourage those who like to talk to give opportunity for everyone to participate.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) If you were to be creative and make something like homemade bread, a craft, or a new invention, what would you enjoy making?

Bridge: Today's story takes us back to the very beginning of earth's history. It explains how our world was created and came into existence. It might be tempting to discount this story or try to explain it in ways that make sense to our mind. But since we were not there, it might be worth giving this story an honest hearing.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 1:1-13
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) This story begins with, “the earth was formless and empty,” yet there are two ingredients listed. What are the ingredients, and how do you make sense of the “formless and empty” description?

✂-----

- 2) In verse 3, where do you think the light comes from since the sun is not created until verse 14?

✂-----

- 3) Each day of creation begins with “And God said let there be _____.” How would you explain to a 7-year-old child that God can create something out of nothing?

✂-----

- 4) Each creation day ends with the same phrase. Let's read this phrase from our different translations. In a 24-hour cycle, when do you think our new day actually begins?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When you are feeling creative, what kinds of things do you like to work on?

✂-----

- B) Most jobs, whether in the home or out of the home, focus on creating or shaping something. How would you briefly describe your daily work?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God created you with the ability to be creative.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Custom-made

outline

Genesis 1:14-31

Message of Hope: God likes you just the way He created you.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) What is something you like doing that involves creativity?

Bridge: In today's story we are going to discover that when God created you, He custom-made you. You are special. You are unique. In other words, God really likes you just the way He made you. You are a custom-made human, and there is no one else on earth who is just like you. Today's story is called *Custom-made*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 1:14-31
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Let's summarize last week: what was created on days one, two, and three, and when does each day begin and end?

✂-----

- 2) Verses 14-19 tell us that the sun and moon govern our seasons, days, and years, but what do you think governs our weekly, seven-day cycle?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verses 26-27 in our different Bible translations. What are all the different possible ways you think it means to be made in God's image?

✂-----

- 4) In verses 29 and 30, what do you see as the differences or similarities between the food God gave to humans and the food God gave to animals?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) If God created each person just the way He wanted them, what do you think motivates people to look for ways to change themselves?

✂-----

- B) What is one thing you really appreciate about the way God made the person to your right?

Directions: After you have shared, ask the person on your right to share what they value and like about the person on their right. Go around the circle.

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God likes you just the way He created you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer & Lunch

All About Relationships

outline

Genesis 2:1-3

Message of Hope: God sets aside 24 hours of Holy time just to be with you.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) If you had 24 hours of extra time, what do you think you would do with it?

Bridge: Today's story is called *All About Relationships*. In fact, God sees His relationship with us as so important that He sets aside a special 24 hours' worth of time. Notice the two things He says about the last day of creation. It may seem a bit surprising, but it is not by accident. As we read this story pay close attention to what God does—just because He wants to spend some special time with you.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 2:1-3
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 2, if God does not get “tired,” why do you think He rests on the Sabbath?
✂-----
- 2) Let's read verse 3 in our different translations. What do you think is so special about Sabbath that it is the only day of the week that God both blesses and makes holy?
✂-----
- 3) What are some of the differences or similarities we can think of between Sabbath being a blessed day and a holy day?
✂-----
- 4) If everyone in the world rested on Sabbath like God did, what would be some of the hidden blessings that people would benefit from?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What are some of the enviable blessings people receive when spending Sabbath with God?
✂-----
- B) How did you first begin to learn about Creation's Sabbath?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) Remember: **God sets aside 24 hours of Holy time just to be with you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Life and Death

outline

Genesis 2:4-17

Message of Hope: God lovingly formed you and gave you life.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) What is one of your early childhood memories about death?

Bridge: Today's story gives us answers to two of life's greatest mysteries. Google the words *life* and *death*, and you will get hundreds of conflicting opinions. As we read this Bible story, compare your childhood stories with what God says in the Bible. You may find some similarities, and you may find some differences. Our story is called *Life and Death*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 2:4-17
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Genesis, chapter 1, tells how this world was created. Why do you think God tells a second creation story in chapter 2?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verse 7 in the different translations in our circle. God could have made us in any way He wanted. Why do you think God uses separate ingredients to bring us to life (dust + His breath = a living being)?

Helpful Tip – “living being.” This is a correct understanding, rather than “soul.” The Hebrew word for “being” means life or person, not some eternal separate entity. In the Bible, people do not *have* souls, but *are* souls/beings/persons. If life came when God formed humans from the elements of the earth and breathed life into them, death is described as the exact opposite (see Ecclesiastes 12:7). Death unravels the association of God’s breath with the elements of the earth, and the person as a living being ceases to exist. For more on the nature of death, see Psalms 115:17; 146:4; Daniel 12:2; John 11:11–14; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–14.

✂-----

- 3) Read verses 8 and 15 again. Why do you think God makes Adam outside the garden and then places him inside the garden?

✂-----

- 4) Let's reread verses 16 and 17 in our different translations. Why do you think God gives such a harsh punishment for disobeying? “You will surely die.”

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Growing up, how did your parents deal with disobedient children?

✂-----

- B) Growing up, what were some of the popular stories you heard to explain where human beings came from?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

D) Remember: **God lovingly formed you and gave you life.** How can this group pray for you?

Helper

outline

Genesis 2:18-25

Message of Hope: Relationships are a two-way street where we give help and receive help.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) If you could have any animal as a pet, what would you choose and why?

Bridge: Today's story talks about the naming of all the animals. Have you ever wondered if we still use the same names for them? But notice where this naming takes place in our story. It almost seems like God is using the names of the animals to help Adam realize something. Our story is called *Helper*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 2:18-25
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Given all the other options God has, why do you think He puts Adam to sleep and uses a rib to create a helper for him?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verse 18 again from the different translations in our circle. In today's world, what do you see as some of the proper uses and unfortunate abuses of a wife as a "helper"?

✂-----

- 3) What do you think the role is for how a husband should treat his wife and family?

✂-----

- 4) Verse 25 talked about shame. How would you describe "shame" and how do you see it used and abused in today's world?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) In your interactions with family and those you spend meaningful time with, how do you go about showing them honor and respect?

✂-----

- B) How do you think your spouse (if married), or someone else close to you, would finish this sentence: "I appreciate your help most when you _____."

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Relationships are a two-way street where we give help and receive help.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

The Original Lie

outline

Genesis 3:1-7

Message of Hope: God does not lie; it is Satan who lies and deceives.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) In 60 seconds or less, describe what it feels like when someone deceives, tricks, or lies to you?

Bridge: Today's story is about deceit, trickery, and lying. It is about the original lie Satan told Adam and Eve. Sadly, this original lie is still alive and well and has been adopted by many in today's world. But this original lie contradicts what God said. Our story is found in Genesis 3:1-7.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 3:1-7
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think God would make an animal that is “more crafty” than all the others?

✂-----

- 2) In verse 3, why do you think God would include dying as part of the consequence for disobedience?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verse 4 and 5 in our different translations. Why do you think Satan blatantly contradicts God?

✂-----

- 4) What do you think was so attractive about Satan's lie?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what kind of lies does Satan try to convince you of?

✂-----

- B) As a child, how was death explained to you?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God does not lie. It is Satan who lies and deceives.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

The Blame Game

outline

Genesis 3:8-13

Message of Hope: Blaming was invented by Satan and destroys healthy conversation.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Quickly describe how you feel when someone blames you?

Bridge: Today's story takes us back to the original blame game. No one likes to be blamed, but we come by it quite naturally. As we read this story, notice what is said that turns the conversation into blaming. Today's story is called *The Blame Game*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 3:8-13
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Where do you think hiding and fear came from if no one taught them?

✂-----

- 2) In verse 11, why do you think Adam answers the second question and ignores the first question?

✂-----

- 3) In verses 12-13, what do you see about the man's and the woman's response that specifically turns their conversation into blaming each other?

✂-----

- 4) If the man had answered the first question in verse 11, what do you think he would have said?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how are you tempted to hide from God?

✂-----

- B) What is one thing you could do to avoid turning your conversations into blaming the other person?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Blaming was invented by Satan and destroys healthy conversation.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

A Rose Among Thorns

outline

Genesis 3:14-19

Message of Hope: Even though we still suffer from Adam and Eve's disobedience, God has a plan to fix our sinful world.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Why do you think rose bushes have thorns?

Bridge: Today's story has one rose among the thorns. After Adam and Eve disobey God, He describes the thorns they will experience in a world that is now filled with sin. In our world we still experience the results of disobedience. But there is one verse in this story that gives us hope. This verse is the rose among the thorns. It describes God's solution to fix our sinful world.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 3:14-19
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) If the snake was cursed to crawl on its belly, what do you think its mode of transportation was before the curse?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verse 15 in the various translations. Take a look at your Bible's foot notes and endnotes. How do you think this verse is a rose among the thorns, and what do you think this verse is talking about?

✂-----

- 3) In verse 16, listen to some of the different ways Eve's response to her husband has been translated: "Desire for your husband" (NKJV), "desire contrary to your husband" (ESV), and desire to control your husband" (NLT). Given these different translations, what do you think God was saying about a husband and wife's relationship?

✂-----

- 4) In verses 17-19 God spends the longest time talking to Adam. Why do you think God spends so much time describing Adam's relationship with the ground?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what have been some of the more painful thorns you have felt in this world?

✂-----

- B) In a world filled with thorns, what are some of the roses that bring you joy and happiness?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Even though we still suffer from Adam and Eve's disobedience, God has a plan to fix our sinful world.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer and Lunch

Evicted

outline

Genesis 3:20-24

Message of Hope: Believe it or not, there are blessings from being evicted.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you pick a flower, at what point do you think it dies?

Bridge: Today's story suggests that Adam and Eve could have lived forever as sinful humans if they had continued to eat from a certain tree. There must have been something extra special about that tree. But instead they are banned from the tree, they lose immortality, and they begin to die. Unlikely as it seems, there are disguised blessings from being evicted from the Garden.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 3:20-24
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) This story does not tell us, but where do you think God obtained the animal skins to make clothing for Adam and Eve?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verse 22 from the different Bible translations we have. What do you think God means when He says, "Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil?"

✂-----

- 3) Why do you think God would use a tree as the one condition for receiving immortality?

✂-----

- 4) Without access to the tree of life, Adam and Eve began to die. Why do you think God sends them out with the job of cultivating the ground?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what are some of the disguised blessings you have experienced because of the hard work of surviving in this world?

✂-----

- B) When was a time in your life you felt evicted, excluded, or kicked out?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Believe it or not, there are blessings from being evicted.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

Obedience

outline

Genesis 4:1-8

Message of Hope: Choosing to obey God is the better way to live.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you hear the word *anger*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story is a sad story. In just a few verses we will see the devastation, misery, and pain which results when a person disobeys, gets angry, loses his self-control, and then kills a family member. But tucked in the middle of this story is hope. We will find the key to living a happy, peaceful, and meaningful life even when people around us get angry.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 4:1-8
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What do you think were some of the root causes of Cain's anger?

✂-----

- 2) Why do you think God rejected Cain's offering but accepted Abel's offering?

✂-----

- 3) If we are saved by grace, why do you think obeying God would make any difference?

✂-----

- 4) What do you think it means for a person to rule over sin?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what has helped you understand that God loves you even though He hates your sin?

✂-----

- B) What kind of emotions do you experience when someone gets angry?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Choosing to obey God is the better way to live.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

A Cover-up

outline

Genesis 4:8-16

Message of Hope: God is both love and justice wrapped up in one.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you hear the word *cover-up*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story begins with someone trying to cover up a murder. But the cover-up does not last long. Even though the killer lies, justice is given. But this story raises a number of questions that we will wrestle with today.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 4:8-16
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What do you think might have happened if Cain had told God the truth when He asked, “Where is your brother Abel?”

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verse 12 from our different translations. Why do you think God cursed Cain in this specific way?

✂-----

- 3) What do you see as the difference between God cursing Cain, and Cain reaping the results of his actions?

✂-----

- 4) Let's read verse 16 in our different translations. What do you think the rest of Cain's life (without God) was like?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when was a time you were honest about a mistake you had made?

✂-----

- B) When being tempted to cover up a mistake, what helps you resist this temptation?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God is both love and justice wrapped up in one.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Family Tree

outline

Genesis 4:17-26

Message of Hope: No matter what your past, you can begin to call on the Lord today.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you die, what is one thing you hope people will remember about you?

Bridge: Today's story seems to be an uninteresting list of names and facts in a family tree. Like many family trees, it has the good, the bad, and the ugly. Yet this genealogy ends differently than you might expect. Notice the upturn at the end.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 4:17-26
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) How many generations do you think are recorded in these verses? And why do you think God took space to record this list of names in the Bible?

✂-----

- 2) Verses 19-22 seem to record several “firsts.” What do you think these “firsts” tell us about the development, both good and bad, of humanity?

✂-----

- 3) Women are not typically listed in genealogies. In verse 22, what else can we learn about Naamah? And why do you think she was included in this list?

✂-----

- 4) Let's read verse 26 in our different translations. Why do you think this verse emphasizes that people began to call upon the name of the Lord?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, who is a significant or influential member of your family tree?

✂-----

- B) Who has helped you to “call upon the name of the Lord”?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **No matter what your past, you can begin to call on the Lord today.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Unexpected Extras

outline

Genesis 5:1-32

Message of Hope: Live your life so that future generations will respect your legacy.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) In 60 seconds, who in your family tree is someone that you admire, and why?

Bridge: Today's story is a genealogy that at first glance may seem totally irrelevant. But this is no ordinary genealogy. Hidden in the list are two unexpected extras. Why were they included? That is what we hope to figure out.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 5:1-32
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think it took both male and female to fully represent the image of God?

✂-----

- 2) What do you see as some of the differences between being made in the image of God and being God?

✂-----

- 3) In contrasting Enoch's experience in verse 24 with all the other people listed in this story, what do you think is so special about his experience?

✂-----

- 4) Let's read verse 29 in our different translations. What do you think Lamech hoped Noah would do to bring comfort and relief from the curse?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when you need a break from the pressures of life, what revives you?

✂-----

- B) When did you begin to discover what it means to be created in God's image?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Live your life so that future generations will respect your legacy.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

A World Gone Wrong

outline

Genesis 6:1-8

Message of Hope: Even though we live in a wicked world, God has not given up on us.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When was a time you made something that did not turn out like you had hoped?

Bridge: Today's story seems like it could be the making of a science-fiction movie. God made a perfect and beautiful world, but something goes wrong, drastically wrong. The Bible says that people have become continually and totally wicked. Twice God says He regretted and was sorry He ever made us. Yet the last sentence in our story gives us hope in a world that has gone wrong.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 6:1-8
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) How do you think that shortening the life span of humans to 120 years would help the problem?
✂-----
- 2) Let's read verse 5 in a variety of Bible translations. How do you think it can be that humans can become so totally evil and wicked that all good is snuffed out of their lives?
✂-----
- 3) Going beyond the obvious, what do you think is so devastating and heartbreaking for God?
✂-----
- 4) What do you think it means to find favor with God?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what or who is something or someone that you poured your time, energy, and life into, only to have the outcome break your heart?
✂-----
- B) Where do you see God's favor resting upon your life?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) Remember: **Even though we live in a wicked world, God has not given up on us.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

A Trusted Friend

outline

Genesis 6:9-22

Message of Hope: God is striving to build a trusting relationship with you.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Who is a friend you really trust?

Bridge: Have you ever noticed that a trusting friendship goes both ways? In other words, trusting relationships are dynamic. They are a two-way street. Today's story is about trust and, more importantly, the evidence of what a trusting relationship looks like.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 6:9-22
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think people so quickly gravitate toward evil?

✂-----

- 2) Compared to the time before the flood, our world does not seem much different. What do you think motivated God to flood the world and start over?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verse 9 from our different translations. What would you say are the qualities that make a person righteous before God?

✂-----

- 4) Let's read verse 22 again. If people lived like Noah did, what do you think would be some of the most noticeable differences in our world?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, if you were to do all that God commanded, what is one thing you would like to do differently?

✂-----

- B) Who is someone in your life that trusts and loves you?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God is striving to build a trusting relationship with you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

A New Start

outline

Genesis 7:1-24

Message of Hope: God gives us multiple opportunities for a new start in life.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When was a time you experienced some kind of flood, for example a broken water pipe or a flooded creek?

Bridge: Today's story is a flood story that goes way beyond a broken water pipe. It is more along the lines of an underground explosion of thousands of water geysers accompanied by torrential downpours that go on and on and on—for forty days. Our story is found in Genesis 7.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 7:1-24
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think a loving God would wipe out every living thing on the earth, except those in the ark?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verse 2 from the different Bible translations in our circle. Why do you think God chose more than two of some animals and what do you think is special or unique about the number seven, instead of six or eight?

✂-----

- 3) In verse 1 Noah is called “righteous.” What do you think makes a person “righteous” or right with God?

✂-----

- 4) In verses 4 and 10, why do you think God waited seven days before sending the rain?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, where do you see God waiting seven days in your life and testing you?

✂-----

- B) If God were to flood a part of your life and give you a new start, what would you like flooded?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God gives us multiple opportunities for a new start in life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Remembered by God

outline

Genesis 8:1-22

Message of Hope: God has not forgotten you; He remembers you.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When was a time that you recently forgot something?

Bridge: It might be easy to conclude that since we forget, God also forgets. But today's story reminds us that God does not forget. And as you will soon see, this story makes it clear that God remembers us and what we are going through.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 8:1-22
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) From start to finish, how long do you think Noah and his family were in the ark?
✂-----
- 2) Regarding verse 1, why do you think this chapter begins with “and God remembered Noah and his family?”
✂-----
- 3) In verse 20, how do you think this story might have been different if Noah had forgotten God when he left the ark?
✂-----
- 4) Let's read verses 21 and 22 in our different translations. Why do you think God gives these two promises, and why do you think God sandwiches a statement about humanity in the middle of these two promises?
✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when was a time you had to leave your “ark of safety”?
✂-----
- B) How do you build alters to remember significant ways you have been rescued you?
✂-----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂-----
- D) Remember: **God has not forgotten you either; He remembers you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle. Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Promise Keeper

outline

Genesis 9:1-17

Message of Hope: God is a promise keeper.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When was the last time you saw a rainbow?

Bridge: Today's story is about a promise that was made some four thousand years ago. Several times a year we see evidence of this promise, even if we do not recognize it. Have you ever seen a rainbow? God invented it as a sign of a special promise He made, and today's story tells us all about it.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 9:1-17
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think God's covenant promise is given to both humans and animals?

✂-----

- 2) In verse 2, what do you think would have happened in this world if God had not made the animals fearful of humans?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verse 4 in our different translations. Why do you think God completely forbids the eating of blood?

✂-----

- 4) In verse 1 and verse 7, why do you think God emphasizes the importance of repopulating the earth?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what is one promise you have made and continue to keep?

✂-----

- B) When someone breaks a promise, how do you sort out your thoughts and feelings?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God is a promise keeper.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Embarrassing

outline

Genesis 9:18 – 10:32

Message of Hope: God loves you, even with your mistakes.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Without going into any details, how recently did you find yourself in some kind of embarrassing situation?

Bridge: Today's story begins with an embarrassing situation. And as is common to humanity, we try to preserve our own dignity. As the saying goes, hurting people hurt people. Unfortunately, this cycle continues. As we will soon see, this story is a mix of both blessings and curses.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 9:18 – 10:32
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In chapter 9 verse 20, with the vegetation destroyed in the flood, where do you think Noah gets the plants for his vineyard?

✂-----

- 2) When Noah sobers up and discovers his embarrassing situation, what do you think motivated him to curse Canaan?

✂-----

- 3) In chapter 10 verse 25, what do you see as unique about language division since verses 5, 20, and 31 also talk about being divided by languages?

✂-----

- 4) In chapter 10 verse 5, how do you see this shaping the different nationalities that we find around the world today?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, if you were to guess, which of these three sons do you think your family lineage might come from?

✂-----

- B) When you have been hurt by someone, how do you stop the cycle and process in a healthy way?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God loves you, even with your mistakes.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

Scattered Dreams

outline

Genesis 11:1-32

Message of Hope: Sometimes God interrupts our dreams to protect us from ourselves.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) What is a life dream that you still hope to accomplish?

Bridge: Today's story is about a collective dream. But it is not completed. This kind of dream has been repeated in thousands of different ways throughout history. The details may be very different in modern examples, but the motivations behind the dream are often very much the same. Today's story is called *Scattered Dreams*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 11:1-32
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think these people thought a tower would keep them together and avoid scattering?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verses 5-7 in different translations. What potential problems do you see God is solving by scattering the people?

✂-----

- 3) In verse 7, who do you think the “let us” is referring to?

✂-----

- 4) Compared to other lists of descendants we have read in past weeks, why do you think people started having children in their thirties and living much shorter lives?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when was a time your plans were redirected?

✂-----

- B) What is a tower in your life that you sense God has interrupted?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: Sometimes **God interrupts our dreams to protect us from ourselves**. How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Being a Blessing

outline

Genesis 12:1-9

Message of Hope: Receiving God's blessings begins with following Him.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) How old were you when you first left home for an extended period of time?

Bridge: Today's story is about leaving home, leaving family, and leaving everything that has been familiar for the past seventy-five years. Yet as we will soon discover, this was not a midlife crisis or an excursion to see the world. It was a sincere desire to follow an invitation that would end up bringing a blessing to each of us and our families.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 12:1-9
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think God led Abram in stages instead of giving him the bigger picture all at once?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verse 2 and 3 again. If these verses were not included, how do you think this story would have turned out differently?

✂-----

- 3) What do you think motivated Lot to go with Abram?

✂-----

- 4) What were some of the benefits to Abram setting up alters along the way?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when was a time you made a change of direction in life but did not know how it was going to turn out?

✂-----

- B) How have you received a blessing from someone else who was following God's instructions?

✂-----

- C) How do you set up symbolic alters in your life to remember how God has led you in the past?

✂-----

- D) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- E) Remember: **Receiving God's blessings begins with following Him.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Faith Famine

outline

Genesis 12:10-20

Message of Hope: God will help you when you face a famine in life.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) In 60 seconds or less, what is one of the worst famines you have heard about or experienced?

Bridge: Today's story begins with a severe famine. A chain of circumstances brings about lying, plagues, and all-around disaster. But even though Abram makes mistakes and messes things up, God is faithful and helps him just because He loves him.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 12:10-20
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Abram seems to forget how God has led him in the past and now lies about his wife?

✂-----

- 2) How do you think Pharaoh comes to realize that the plagues are directly connected to taking Sarai into his palace?

✂-----

- 3) How do you think Pharaoh's view of God may have changed after this experience?

✂-----

- 4) What do you think are some of the more important lessons God wanted Abram to learn?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what is a famine you are trying, or have tried, to avoid?

✂-----

- B) When was a time that you suspect God rescued you from a poor choice?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God will help you when you face a famine in life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Resolving Conflict

outline

Genesis 13:1-18

Message of Hope: Using an unselfish approach, conflict can be resolved.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) In one word, how would you describe the way you generally respond when facing conflict?

Bridge: Today's story is about conflict. If we are honest with ourselves, when facing conflict, we are often looking out for ourselves, defending ourselves, or fighting for our rights. But this story turns this common, selfish approach upside down. Notice what happens.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 13:1-18
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verses 3 and 4, why do you think Abram has been here in the past, and what do you think brings him back this time?

✂-----

- 2) Why do you think Lot does not defer to his Uncle Abram by saying something like, “No, *you* choose what part of the land is best for your family, and I will be happy with the remainder”?

✂-----

- 3) If Lot had insisted that his Uncle Abram be the first to choose, what do you think Abram would have chosen, and why?

✂-----

- 4) Read verse 17 again. What do you think God is doing when He asks Abram to walk the land?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what kind of symbolic “land” are you walking or exploring in life?

✂-----

- B) What do you see as a next step to resolving some conflict in your life?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **By using an unselfish approach, conflict can be resolved.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

A Time for War

outline

Genesis 14:1-24

Message of Hope: It is God who defeats your enemies.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) How many wars would you guess are going on around the world?

Bridge: Today's story seems like a wild tale of warring tribes. But when a line is crossed, one of God's prominent leaders goes to war. To make matters more confusing, one of God's priests blesses this prominent leader. Some would suggest that God does not go to war. How do you make sense of this? Our story is called *A Time for War*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 14:1-24
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) If Abram has 318 trained men, what do you think was a typical size of these other armies?

✂-----

- 2) Reflecting on this story, how would you describe Abram's philosophy of war?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verses 18-20 again. What do you think makes Melchizedek unique and different from all the other kings, and why do you think he affirms what Abram did?

✂-----

- 4) In verse 20, what do you think would motivate Abram to give a tenth to Melchizedek?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, in today's world, how do you make sense of the reality of war?

✂-----

- B) When was a time when you were blessed by a "priest of God Most High"?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **It is God who defeats your enemies.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Reassurance Needed

outline

Genesis 15:1-8

Message of Hope: When we believe God, He counts us as righteous because of our faith.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you hear the word *vision*, what thoughts come to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story is about a vision. For some, a vision is just a grand idea. For others it is a future goal. And some might describe a vision as what happens when you eat too much food before going to bed. But in today's story, this vision is different. God uses a vision to give reassurance.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 15:1-8
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 1, why do you think God specifically focuses on fear, protection, and reward?

✂-----

- 2) In today's world, how do you think a person can determine if a vision is really from God?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verse 6 and verse 8 again. In practical terms, what do you think it means to be "counted as righteous because of his faith"?

✂-----

- 4) It seems like, in verse 8, that Abram is doubting God. How do you think a person can reconcile Abram's faith in verse 6 with his doubt in verse 8?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when was a time you sensed God was reassuring you or telling you, "Do not be afraid"?

✂-----

- B) When was a time you believed God just because it was God who said it?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **When we believe God, He counts us as righteous because of our faith.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Reassurance Needed—part 2

outline

Genesis 15:6-21

Message of Hope: God's personal plan for your life includes both obedience and faith.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) If you could live anywhere, what is one place you would like to live?

Bridge: Today's story is a continuation from last week. It is a promise from God that spans hundreds of years and many generations. Note how one person plays an important part in making the promise possible for everyone else.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 15:6-21
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think God would communicate this message to Abram in a vision instead of in real life?

✂-----

- 2) In verse 12, what do you think caused this great and dreadful darkness that came upon Abram?

✂-----

- 3) Why do you think God's prediction included four hundred years of slavery and oppression?

✂-----

- 4) Let's read verse 16 in our various translations. How do you make sense of this verse?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how would you describe the "land" that God has been bringing you out of?

✂-----

- B) If God were to make a personal covenant with you, what do you think it might be?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God's personal plan for your life requires both obedience and faith.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Cry of Distress

outline

Genesis 16:1-16

Message of Hope: God sees your difficult situation and hears your cry of distress.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you hear the word *distress*, what comes to mind?

Bridge: Today's story is about stress—something that many people turn into distress. In our story, the distress gets so bad that someone runs away from home, but at their darkest moment, God shows up. This story gives us hope. When we face our darkest moments, God sees, hears, and responds to our cry for help.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 16:1-16
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In this story, who do you think is most wronged? And why?

✂-----

- 2) In verses 8, why do you think the angel of the LORD would call Hagar by name, and then ask her where she came from and where she was going?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verses 9-10 in our different translations. Why do you think God's promise in verse 10 is dependent upon Hagar's submission to authority?

✂-----

- 4) Why do you think God also promises Hagar a nation of countless descendants?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when facing difficult situations, what helps you remember that God sees you and hears your cry for help?

✂-----

- B) When was a time that God heard your cry of distress?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God sees your difficult situation and hears your cry.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

A New Name

outline

Genesis 17:1-14

Message of Hope: A covenant is a two-way relationship.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) What is your middle name, your maiden name, or an alternate name you have gone by?

Bridge: Today's story begins with someone being given a new name. Often a new name signifies a new chapter in life, and it typically comes with new commitments and new agreements. As we read this story, notice what the new commitments and new agreements are.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 17:1-14
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 1, God says, "I am El-Shaddai, which means "God Almighty." How many other names for God can we think of? Why do you think God uses this specific name in this story?

✂-----

- 2) What do you think it would look like for a person to "serve God faithfully and live blamelessly"?

✂-----

- 3) In Genesis 12:2 and 15:5 God has already given Abram a promise that his descendants will be as many as the stars in the sky. Why do you think God waits until now to give Abram a new name?

✂-----

- 4) Why do you think the servants were included in this covenant of circumcision?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what kind of covenants have you made with people throughout your lifetime?

✂-----

- B) Where do you sense God is inviting you to serve Him faithfully or live blamelessly?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **A covenant is a two-way relationship.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

An Insider

outline

Genesis 17:15-27

Message of Hope: You belong to God.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Name or describe a group of people that you consider yourself a part of.

Bridge: Today's story is about being included. Even though some in the story are not blood relatives and might be considered outsiders, God says that they are insiders, they belong, they are included. As far as God is concerned, you are an insider. You belong to God and are included. Yet God does not force us; each one of use must also choose God. The good part is that God is very patient with us while He waits and hopes. Our story is called *An Insider*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 17:15-27
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 17, how do you think God could be feeling when Abraham laughs at what God has said?

✂-----

- 2) Why do you think Abraham responds to God by saying, in verse 18, “May Ishmael live under Your special blessing”?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verse 20 in our different translations. In today's world, who might the twelve princes be, and who do you think is the great nation that has come from Ishmael?

✂-----

- 4) In verse 27, what thoughts or feelings might it bring to Abraham's servants to know with confidence that they are included in God’s covenant?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when was a time in your life you, like Abraham, doubted what God said?

✂-----

- B) How has God showed you that you belong to Him and are included?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **You belong to God**. How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Unexpected Visitors

outline

Genesis 18:1-15

Message of Hope: God still sends unexpected visitors from heaven.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) If you had unexpected visitors stop by, what do you think you would feed them?

Bridge: Today's story is not a dream. It is not a movie. It happens in real life. It is called *Unexpected Visitors*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 18:1-15
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What is there about the visitors that seems ordinary, and what seems supernatural?

✂-----

- 2) At what verse in this story do you think Abraham begins to realize that these three people are not humans?

✂-----

- 3) What reasons might the Lord have for delivering His message to Abraham and Sarah in person?

✂-----

- 4) Why do you think the Lord countered Sarah's statement when she said, "I did not laugh"?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, describe a time when you wish you had not lied.

✂-----

- B) How do you feel when a conversation turns to stories of encounters with supernatural beings? Why?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God still sends unexpected visitors from heaven**. How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Lifeguard

outline

Genesis 18:16-33

Message of Hope: Others are trying to save your life.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) In 60 seconds or less, describe a time you could have died?

Bridge: Today's story is about some people who will die unless someone else steps in to help save their lives. When we think of a lifeguard, we often think of a swimming pool. But there are all kinds of lifeguards. And most likely, you are still alive because of some of these other kinds of lifeguards. Notice who the lifeguards are in this story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 18:16-33
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verses 17-19, whom do you think the Lord is talking to?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verse 19 in the different translations we have here. How does Abraham know what God would consider to be "right and just"?

✂-----

- 3) In verse 22, when the other men leave, why do you think the Lord stays, instead of going with the other men?

✂-----

- 4) Why do you think Abraham stops after "what if only ten can be found there?"

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, name some people who have been lifeguards, like Abraham, in your life.

✂-----

- B) In your own life, how do you try to discern what God considers to be "right and just"?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Others are trying to protect your life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Judgment—part 1

outline

Genesis 19:1-13

Message of Hope: God will not allow sin to continue forever.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you travel, do you typically stay in a motel or with friends along the way?

Bridge: Today's story is not your typical bedtime story. It can draw out a variety of feelings and emotions, and it may be considered an unpopular story in today's world. But it is an important story. So, as we read it and discuss, please use age-appropriate discretion.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 19:1-13
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Lot would be hanging out at the entrance to the city?

✂-----

- 2) Why do you think Lot would, in verse 7, call this activity “wicked” but then suggest an alternate activity in verse 8? Please remember to use discretion as we talk about this.

✂-----

- 3) As blinded men, young and old, pondered this supernatural judgment, what do you think would have happened if they had repented of their sin?

✂-----

- 4) In today's world, what do you think keeps people from repenting of their sins and turning to God?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when was a time God provided a way of escape for you?

✂-----

- B) In this wicked world, we all have sinned. How do you personally show love for sinners while not celebrating sin?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God will not allow sin to continue forever.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Judgment—part 2

outline

Genesis 19:12-29

Message of Hope: Don't complain when God sends someone to grab your hand and pull you out.

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5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) What is the hottest fire you have ever seen?

Bridge: Today's story is about one of the hottest fires on record. In fact, it is so hot that it leaves nothing behind. This is also a sad story. But among the ashes, we find a picture of a God who is patient, yet who also brings judgment not allowing wickedness and sin to go on forever and ever.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 19:12-29
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 14, what do you think Lot could have done differently so that those he talked with would take him seriously?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verses 16-17 again. How do you think this story would have changed if the angel had not taken Lot by the hand and pulled him out of the city?

✂-----

- 3) Someone read verse 18-20 for us. What do you think gave Lot the audacity to request another option?

✂-----

- 4) Let's read verse 22 in our different translations. How do you make sense of this idea that angels have limitations to work within?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, who is someone in your life that you suspect prays for you and your protection?

✂-----

- B) When has someone taken you by your hand and pulled you away from something for your own good?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God may take you out of certain circumstances to protect you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer and Lunch

Cave Dwellers

outline

Genesis 19:30-38

Message of Hope: God wants to help you solve your problem; ask Him to help you.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When was a time you visited a cave?

Bridge: Today's story is about three cave dwellers. This story is also rather blunt. So, as we read it and discuss, please use age-appropriate discretion. As we will soon see, the Bible does not sugarcoat sin and its results. But this story is partly the result of a lifelong exposure to Satan's values.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 19:30-38
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What assumptions do you see behind the daughters' reasoning?

✂-----

- 2) If these two daughters had asked God how to solve their problem, how do you think this story could have been different?

✂-----

- 3) In today's world, how do you see Satan instilling Sodom's values in people, even if they live in the country?

✂-----

- 4) God physically took Lot's family out of Sodom, but what do you think it requires to take Sodom out of Lot and his daughters?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how do you try to keep yourself protected from gradually adopting Satan's values?

✂-----

- B) If you were to ask God to help you solve a challenge you are facing, what would you like to ask?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God wants to help you solve your problem; ask Him to help you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

Round Two

outline

Genesis 20:1-18

Message of Hope: Even when we make mistakes, God is still working for our best good.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When was a time you lived in a place that you felt like an outsider?

Bridge: Today's story is about a foreigner who does not belong. To make this worse, he lies. And to make matters even worse, this is the second time he has lied. Yet God intervenes and rescues him and his family. Why does he lie, and why does God rescue him? These are good questions that we hope to explore. Our story is called *Round Two*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 20:1-18
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) The first time Abraham did this was in an earlier story, Genesis 12:10-20. Why do you think Abraham does this again?

✂-----

- 2) Having been through this before in Egypt, how do you think Abraham continues to justify his lying?

✂-----

- 3) At what point do you think people become responsible in God's eyes for what they have learned or could have learned?

✂-----

- 4) Last time this happened in Egypt, the king asked Abraham to leave. This time, why do you think King Abimelech offers him any part of the land to live in?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when was a time someone else helped protect you from doing something you might have regretted?

✂-----

- B) When someone else tries to protect or correct you, how do you keep your heart open so that you are able to receive what they have to say?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Even when we make mistakes, God is still working for our best good.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

When All Hope is Gone

outline

Genesis 21:1-21

Message of Hope: When all hope is gone, turn to God.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Growing up, when was a time that you were sent away (maybe from the dinner table, a game, or something else)?

Bridge: In today's story, someone is sent away, never to return. And yet, God gives an amazing promise and a miracle to two people whose hope is gone. Today's story is called *When All Hope is Gone*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 21:1-21
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verses 9-10, why do you think Sarah, who originally suggested that Abraham have a son by Hagar, now turns on Abraham and Hagar?

✂-----

- 2) Why do you think God would tell Abraham to do whatever Sarah said?

✂-----

- 3) Putting yourself in Hagar's shoes, what do you think it felt like to hear Abraham tell her to pack up and leave, having no place to go?

✂-----

- 4) What do you think gave Hagar the ability to hold on to God's promise, even though it looked like all hope was gone?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when it seems like all hope is gone, what keeps you going?

✂-----

- B) What are some promises that you hold on to for strength and courage to keep going?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **When all hope is gone, turn to God.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Tree Planting

outline

Genesis 21:22-34

Message of Hope: Planting a tree is one way to remember God's specific leading in your life.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) If you were to plant a tree, what kind would you consider planting?

Bridge: Today's story ends with a tree-planting ceremony. But it is full of deep spiritual meaning. Maybe today's story will give you some ideas on how to mark and remember significant events in your own life.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 21:22-34
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 23, why do you think a secular king would ask Abraham to swear in God's name?

✂-----

- 2) This kind of agreement brings a degree of relational entanglement with the surrounding people. How do you think Abraham knew that this was the right thing to do?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verse 26 again. With something as important as water, why do you think Abraham had not complained about the well prior to this?

✂-----

- 4) Let's read verse 33 from the different translations in our circle. How do think the message of this story would have changed if verse 33 was not included.

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how do you mark and remember significant events in your life?

✂-----

- B) Where do you see God giving you favor in the eyes of those around you?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Planting a tree is one way to remember God's specific leading in your life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Extreme Testing; Extreme Faith—part 1

outline

Genesis 22:1-5

Message of Hope: God will provide a way of escape.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) What is an extreme sport or activity you have participated in?

Bridge: We live in a world of extreme sports: bungee jumping, cliff diving, and rock climbing. Today's story may be the most extreme test that God has ever asked of anyone. It may be tempting to sugarcoat this story so that we feel better about it, but let's dig deep into this story and explore what extreme testing and extreme faith looks like.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 22:1-5
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think God would test anybody by asking them to kill their son?

✂-----

- 2) Verse 3 begins with “early the next morning Abraham saddled his donkey.” Why do you think Abraham obeys God's command so quickly?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verse 5 in our different translations. What do you think prompts Abraham to say, “We will come back to you”?

✂-----

- 4) In some ways this story seems very matter-of-fact. What can you imagine was going on in the thoughts of the rest of the family who stayed at home and the servants who go with them?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when did you go ahead and do something that you did not fully understand?

✂-----

- B) How has your faith been tested?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God will provide a way of escape.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Extreme Testing; Extreme Faith—part 2

outline

Genesis 22:4-24

Message of Hope: Before God gives you a big test, He will build your trust in Him by giving you small tests of obedience.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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3. Keep this top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) In 60 seconds or less, when was a time someone asked you a question you did not know how to answer?

Bridge: Today's story begins with a son asking his father a very difficult question. But it quickly turns to a story of extreme risk. We live in a world of extreme and risky sports. Bungee-jumping is one example. As we read this story, notice the extremes—extreme testing, extreme risk, extreme faith, and extreme obedience.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 22:4-24
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 7, why do you think Isaac has waited this late in the journey to ask this question?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verses 8-12 again. What do you think gives Abraham the ability to obey God's command and at the same time continue to say that God would provide a lamb?

✂-----

- 3) In today's world, what do you think are some of the things people withhold from God?

✂-----

- 4) What do you see this story revealing about Isaac's relationship with his own earthly father?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when was a time you obeyed even when it seemed hard or the wrong thing to do?

✂-----

- B) What are some little tests of obedience that God has used to prepare you for future tests of obedience?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Before God gives you a big test, He will build your trust in Him by giving you small tests of obedience.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Bury My Dead

outline

Genesis 23:1-20

Message of Hope: It is okay and healthy to weep and mourn the death of those we love.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) In 60 seconds or less, have you ever been in a situation where you felt like you had to bargain for something you needed?

Bridge: Today's story is about Abraham making burial arrangements for Sarah, his life companion and mother of his beloved son. The story centers on the process for acquiring a place to bury her. We'll call the story *A Place to Bury My Dead*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 23:1-20
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) If you had been Abraham, how do you think you would have responded to the death of your spouse?

✂-----

- 2) Why do you think Abraham did not own any land at this time even though he had been living in the land for decades?

✂-----

- 3) Why do you think Abraham felt the need to pay for the land when God had already given it to him?

✂-----

- 4) Let's read verses 5 and 6 again. How do you think the inhabitants of the land view Abraham?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, growing up, how did your family view and respond to death?

✂-----

- B) Who are those in your life who have died, either family, friends or even pets?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **It is okay and healthy to weep and mourn the death of those we love** . How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

An Arranged Wedding

outline

Genesis 24:1-20

Message of Hope: The same God who arranged Isaac and Rebekah's marriage has a plan for your life.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) What was the last wedding you attended?

Bridge: Today's story is an engagement story, but it is in the context of an arranged marriage. This might be a foreign concept for some, but in many parts of the world arranged marriages are common. Yet as we read this interesting story, notice who is the primary person instrumental in arranging this marriage. Our story is called *An Arranged Wedding*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 24:1-20
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What are some of the character qualities that you think Abraham was looking for in a wife for his son?

✂-----

- 2) What do you see as some of the character flaws that Abraham wanted to avoid in the local women?

✂-----

- 3) In the last part of verse 7, how do you think Abraham could be so confident that the angel would find a wife for his son?

✂-----

- 4) Let's read verses 12-14 in our different translations. What do you think makes an appropriate time to ask God for a specific sign?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what are some of the character qualities you looked for, or are looking for, in a spouse?

✂-----

- B) If you are married, who was instrumental in introducing you to your spouse?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **The same God who arranged Isaac and Rebekah's marriage has a plan for your life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Waiting

outline

Genesis 24:21-33

Message of Hope: God will answer your request for help and guidance.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When was a time you had to wait for an answer?

Bridge: Today's story leaves a man standing by a well with his camels wondering what is going to happen next. Sometimes in life, we are left standing, wondering what to do next in life. But even while we wait and wonder, God has our best interest in mind and is working things out for your best good. Our story is called *Waiting*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 24:21-33
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) It must have taken some time to water the camels. Why do you think this servant did not try to find a way to help water all his camels?

✂-----

- 2) What do you think was going through Rebekah's mind while watering the camels?

✂-----

- 3) When Rebekah saw the customary engagement gifts, who do you think she thought they were from?

✂-----

- 4) Why do you think Rebekah left them at the well and ran home, and Laban was the one to invite them home?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when was a time you had direct supernatural guidance?

✂-----

- B) How are you standing and waiting to see what happens next?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God will answer you request for help and direction.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Recognizing Evidence

outline

Genesis 24:33-54

Message of Hope: God cares about your life and is leading you.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you hear the word *evidence*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story can leave one in awe and amazement as we see how clearly God's leading can be in a person's life. And this story can leave us wondering and silently hoping that God cares for us and is leading in our own personal lives. But how do we recognize God's leading in our own life today? Today's story is called *Recognizing Evidence*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 24:33-54
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 35, why do you think the servant begins his summary by linking God's blessing to physical wealth?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verse 45 again. Why do you think the servant includes "before I had finished speaking in my heart" in his summary of what happened?

✂-----

- 3) In verse 50 and 51, what do you think Laban and Bethuel saw in this series of events that led them to be able to say with confidence, "This is from the Lord"?

✂-----

- 4) In today's world, what do you think makes it possible to discern God's leading in our lives?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when was a time you received an answer even before you were finished thinking or asking?

✂-----

- B) When was a time, like for Rebekah's family, you clearly saw God's direction in your life?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God cares about your life and is leading you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

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- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

Meditating

outline

Genesis 24:54-67

Message of Hope: As you patiently wait, God has your best interest in mind.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When was one of the first times you left home?

Bridge: Imagine what it would be like to leave home, realizing that you will probably never see your family again. That is how this story begins, but it is the beginning of a wonderful story that will slowly unfold over the coming weeks as we continue to read, share, and reflect.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 24:54-67
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Rebekah's parents want her to stay "at least ten days"?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verse 59 again. What thoughts, feelings, and questions do you think are going on in the heart of Rebekah's childhood nurse?

✂-----

- 3) In verse 61, what do you think would be the benefit of sending additional servants with Rebekah, especially since Isaac is so wealthy?

✂-----

- 4) What do you think was going through Isaac's heart when he saw the camels coming his direction?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when was a time you took a walk to think and mediate? What happened?

✂-----

- B) What is something you are patiently waiting for?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **As you patiently wait, God has your best interest in mind.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Living a Satisfied Life

outline

Genesis 25:1-11

Message of Hope: Living a deeply satisfying life goes beyond living for self.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Who is a well-known person who has died in your lifetime?

Bridge: Today's story includes the death of a well-known person in the Bible. His name is Abraham. But before he dies, some rather interesting details are added to the story. Why are they added? Why are they important? Why does it matter to me in today's world? Let's read this short story and see what happens. This story is called *Living A Satisfied Life*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 25:1-11
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) How long do you think Abraham and his second wife, Keturah, were married before he dies?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verse 5 again. What kinds of discussions, thoughts, and feelings would have been whirling around as Isaac's brothers watch Isaac getting everything?

✂-----

- 3) Now, let's read verse 6 again. What do you think it was like to be sent away with your children and starting life over again?

✂-----

- 4) In verse 11, how do you think Isaac felt as he watched all these events unfold in his life?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when was a time that you received an unexpected benefit or blessing?

✂-----

- B) What are the deeper things of life that bring a sense of satisfaction to you?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Living a deeply satisfying life goes beyond living for self.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Interesting Predictions

outline

Genesis 25:19-26

Message of Hope: Predictions are a dime a dozen, but God's predictions are worth taking note of.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you hear the word *prediction*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story begins with a family tree—maybe not the most exciting way to start a story—but then this story takes a turn. There is a war, a conflict that starts between two unborn boys. It is interesting how this conflict was predicted before it happened. Our story explores an interesting prediction.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 25:19-26
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Isaac was so desperate for his wife to have children?

✂-----

- 2) Why do you think God answered Isaac's prayer in a way that brought generations of conflict?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verse 23 and 26 again. What predictions do you see in these verses or in the footnotes of your Bible?

✂-----

- 4) When Rebekah heard that her older son will serve her younger son, what do you think she quietly thought in her heart?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, if you could know what was going to happen in the future, what would you like to know?

✂-----

- B) How do you tell the difference between God's predictions and the local weatherman's predictions?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Predictions are a dime a dozen, but God's predictions are worth taking note of.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

Selling the Farm

outline

Genesis 25:27-34

Message of Hope: God has given you a birthright. You can call for His help anytime, and He will help you.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Do you tend to be more of an outdoor person or an indoor person?

Bridge: Today's story is about the oldest boy selling his birthright. In our world, we do not talk much about birthrights, but they still do exist in different ways. Today's story is called *Selling the Farm*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 25:27-34
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) When a parent favors a child over the others, what do you see as some potential problems this causes?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verse 33 in the different translations we have in our circle. In this story, what do you think it means to "swear"?

✂-----

- 3) What do you think the "rights" of the firstborn included? (Footnotes and endnotes in your Bible may have some tips.)

✂-----

- 4) In today's world, where do you see people taking advantage of other people's weaknesses?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when have you traded or given something away that you later regretted?

✂-----

- B) Growing up, what "birthrights" existed in your family?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God has given you a birthright. You can call for His help anytime and He will help you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Undeserved Blessings

outline

Genesis 26:1-11

Message of Hope: It could be that you have been blessed by God because of what others have done.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When was a time you lived somewhere or visited a place that was not your home?

Bridge: Today's story is about an outsider living in foreign land. He is dishonest. He lies and gets caught. But the locals are afraid of him and believe it or not, they pass a law that protects him and his wife.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 26:1-11
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1) Why do you think it was important to God that Isaac not go down to Egypt?

✂-----

2) Let's read verse 4 again. As you look around our world today, how do you see that this promise of "all the nations being blessed" has come true?

✂-----

3) How do you think our world would be different if Abraham had not obeyed God?

✂-----

4) Let's read verse 10 from our different translations. If Abimelech and his people were not followers of God, why do you think they were concerned about being "guilty"?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

A) On a personal note, when was a time you were protected from doing something you would have later regretted?

✂-----

B) How do you think you have been blessed or cursed by what others have done?

✂-----

C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

D) Remember: **It could be that you have been blessed by God because of what others have done.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Water Rights

outline

Genesis 26:12-25

Message of Hope: When following God, there are times of difficulty and opposition, and there are times of peace and fruitfulness.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Throughout your life, what different sources has your water come from?

Bridge: Today's story is an interesting story about water rights. For some people, water can be taken for granted because they live in a city that provides water for them. For others, getting good water can be much more involved and time consuming. Notice the number of wells that are dug in today's story, which is called *Water Rights*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 26:12-25
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) If material wealth brings a number of difficulties, why do you think God blessed Isaac with material wealth?

✂-----

- 2) How do you think it would have been possible for Isaac to become a great nation without material wealth?

✂-----

- 3) In verses 19-22, when facing opposition, why do you think Isaac moves on and digs another well instead of defending his water rights?

✂-----

- 4) In verse 22, why do you think Isaac credits God for being the one who created room for them to prosper in the land?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when facing opposition, how do you tend to respond?

✂-----

- B) Looking ahead in your life, do you see more disputes or room to prosper?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **When following God, there are times of difficulty and opposition, and there are times of peace and fruitfulness.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

Peace

outline

Genesis 26:26-35

Message of Hope: Go and live in peace with each other.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you hear the word *peace*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story is about peacemaking. So often in today's world people live at odds with each other. Yet in this story people who do not believe in God take the initiative to make peace.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 26:26-35
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Let's read verses 27 and 29 again. How do you think King Abimelech can claim that he has *only* done Isaac good?

✂-----

- 2) In verse 28, what do you think were the tangible and observable things that made it possible for King Abimelech to conclude that God was with Isaac?

✂-----

- 3) Given Abimelech's history, what do you think would motivate Isaac to go ahead and make a treaty with him?

✂-----

- 4) In today's world, what do you see as some of the big obstacles that appear to make it seem impossible for people to live in peace with each other?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, if you were to make peace with someone in your life, what do you see as a possible next step?

✂-----

- B) Who are some people in your life that you would say, "God is with them"?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Go and live in peace with each other.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Cold Deception

outline

Genesis 27:1-29

Message of Hope: Deception is devastating, but honesty brings healing.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Without mentioning any names, when was a time someone lied to you?

Bridge: Today's story is full of deception, lying, and hurt. This story could have been very different if people would have been honest with each other. Our story is called *Cold Deception*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 27:1-29
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) How do you think it is possible for people who follow God to use deception to get what they want?

✂-----

- 2) How do you think Rebekah justified her lying and deception?

✂-----

- 3) Why do you think Jacob did not stand up for right?

✂-----

- 4) Let's read the blessing again in verses 28-29. The part about siblings bowing down seems to be a setup for fighting. Why do you think Isaac would include this in his blessing?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how many siblings do you have, and what kind of relationship do you have with them?

✂-----

- B) When you are tempted to lie and deceive someone, what gives you courage to stand for what is right?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Deception is devastating, but honesty brings healing.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

The Power of Your Words

outline

Genesis 27:30-40

Message of Hope: Your words shape the future.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Who is someone that has significantly shaped your life?

Bridge: Today's story explores the power of your words and how they shape people's lives. It is tempting to believe that we are not affected by what others think or say about us. We are deeply affected by what others say. Our story is called *The Power of Your Words*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 27:30-40
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 36, what was the birthright that Jacob had stolen? And how do you think the birthright is different from the blessing?

✂-----

- 2) In the last part of verse 33 Isaac emphasizes that the blessing he gave to Jacob cannot be reversed. Why do you think he emphasizes this?

✂-----

- 3) Read verse 37 again. How can a blessing like this predict the future of what would happen between these two brothers?

✂-----

- 4) In verse 38 Esau weeps. Why do you think that the same person who gave away his birthright is now weeping that he lost his father's blessing?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what are some blessings you have received from others?

✂-----

- B) What is something you could do to be a blessing to one other person?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Your words shape the future**. How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Healing the Hurt

outline

Genesis 27:41–28:9

Message of Hope: God can heal our own hurt so that we can stop the cycle of hurting others.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) How do people typically respond when others hurt them?

Bridge: This story shows us how, when we have been hurt by others, we tend to continue the cycle by lashing out and hurting those around us—often our own family. But there is hope. We do not have to continue the cycle of hurting others if we are willing to let God heal our broken hearts.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 27:41–28:9
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) How do you think Rebekah might have discovered Esau's plan to kill Jacob?

✂-----

- 2) How do you see Rebekah using the local Hittite women as part of her plan to convince Isaac to send Jacob away?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read 28:3 again. How do you see this additional blessing being different than the blessing in 27:28-29?

✂-----

- 4) Read verses 28:6-9 again. Why do you think that hurting people so often hurt other people?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, where have you been hurt by others and need to forgive them.

✂-----

- B) Where do you think you might be hurting your own family and need God to heal your heart?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God can heal our own hurt so that we can stop the cycle of hurting others.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

One Tenth

outline

Genesis 28:10-22

Message of Hope: God blesses us because He has promised.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) In 60 seconds or less, what was one of the last dreams you remember having?

Bridge: Today's story begins with a very odd dream. But in this dream God promises to protect Jacob and his family and to provide food and clothing for them. But the story ends with a very interesting twist. Notice how Jacob says, "Thank you."

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 28:10-22
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What part of this dream do you think was most meaningful to Jacob? And why do you think so?

✂-----

- 2) In verse 26, how do you think Jacob could say that he was not aware of God's presence?

✂-----

- 3) In today's world, what do you think keeps people from recognizing God's presence in their lives?

✂-----

- 4) Let's read verse 22 from the different translations we have. How much is "one tenth" and why do you think Jacob makes this promise?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, if God were to make similar promises to you, how do you think you would respond?

✂-----

- B) Where do you see God blessing you just because?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God blesses us because He has promised.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Cultural Differences

outline

Genesis 29:1-14

Message of Hope: Kindness and respect cross all cultures.

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5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) What was one of the bigger trips you have taken in your life?

Bridge: Today's story begins with a big trip, but then encounters some cultural differences. In today's world one does not have to go very far to find cultural differences. These differences give us an opportunity to understand others, listen to their stories, and share own story. Our story is called *Cultural Differences*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 29:1-14
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jacob is making this trip to the land in the east?

✂-----

- 2) Read verses 7 and 8 from our different translations. What differences in cultural values do you see between Jacob's recommendation and the local shepherds' response?

✂-----

- 3) Why do you think it was the custom to wait until all the flocks had arrived before beginning to water them?

✂-----

- 4) Why do you think Jacob takes the lead in rolling away the stone since he does not know when all the flocks would have arrived?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when did you encounter a cultural difference?

✂-----

- B) What cultural differences challenge your beliefs; how do you still uphold respect and kindness?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Kindness and respect cross all cultures**. How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Devastating Deception

outline

Genesis 29:15-30

Message of Hope: Deception devastates a person, but honor and value upholds a person.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you hear the word *deception*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story begins as a beautiful love story. The bride price, that is voluntarily paid by the groom, is unheard of, but deception turns this story into a disaster that leaves deep scars and lifelong hurt in people's lives.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 29:15-30
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) If we converted seven years of work into wages, how much do you think Jacob paid for Rachel, and why do you think he paid so much?

✂-----

- 2) If you were to put yourself in Leah's shoes, how would you describe the hurt she carried in her heart, and how might it play out in her life?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verse 26 in our different translations. After working seven years, how do you think Jacob overlooked this custom and what it meant for him and Rachel?

✂-----

- 4) If you were to put yourself in Rachel's shoes, what kind of thoughts and emotions do you think were going through her heart as she watched these events unfold.

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when was a time something did not turn out as you had hoped?

✂-----

- B) Who is someone in your life that has placed a high value on you?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Deception devastates a person but honor and value upholds a person.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Family Strife

outline

Genesis 29:31 – 30:24

Message of Hope: We can learn from the mistakes of others.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Growing up, what caused strife in your family?

Bridge: Today's story is one big mess. It reminds us how selfishness, jealousy, and competition can ruin a family. And this story invites us to consider how we bring strife into our own family—and hopefully we will be inspired to make some personal changes.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 29:31 – 30:24
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think that having sons has become an out-of-control obsession for both Leah and Rachel?

✂-----

- 2) What do you think Jacob, as the leader in this family, could have or should have done differently in this story?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verse 21 again. Why do you think this is the only daughter highlighted?

✂-----

- 4) In today's world, what do you think causes family strife and disfunction?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what could you do to bring more peace and less strife to your family?

✂-----

- B) Who is someone in your life that, if you asked them, would help you see your blind spots?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **We can learn from the mistakes of others.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Magic or Miracles?

outline

Genesis 30:25:43

Message of Hope: God vindicates those who live honestly and with integrity.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) What comes to mind when you hear the words sly, devious, and dishonest?

Bridge: Today's story is a prime example of trying to live honestly and with integrity with those who are deceitful, devious, and sly in their interactions with other people. But as we will soon discover, God vindicates an honest person in a rather miraculous and unexpected way. Our story is call *Magic or Miracles?*

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 30:25-43
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 28, Laban asks Jacob how much he owes him. Why do you think that Jacob does not answer his question in verses 29-30?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verses 31-34 again. What do you think motivates Jacob to make this suggestion instead of taking pay for his futurework?

✂-----

- 3) Regarding verses 35-36, what do you think was going through Jacob's mind when he learned what Laban had done?

✂-----

- 4) Beginning with verse 37, how do you explain or make sense of Jacob's actions?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how do you live with integrity and honesty when working with dishonest people?

✂-----

- B) When was a time you took a hit in order to live honestly?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God vindicates those who live honestly and with integrity.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

Worth the Wait

outline

Genesis 31:1-21

Message of Hope: Waiting for God's timing and direction is worth the wait.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) What is something for which you waited a long time?

Bridge: Today's story is about waiting. So often we are in a rush to move forward, get ahead, and do what we think is best. But running our own show often gets us into trouble. In today's story Jacob has been waiting a long time, but while he is waiting for God, notice what God is doing for him. Our story is called *Worth the Wait*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 31:1-21
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 2, what do you think brought about Laban's change of attitude towards Jacob, since he agreed to this plan in chapter 30 verse 34?

✂-----

- 2) Reread verse 3 and verse 20. If God had told Jacob it was time to leave, why do you think he left without telling Laban?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verse 12 in our different translations. If Jacob had not waited for God's direction, how do you think Jacob might have lost out on God's blessings?

✂-----

- 4) What is an idol, and what do you think motivates Rachel to steal them?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what idols are you tempted to keep in your home?

✂-----

- B) In what way are you waiting on God's timing in your life?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Waiting for God's timing and direction is worth the wait.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Vindicated

outline

Genesis 31:22-42

Message of Hope: Live an honest life, and let God vindicate you.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you hear the word *vindicated*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story begins with and is filled with deception. Yet God vindicates and protects Jacob. Most interesting is that the person who blames Jacob as being deceptive has a long track record of being deceptive. But God steps in and says “enough.” Our story is called *Vindicated*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 31:22-42
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) If God had told Laban to leave Jacob alone, why do you think Laban has the guts, in verses 25-28, to criticize and humiliate Jacob?

✂-----

- 2) What blind spots do you think keep Laban from realizing that no matter what he does God will protect and bless Jacob?

✂-----

- 3) What do you see as the difference between lying and intending to deceive?

✂-----

- 4) Although we are not told, what do you think happened when Jacob discovered that Rachael had stolen the gods?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, if you had been Laban, what do you think you would have done differently?

✂-----

- B) When was a time you felt like God defended and vindicated you?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Live an honest life, and let God vindicate you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Mine, Mine, Mine

outline

Genesis 31:43-55

Message of Hope: We do not have to be obsessed with our stuff.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) If a child was being selfish with their toys, how would you try to help them share with others?

Bridge: Have you ever heard a small child gather up his toys and declare these are mine, mine, mine? In today's story this is what a grown adult does. Even worse, Laban tries to make a deal with Jacob to protect himself and his stuff. Why does he act like this? Our story is called *Mine, Mine, Mine*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 31:43-55
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) When Laban says that everything is his, how much of his perspective do you think is cultural, and how much is selfish?

✂-----

- 2) Why do you think they include a pile of stones, a meal, and the entire family in this process instead of shaking hands to confirm their agreement?

✂-----

- 3) In verses 49 and 50, what do you think is driving Laban to be so concerned about protecting himself and his belongings.

✂-----

- 4) What do you see as the differences between the covenant meal in verse 46 and the covenant feast in verse 54?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what is a significant and meaningful covenant you have made?

✂-----

- B) How do you guard your heart so that you do not fall into the trap of thinking that all that you have is the result of your own hard work?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **We do not have to be obsessed with our stuff.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

Faith and Fear

outline

Genesis 32:1-21

Message of Hope: God loves you even when you walk by fear.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When was a time you think you encountered the supernatural?

Bridge: Today's story begins with a supernatural encounter from God. Imagine what it would be like if God were to send angels to visit with you. This is what happens to Jacob, but it seems like he still is living in fear. But before we criticize him, let's remember that our own journey is often a mixture of *Faith and Fear*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 32:1-21
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think this story begins with angels meeting with Jacob, and what do you think they might have talked about?

✂-----

- 2) In verse 7, after meeting with angels, why do you think Jacob is still afraid and terrified?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verses 9 and 12 in our different translations. What do you notice about how Jacob dialogues with God?

✂-----

- 4) If angels met with Jacob in verse 1, and if God has promised to make him prosper and to treat him well, why do you think Jacob still makes an elaborate strategy for meeting his brother Esau?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, where do you see yourself walking by faith, and where do you see yourself walking by fear?

✂-----

- B) To what degree do you feel you can talk openly and honestly with God?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God loves you even when you walk by fear.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

Overcoming God

outline

Genesis 32:22-32

Message of Hope: It is possible to “win” with God.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When was a time you did something you did not expect to be able to do?

Bridge: Today's story begins by being quite elusive. Then slowly the picture comes clear. As we read this story, notice how Jacob is able to wrestle with God and overcome. Even God says, in this story, that He is not able to win the wrestling match. That seems really odd. But dig deeper than the surface. This story is called *Overcoming God*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 32:22-32
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) If it is God who wrestles with Jacob in verse 25, why do you think this “man” concluded that he could not overcome, prevail, or win the wrestling match against Jacob?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verse 28 in our different translations. Who do you think the “with man” is referring to?

✂-----

- 3) What do you think it means to prevail, overcome, or win as it relates to God?

✂-----

- 4) Jacob ask to be blessed. How do you see this request being answered?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, where do you think you might be wrestling with God?

✂-----

- B) When was a time you wondered if you had encountered God or one of His angels?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **It is possible to “win” with God.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Peacemaking

outline

Genesis 33:1-20

Message of Hope: Restoring and strengthening relationships is a two-way street.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you hear the word *peacemaking*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story is a heartwarming story of a strained and difficult relationship being restored. It is one of the stories that ends well. But not all stories end with relationships being restored. Then what? Well, it all depends. Today's story is called *Peace-Making*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 33:1-20
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 2, what do you think was going on in the thoughts of Jacob's wives and servant wives as he lined them up in a specific order?

✂-----

- 2) If Esau, in verse 4, welcomes Jacob with open arms, why do you think he comes with four hundred men?

✂-----

- 3) At what point do you see the gift-giving cross the line and become manipulative in order to buy friendship?

✂-----

- 4) In verse 14, Jacob and Esau agree to meet in Seir, but instead Jacob goes to Succoth and to Shechem. How do you make sense of this?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what relationship would you like to see restored or strengthened?

✂-----

- B) If someone does not want to restore or strengthen a relationship with you, then what do you tend to do next?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Restoring and strengthening relationships is a two-way street.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

Hurting Back

outline

Genesis 34:1-31

Message of Hope: Hurting back never helps.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Why do you think most people hurt back when they have been hurt?

Bridge: Do two wrong's make a right? Today's story is a series of hurting people who hurt people who then hurt other people. What does it take to stop this tide of events, and even turn it around? A turnaround does not happen in today's story, but it will give us something to think about as we respond to those who have hurt us.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 34:1-31
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jacob seems to be more concerned about his reputation than his own daughter?

✂-----

- 2) What do you think are some other ways that Jacob's sons could have or should have handled this wrong?

✂-----

- 3) What are the various points of deceit you see in this story?

✂-----

- 4) In verse 27, why do you think the rest of Jacob's sons arrived later, and why do you think they had even come?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when you or someone has been wronged, how do you try to address it without hurting back?

✂-----

- B) How do you express healthy anger when someone has been wronged?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Hurting back never helps.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

New Name

outline

Genesis 35:1-15

Message of Hope: God has a plan for your life

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) What is your full name and what nicknames did you grow up with?

Bridge: Today's story ends with Jacob being given a new name. With this new name comes several promises. But notice what is required before the new name and promises are given.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 35:1-15
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think a new name is a significant part of this story?

✂-----

- 2) If people were to “purify themselves” and prepare to meet God in today's culture, what do you think it might look like?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verse 4 in our different translations. Why do you think earrings were included?

✂-----

- 4) If God were to tell you to go do something, how likely do you think you would be to do it, and what kind of things might keep you from doing it?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, who named you, and does your name have any special meaning?

✂-----

- B) If God literally talked with you so that you could hear him, what do you think it would be like?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God has a plan for your life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Death

outline

Genesis 35:16-29

Message of Hope: Death is part of our sinful world, but someday death itself will be destroyed.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you hear the word *death*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: We pick up today's continued story at a rather sad point. Jacob and his family have been on the move for some time. While traveling, his wife dies. This story does not address the questions of what happens when a person dies, but it simply tells the story of people, their pain, and their journey onward with a newborn baby.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 35:16-29
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 17, why do you think the midwife includes the words, “do not be afraid”?

✂-----

- 2) Why do you think Jacob disregards his wife's name for the baby and gives him a different name?

✂-----

- 3) Being a continued story, some of us may remember when Jacob had to quickly leave home many years earlier. What do you think it was like for Isaac to have his son and family back home again?

✂-----

- 4) In today's world, how do you think most people relate to the death of a friend or family member?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, have you ever lived in a foreign place? What was your experience?

✂-----

- B) What is the first name of a friend, family member, or special pet that has died?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Death is part of our sinful world, but someday death itself will be destroyed.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

Relevant Relatives

outline

Genesis 36:1-9 (optional summary of 10-43 below)

Message of Hope: God is the God of every generation, the Father of every family.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Does your family have any traditions or heirlooms that have been passed down from one generation to the next?

Bridge: While we often think of genealogy as a dry list of names, the imprint that one generation leaves becomes a relevant reality to generations that follow. This is why the Bible places people and events in the context of family history. Like it or not, we are each influenced by the choices of those before us. But we can make generation-changing choices, too. Today's story is call *Relevant Relatives*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 36:1-9 (summary option for verses 10-43: Verses 10-14 name Esau's sons and grandsons according to which wife of Esau they were born to. Verses 15-19 give an almost identical list of Esau's sons and grandsons, now identified as clan leaders. Verses 20-30 give the lineage of the Horites, the native people of Mt Seir, where Esau's descendants settled; this section shows the joining of Horite and Edomite? bloodlines when it mentions two women, Timna and Oholibamah, who are also mentioned in Esau's family line. Finally, verses 31-43 list descendants of Esau—EdoCollection--who become regional rulers.

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think that one of Esau's wives, Judith, who was mentioned in chapter 26 is not mentioned here?

✂-----

- 2) What clues do you see about the quality of Jacob and Esau's relationship?

✂-----

- 3) Reread verse 8. How do you think this “code-breaker” piece of information helps you understand other parts of the Bible?

✂-----

- 4) Most of the stories in the Old Testament follow the family line that leads to Jesus, the promised Savior. But Jesus was a descendant of Jacob, not Esau. Why do you think this story takes a detour through Esau's genealogy?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how do you think your own lineage, or people group, has affected your life.

✂-----

- B) What is one thing you hope to pass on to the generation that follows you?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

D) Remember: **God is the God of every generation, the Father of every family.** How can this group pray for you this week?

A Setup

outline

Genesis 37:1-17

Message of Hope: Even in a family feud, God is still working.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Where are you in the birth order of your siblings?

Bridge: Today's story is about a teenager who is either proud and a bit arrogant or is naive to the growing jealousy of his brothers towards him. Even though Dad may be somewhat responsible for causing this jealousy, he seems to side with the brothers publicly. Today's story is called *A Setup*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 37:1-17
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) How do you think Jacob could have expressed his love for Joseph without contributing to the brothers' jealousy?

✂-----

- 2) Is Joseph naive or proud, and what do you think motivated Joseph to tell his dreams to his brothers?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verse 9 again. If sharing his first dream with his brothers did not go well, why do you think he tells them his second dream?

✂-----

- 4) If Jacob recognizes a deeper meaning in these dreams, why do you think he scolds and rebukes Joseph for sharing them?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how do you try to avoid these kinds of misunderstandings among your own siblings or among your own children?

✂-----

- B) If you have children, how do you protect yourself against favoritism and not just covering up your favoritism?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Even in a family feud, God is still working.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer & Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Sold as a Slave

outline

Genesis 37:18-36

Message of Hope: God can take the worst circumstances and use them in a good way.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you hear about slavery, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story begins with some siblings wanting to kill their brother. But instead of killing Joseph, they sell him into a life of slavery.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 37:18-36
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What do you think motivated Reuben to come to Joseph's rescue when his other brothers wanted to kill him?

✂-----

- 2) What do you see is at the root of hate and anger?

✂-----

- 3) How would you describe deceit, and how do you see people using deceit in today's world?

✂-----

- 4) What life lessons do you think Joseph may have learned while being transported to Egypt?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what is a life lesson you have learned by going through a difficult situation.

✂-----

- B) What is a life lesson that you may be in the process of learning?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God can take our worst circumstances and use them in a good way.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Living Integrity

outline

Genesis 38:1-30

Message of Hope: Live a life of integrity, even when nobody is looking.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you think of integrity, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story is a difficult story. We may even wonder why it was included in the Bible. As we read and talk about this story, please use discretion given the variety of ages in our circle. We will likely not discover all the answers to our questions, but we will be challenged and hopefully inspired to live lives of integrity when nobody is looking. Would an adult be willing to read this story for us?

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 38:1-30
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1) After reading this story how would you summarize Judah's ethical and moral integrity?

✂-----

2) Why do you think that it was so important in their culture that people would go to this extent for a woman to have a child?

✂-----

3) How would you summarize Tamar's ethical and moral integrity?

✂-----

4) In verse 26 Judah says, "she is more righteous than I am." If an eight-year-old child asked you, "What makes a person *righteous*?" how do you think you would answer this question?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

A) On a personal note, who is someone who has helped or inspired you to live a life of ethical and moral integrity?

✂-----

B) How do you strive to live a life of integrity when nobody is looking?

✂-----

C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

D) Remember: **Live a life of integrity even when nobody is looking.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

Moral Sobriety

outline

Genesis 39:1-18

Message of Hope: Living a trustworthy life means living a morally sober life.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

Welcome: We are so glad that you are here today.

Setting the Context:

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) What is something that someone has trusted you with?

Bridge: Today's story is about being trustworthy. Today's world is full of immorality. But our story stands in stark contrast to the world in which we live, and hopefully this story will be an inspiring reminder to each of us to live a trustworthy life that is faithful and morally sober.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 39:1-18
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Potiphar attributes Joseph's success to God's blessings, instead of attributing it to getting a good slave?

✂-----

- 2) How old do you think Joseph is, and as he climbs the ladder so quickly, what do you think keeps him from becoming proud and self-centered?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verses 8 and 9 in our different translations. What do you think gives Joseph his moral sobriety, when it would be very easy to justify this invitation?

✂-----

- 4) If God is blessing all that Joseph does, why do you think God does not protect Joseph from Potiphar's wife?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, like Potiphar, what is an area you see God's recent blessings in your life?

✂-----

- B) How do you preserve moral sobriety in a world that is full of immoral invitations?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Living a trustworthy life includes living a morally sober life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Freedom Behind Bars

outline

Genesis 39:19-23

Message of Hope: Integrity is who you are when nobody is looking.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Without mentioning any names, when was a time you saw someone who was really furious and angry?

Bridge: Today's story begins with someone who is angry and throws someone into jail. But interestingly enough, the person in jail is actually a free man, even though he is in jail. Our story is called *Freedom Behind Bars*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 39:19-23
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Potiphar preserved Joseph's life instead of immediately killing him?

✂-----

- 2) How do you think the other prisoners responded to Joseph being in charge of them?

✂-----

- 3) If someone suggested that Joseph's promotions had more to do with his own leadership skills than God's blessings, how do you think you might respond?

✂-----

- 4) If Joseph came to live in your home, how do you think that would change things?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, where do you see God arranging circumstances in your favor?

✂-----

- B) How do you seek to live a life of integrity, even when you feel confined by your circumstances?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Integrity is who you are when nobody is looking.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Waiting Again

outline

Genesis 40:1-23

Message of Hope: You will not make a mistake when you wait on God's timing.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) How often do you remember dreams you had during the night?

Bridge: Today's story tells about two very odd dreams, someone who accurately interprets both dreams, and a forgotten promise, which leaves the interpreter waiting and wondering if he will ever get out of prison. Our story is called *Waiting Again*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 40:1-23
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What character quality do you see in Joseph that makes it possible to even notice when the cupbearer and baker look sad and dejected?

✂-----

- 2) What do you think gives Joseph the confidence to know that his interpretation of the dream is correct?

✂-----

- 3) How do you think it is even possible for Pharaoh's chief cupbearer to completely forget about Joseph and his request?

✂-----

- 4) What do you think gives Joseph hope that God has not forgotten him?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what is an area of your life where you are waiting for God?

✂-----

- B) Over the past several months, would you describe yourself as becoming more patient or less patient?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **You will not make a mistake when you wait on God's timing.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Desperate—part 1

outline

Genesis 41:1-16

Message of Hope: When we are desperate for God, He will reveal Himself in unusual ways.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) If you had a dream and felt there was an important meaning to it, how would you go about trying to figure out its meaning?

Bridge: Today's story finds a government leader so desperate to have his dreams interpreted that he is open to trying anything. What he does not know, but will eventually discover, is that this person who interprets his dreams ends up saving his life. Our story is called *Desperate—part 1*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 41:1-16
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Pharaoh also included the magicians when he called upon the wise men to interpret his dreams?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verse 9 in the different translations we have. Why do you think the cupbearer refers to his faults, shortcomings, and failures when he tells Pharaoh about Joseph?

✂-----

- 3) In verse 16, why do you think Pharaoh is not offended when Joseph tells him that God is able to tell him the interpretation of his dreams?

✂-----

- 4) What similarities and differences do you see between the cupbearer and Joseph?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, do you think it would be easier for you to talk about your faults or about God?

✂-----

- B) If you were to talk about God in today's world like Joseph did, how do you think people would respond?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **When we are desperate for God, He will reveal Himself in unusual ways.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

Desperate—part 2

outline

Genesis 41:17-36

Message of Hope: God will walk with you in both times of plenty and times of need.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When was a time you had two similar dreams?

Bridge: Today's story begins with two interesting dreams and ends with a master plan to save the nation. Yet, it is times of “do-or-die” that people realize how fragile they are, and how desperate they can be. That is why our story is called *Desperate—part 2*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 41:17-36
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Joseph immediately gives the interpretation of these dreams instead of asking for time?

✂-----

- 2) If this would have happened in today's world with today's world leaders, how do you think they might have responded?

✂-----

- 3) What do you think God is trying to do in this story?

✂-----

- 4) What are the different ways you think people could have responded to a 20% tax?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how would you describe your typical response to taxes?

✂-----

- B) When was a time of “plenty” in your life and when was a time of “need” in your life?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God will walk with you through both times of plenty and times of need.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

National Power

outline

Genesis 41:37-57

Message of Hope: God will honor those who honor and obey Him.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) What was one of the earlier responsibilities you were given when you were growing up?

Bridge: Today's story takes us into the heart of responsibility at a national level. Often power, wealth, and corruption go together. But this story is very different. It is a story of power and wealth, but there is no corruption. In fact, it is a story of giving honor and glory to God even when everyone else most likely did not believe in the God of Heaven.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 41:37-57
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1) When Joseph is appointed second-in-command of Egypt, what do you think keeps him from becoming proud and arrogant?

✂-----

2) Someone read verses 45 and 46 again. What do you see as some of the greatest temptations Joseph will face in his new position?

✂-----

3) Even though it was likely not Joseph's choice, what do you think it was like being married to someone who believed very differently?

✂-----

4) In light of verse 49, when do you see planning for the future turning into hoarding?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

A) On a personal note, how do you currently prepare for unforeseen times of spiritual famine, physical famine, financial famine, or relational famine in your family?

✂-----

B) Where do you find the balance between planning for the future and trusting in God?

✂-----

C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

D) Remember: **God will honor those who honor and obey Him.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

Accused—part 1

outline

Genesis 42:1-17

Message of Hope: Live an honest life, so if you are falsely accused, your reputation will defend you.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) What is one of the longer trips you have taken away from home?

Bridge: Today's story is a crisis. Not only does the governor of Egypt accuse some people of being spies, they are his brothers whom he has not seen for many, many years. But his brothers do not recognize him as their own brother. Is this all about revenge, or is there something else going on? Our story is called *Accused, part 1*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 42:1-17
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) How do you think Jacob heard about the grain that was for sale in Egypt?

✂-----

- 2) Using your Bible's footnotes, commentary, and maps, which are often located in the back of a Bible, where is Canaan in relationship to Egypt, and how long might it take to make this trip?

✂-----

- 3) In verse 8, how many years do you think have passed since Joseph first had the dreams of his brothers bowing down before him?

✂-----

- 4) Let's read verse 13 again. What do you think motivated them to share this additional information?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When was a time you falsely accused someone?

✂-----

- B) Without giving names, when was a time you felt falsely accused?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Live an honest life, so that if you are falsely accused, your reputation will defend you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Accused—part 2

outline

Genesis 42:17-38

Message of Hope: You can change your reputation.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Who is a well-known person you have met? For example, a president, chief, judge, governor, mayor, actor, leader, etc.?

Bridge: In today's story, ten brothers come face to face with the governor of the most powerful nation in the world at that time. What they don't know is that this governor is their brother—the one they sold into slavery years before. Now they are being tested to see if they have truly changed. Our story is called *Accused, part 2*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 42:17-38
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 18, why do you think Joseph told them that he was a “God-fearing man,” with a capital G?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verse 22 from our different translations. What do you think Reuben is referring to when he says that they must give an account for his blood?

✂-----

- 3) When the brothers are telling their father what happened, why do you think they did not include the part about the governor being a “God-fearing man”?

✂-----

- 4) What do you think Joseph is really testing them for? What is he trying to determine?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, without mentioning any names, when was a time in your life someone questioned your honesty?

✂-----

- B) If you were to change your reputation among your family and friends, what would you like to change?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **You can change your reputation.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Reputations

outline

Genesis 43:1-18

Message of Hope: You can change your reputation, but it will take time for others to trust the new you.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you hear the word *reputation*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story seems to go against today's popular thought which says, "do not judge me." People are tired of being judged and criticized. That makes sense. Yet, today's story goes much deeper than the popular "do not judge me" attitude and seeks to assess the character qualities of some people who had some bad reputations.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 43:1-18
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think the ten brothers did not go as individual men seeking to buy grain, instead of going as a group?

✂-----

- 2) If Jacob's household had balm, honey, gum, aromatic resin, pistachio nuts, and almonds, how much of a food shortage do you think they are experiencing?

✂-----

- 3) Why do you think the brothers were terrified to be taken to Joseph's house instead of seeing it as a gesture of honor?

✂-----

- 4) Read verse 11 again. Jacob is stuck between a rock and a hard place. What other options do you see as possibilities to his dilemma?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what is one of the harder decisions you have had to make?

✂-----

- B) How, like Joseph, do you try to assess people's character qualities?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **You can change your reputation, but it will take time for people to trust the new you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

Tested Again

outline

Genesis 43:19-34

Message of Hope: Testing both reveals and refines our character.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) What is one of the more difficult tests you have taken?

Bridge: Today's story is full of apprehension. By the end, all seems to be going well. But Joseph is carefully watching what happens, trying to determine if his brothers, who sold him into slavery in Egypt, are the same or if they have changed. Our story is called *Tested Again*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 43:19-34
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) At what point in today's story do you think Joseph's brothers begin to relax a little bit?

✂-----

- 2) After hearing that they had brought back the money they found in the sacks of grain, and after seeing Benjamin, why do you think Joseph did not tell them who he was at this point in the story?

✂-----

- 3) At what point in this story do you think the brothers suspected that something else is going on or that this might be Joseph?

✂-----

- 4) Why do you think Joseph gives five times as much food to Benjamin instead of two or three times as much?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what are some of the early indicators that help you discover when you are being tested?

✂-----

- B) What is an area in your life that you think you might have been tested recently?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Testing both reveals and refines our character.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

A Setup

outline

Genesis 44:1-17

Message of Hope: Honesty is the best way to live.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When was a time you sensed someone was testing you?

Bridge: In today's story there is a major test. But it looks like a setup for a takedown. Since this story is a continued story, we will not see the outcome, but there is something else going on behind the scenes that will be revealed next week. This story seems to be filled with dishonesty, which will provide some good discussion. So, let's read this story, which is called *A Setup*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 44:1-17
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do think Joseph was willing to be dishonest about his silver cup?

✂-----

- 2) How do you think Joseph's steward views Joseph's instructions and all that was going on?

✂-----

- 3) What additional information do you think Joseph might have shared with his steward?

✂-----

- 4) Let's read verse 15 in our various translations. What do you think Joseph means when he talks about practicing divination?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, how do you protect yourself from justifying dishonesty?

✂-----

- B) When you suspect dishonesty in others, how do you typically respond?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Honesty is the best way to live.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Healing

outline

Genesis 44:18 – 45:15

Message of Hope: God brings healing in His time.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Do you think people have more broken or healthy relationships?

Bridge: Today's story is a story of healing that has taken years to happen. Have you ever pondered why there are so many broken relationships in people's lives? People are very complex. Today's story gives hope in a world of broken relationships.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 44:18 – 45:15
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Judah is the one who speaks on behalf of his brothers and who offers to become a slave in Benjamin's place?

✂-----

- 2) Why do you think Joseph sends everyone else out of the room before telling his brothers who he is?

✂-----

- 3) In verses 5-8, why do you think Joseph spends so much time reassuring his brothers that it was God who did all this?

✂-----

- 4) In verse 14, reading in between the lines, what do you think they would have likely talked about?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when was a time you experienced healing in a difficult relationship?

✂-----

- B) How do you find the balance between actively trying to bring healing to difficult relationships and waiting for God to bring about healing?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God brings healing in His time.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Almost Home

outline

Genesis 45:16 – 46:27

Message of Hope: God cares about the details of your life.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When was the last time you traveled some distance to see family? How far did you travel?

Bridge: Today's story is soon to become a family reunion. It has taken years for this reunion to become a reality. The journey itself takes weeks to make and will not be completed until next week's story. Yet we join this journey that will change the course of history. Today's story is called *Almost Home*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 45:16 – 46:27
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) If the Egyptians despise shepherds, why do you think Pharaoh is willing to give them the best land in Egypt?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read 45:24 in our different translations. Why do you think Joseph would give this last bit of instruction if he was convinced that they had changed?

✂-----

- 3) Looking in your footnotes and side notes regarding 46:1, what do you think is so special about Beersheba?

✂-----

- 4) Let's read 46:3-4 again. What do you find touching and meaningful in these verses?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, when was a time you felt like you were given reassurance?

✂-----

- B) If there is something you would like reassurance about in your life, what might it be?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God cares about the details of your life**. How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Getting Settled

outline

Genesis 46:28 – 47:12

Message of Hope: Even in trials, God is leading you and your family.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) Where were you born, and how many different places have you lived?

Bridge: Today's story brings closure to one chapter of life as a father and son are reunited, and yet this story also begins another chapter, one that will last about four hundred years. Our story is called *Getting Settled*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 46:28 – 47:12
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) When do you think Joseph's brothers told Jacob the real story of how they had sold Joseph into slavery?

✂-----

- 2) In verse 2, why do you think Joseph only took five of his brothers?

✂-----

- 3) How do you think Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and what do you think he might have included in his blessing?

✂-----

- 4) Using the footnotes or endnotes in your Bible, how long did Jacob's father, Isaac, and his grandfather, Abraham, live, and why do you think Jacob does not live as long?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, what are some of the different places you have lived, and what is one thing you really liked about each place?

✂-----

- B) If you were going to choose a new place to live, what are some of the factors you would include in picking a new place?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Even in trials, God is leading you and your family.** How can this group pray for you this week?

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- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

Taxes and Slavery

outline

Genesis 47:13-31

Message of Hope: God uses the worst of circumstances to accomplish His goals.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you hear the words *taxes* and *slavery*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story raises a lot of questions about taxes, slavery, and God's leading. From the comfort of our living rooms it can be easy to theorize about these topics, but life and death issues tend to force a practical and sober perspective. Today's story is called *Taxes and Slavery*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 47:13-31
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Joseph sold them food instead of giving each family a food allotment?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verses 20 and 21 again. Since Joseph had firsthand experience of being sold as a slave, why do you think he perpetuated a slave system once he was in power?

✂-----

- 3) What do you think this story teaches us about the sensitive topic of governmental taxes and governmental support?

✂-----

- 4) In verses 29-30, why do you think it was so important to Jacob to be taken out of Egypt?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, who is someone that has saved your life in a big or in a small way? What happened?

✂-----

- B) If you and your family had lived in Egypt during this famine, how do you think you would have responded to Joseph's government 20% tax and government support?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **God uses the worst of circumstances to accomplish His goals.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Godly Fathers

outline

Genesis 48:1-22

Message of Hope: A Godly father will impact his children's lives for good.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) On a scale of one to ten (with ten being very involved) how involved is or was your father in your life?

Bridge: Today's story emphasizes the role of a Godly father in the lives of his family. Not only will his last words affect their lives, but his daily interactions will speak life or shame into their lives.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 48:1-22
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1) In verses 3 and 4, Jacob repeats God's promise to Joseph. But if you were to guess, when do you think Jacob began to realize that he may not see God's promise fulfilled in his lifetime?

✂-----

2) What do you think motivated Jacob to claim and adopt Joseph's two sons as his own sons, but not make a similar provision for Joseph's possible future children?

✂-----

3) In crossing his arms when he placed his hands on the boys' heads, do you think Jacob saw something in the future that Joseph did not know, or do you think God caused the course of events to follow Jacob's actions?

✂-----

4) Read verse 22 again. Given the history of treating Joseph with extra special favors, why do you think Jacob would continue this behavior now?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

A) On a personal note, if you were going to remind your children or grandchildren of something of significant importance, what do you think you would share with them?

✂-----

B) Who is someone, not from your family, who has treated you as one of their own children? What has it been like?

✂-----

C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

D) Remember: **A Godly father will impact his children's lives for good.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

The Power of Words

outline

Genesis 49:1-33

Message of Hope: Your words can give life, or they can kill.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) How much of our communication do you think is verbal, and how much is nonverbal?

Bridge: Today's story is about our words. Words have power. Our words either build people up or tear them down. They honor people or shame them. But more than our specific choice of words, it is our nonverbal communication that heals hearts or destroys hearts. And most importantly, our communication habits set up our children for the kind of spouse they will be emotionally attracted to—one that builds them up or tears them down.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 49:1-33
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Do you think that Jacob's comments about each son was more of a summary of their past or a prediction of what was going to come in the future?

✂-----

- 2) In today's culture, in what ways do you see fathers and mothers using their nonverbal words to speak life or death into their family?

✂-----

- 3) If you were willing to ask your spouse for their honest perspective, how do you think they would answer this question, "How could I bring more life and less death into our home?"

✂-----

- 4) When we use our position to shame our family, what do you think this reveals to us about ourselves?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, growing up, what kinds of words and nonverbal words did you hear from your father or mother?

✂-----

- B) If you were going to change the words and nonverbal words you spoke to your family, how do you think you could start?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Your words can give life, or they can kill.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer & Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet

Grieving Loss

outline

Genesis 50:1-13

Message of Hope: Healing comes out of mourning the loss of loved ones.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

Welcome: We are so glad that you are here today.

Setting the Context:

- We come from a variety of backgrounds and seek to create a safe place for Truth seekers to grow spiritually.
- You will notice that we try to avoid fancy religious language. We are common people.
- Let's encourage those who like to talk to give opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What is a high-light or a low-light (a headline) from your week?
3. [*Insert rotation question for the week.*]

At the end of check-in ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate check-in next week. Anyone can facilitate check-in. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

The Quiz: A child asks three questions. They randomly choose from the check-in questions people just answered. Ask everyone to raise their hands and the child picks someone to answer the questions.

At the end of the quiz ask the child who facilitated to choose another child to facilitate the quiz next week.

Facilitator's Directions:

1. Talk as little as possible, encourage others to share, and avoid a monologue.
2. Cut on the dotted lines. Distribute questions around the circle. (✂-----)
3. Keep this top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) When you hear the word *death*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story is a story of death, loss, and grieving. In today's world many cultures have distanced themselves from death and grieving, but as we will soon see, one's ability to grieve plays an important part in our own healing and our ability to live life with meaning and purpose. Today's story is called *Grieving Loss*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 50:1-13
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Since the Egyptians did not really know Jacob, why do you think seventy days were set aside to mourn his death?

✂-----

- 2) Let's read verses 4-5 again. What do you think motivates Joseph to make his request to Pharaoh's advisors instead of talking directly with Pharaoh?

✂-----

- 3) What thoughts, feelings, and fears do you think ran through the minds of the people living in Canaan when they saw all of Egypt's top leadership come with Joseph?

✂-----

- 4) Why do you think many cultures in today's world have distanced themselves from death and grief?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, growing up how did your family deal with death and grief?

✂-----

- B) Who is someone you have lost, and how have you processed the loss?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Healing comes out of mourning the loss of loved ones.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**

God Intended It for Good

outline

Genesis 50:14-26

Message of Hope: Whatever happens in life, God will use it for good.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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3. Keep this top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle) In your family history, how long do people live?

Bridge: Today's story is the last story in Genesis. We have spent over a year exploring this amazing story which started out with a creation template that God designed for our world. We discovered how sin entered our world, and we have personally experienced hardship and pain. In today's story, Joseph will die at the age of 110. But he leaves with us a secret to help us as we continue to live our lives. Our story is called *God Intended It for Good*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Genesis 50:14-26
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂-----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verses 16-17, if it was Jacob who instructed Joseph's brother to apologize for what they did to Joseph, what indications do you see that Joseph's brothers were truly repentant for what they did?

✂-----

- 2) What evidence do you see in this story that Joseph had truly forgiven them?

✂-----

- 3) Let's read verse 19 again. With all the great things that Joseph had accomplished in Egypt, what do you think keeps him from becoming proud and arrogant?

✂-----

- 4) Let's read verse 20 in our different translations. When do you think Joseph came to this conclusion?

✂-----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a personal note, where do you see God taking you through some difficult times?

✂-----

- B) How do you see God using these difficulties for good?

✂-----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂-----

- D) Remember: **Whatever happens in life, God will use it for good.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet**