

ONE STORY CHURCH YEAR

Small Group Discussion Guide

Genesis 12 marks the shift when God's plan of salvation is revealed to work through one family for the sake of every family. Blessed to be a blessing! In the call of Abraham, we see God call and Abraham go, because what God says is. God calls you and you go. God blesses and you are blessed. Abraham is a participant but it is all the work of God. In Mark, we see that it is human nature to look to our own actions for our salvation. In our own actions, we are doomed. But in God, salvation -- blessing, life -- is not only possible, but is.

Week Two: Blessed

Genesis 16-27; Mark 6-10; Psalms 1, 107, 4

The Small Group: Its Purpose

Faith matures and deepens in community. Small groups are places to develop faith-based relationships, explore questions, and find support for the journey. Discussion guides contain elements that will help group members get to know each other, reflect on the ONE readings, and pray together. The covenant of the small group is to be encouraging, confidential, and open to the wonderings and assurances that arise from reading scripture.

This Week's Readings: Some Notes

Genesis 12 is another beginning story and, while you read it last week, it is worth noting this week, when you are getting deep into the Abraham story. The call of Abram is the beginning of God's story with Abram and Sarai, renamed Abraham and Sarah. It is the beginning of God choosing one family to bless all families, God building one nation in order to bless all nations. Genesis can really be divided into two parts: chapters 1-11, which tell of the beginnings of the world, and chapters 12-50, which is the ancestral story of Israel. The story of Abraham matters for those of the Jewish and Christian faith, as well as Muslim. Tapping into some of the resources for more on this section of Genesis will probably be helpful. Even apart from its significance, the stories that you will encounter in these chapters are interesting, funny, heart-breaking, and so human.

In Mark, you will continue sprinting through the life of Jesus, traveling with him as he teaches and performs miracles outside of Jerusalem. Next week's reading begins with his entrance into Jerusalem, but in these chapters, his identity continues to be made known. There is a theme of not understanding and you can see that Jesus' doings are agitating to some. Some things to note: the feeding of the 4000 and 5000, three predictions of Jesus' death and resurrection, and the tension of Jesus' teaching on greatness and success (losing life to save it, last being first, etc.).

Connecting: Take Time to Get to Know Each Other

Continue to get to know each other. Share names again and where you grew up and if you would describe your growing up years as "blessed."

Praying: Entrusting All Things to God

Designate someone in your group to open in prayer. If members have joys and concerns to share, include those things, too.

Discussing and Studying: Digging In

The Bible study portion for these small group studies focuses on Sunday's preaching texts, but feel free to dig into what you have been reading. What did you read in the last week that surprised you?

What challenged you? What bothered you?

What sounded like good news? What did you find out about God? About yourself?

You could spend your whole discussion time just on these questions. If you like more structure, use the questions below. Some groups may want to go more deeply into the Bible readings; refer to the resource section for more.

Invite someone to read out loud Genesis 12:1-4a and Mark 10:17-27. Use the questions below to assist your discussion and study.

1. What are some initial reactions you have to these readings?
2. If you heard this week's sermon, with what did you resonate? What did you wonder? How did it help or hinder your understanding of these texts?
3. Of all the verses included in this week's readings, the above verses are what were chosen for preaching texts. What connections do you see in these texts? What would you have chosen if you were the preacher?
4. When God tells – calls – Abraham to go, he does. It's easy to marvel at the obedience of people in the Bible to do what God asks. On the other hand, the creation story reveals that God speaks and it is. God says, "Let there be light" and there is light. God says, "You are forgiven" and you are forgiven. When God calls, do we assent to that call? Or is God's Word doing in our lives what it does elsewhere: making happen what it declares. How do you understand "call" for Abraham and for you?
5. Abram is told that God will bless him so that others may be blessed. A blessing is the promise of favor; it is the promise of God's care and presence and work of life. How does this sense of blessing fit or not fit with how you understand it?
6. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God" Mark 10:25. Are you as disturbed by this declaration as the disciples were? What is bothersome about it?
7. The rich man comes to Jesus wanting to know what he can do to be assured of his salvation. What is wrong with his question? (Hint: on whom does salvation rest?)
8. What is impossible for mortals is possible for God. Is this not the good news of this text? Our salvation rests not on us but on God, who in Jesus, Word made flesh, reveals that God saves you. It is our human nature to think it is about us, but how do these two readings point us to God and the power of God's Word?
9. Is blessing – having the promise of God's favor – the same as salvation?
10. Any other thoughts on these texts? Tap into study Bibles and other resources to expand your discussion.

Wrapping up

Share closing thoughts and a prayer and/or one of the week's psalms as a benediction for your time together.

Additional Resources

The Bible Project: <https://bibleproject.com/>

This site has many videos and other resources that your group may find beneficial for book overviews and context.

These videos are short but comprehensive. Specific videos that pertain to this week's readings are:

[Genesis 12-50](#)

[Bible Project: Mark](#)

[Blessing and Curse](#)

Luther Seminary: [Enter the Bible](#)

[Summary of Genesis](#)

[Summary of Mark](#)