

ONE STORY CHURCH YEAR

Small Group Discussion Guide

Joseph has the gift of interpreting dreams. This gift blesses prisoners and kings. God creates us with gifts that bless others, wherever we find ourselves. We, in turn, do not hide our gifts but use them, for they are not to our credit but to God. Paul widens that credit and reminds us that we are justified in no one but Christ. For all things – gifts, life, salvation – we look to God.

Week Four: Given

Genesis 41-50; Mark 16; Galatians 1-4; Psalms 24, 108, 25

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 ends with the story of Joseph and explains how the nation of Israel ended up in Egypt. We see in Joseph that God is a saving God, a characteristic and work that is not limited to Israel but extended to all people, as we see in the saving work that happens in and through Egypt. The promise of God to bless one nation for the sake of other nations can be seen. The overall story of God is laid over the story of Joseph and his family. It is both personal and universal.

Mark ends with the Good News of resurrection. It is a new day! The reading schedule then jumps into Galatians, a letter written by the Apostle Paul to the congregation in Galatia, when Paul feared that they were being led away from the message of the Gospel. In this letter, Paul asserts that we are saved not by our works but by grace. Galatians provides a powerful witness of the Gospel and a strong theological footing for salvation in Christ.

Connecting: Take Time to Get to Know Each Other

Continue to get to know each other. What's the best gift you've ever received?

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 41:14-16 and Galatians 2:16-21. 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. In spite of the tragic turn Joseph's life has been taken – kidnapped and sold by his brothers, taken to Egypt to serve as a slave, falsely accused and thrown into jail – he is contributing to the lives of others anywhere he is. In jail, he interprets fellow prisoners' dreams. Through sharing his gift, he is asked to interpret Pharaoh's dreams.
 - a. How do we sometimes let circumstances block good in life?
 - b. If God creates us with gifts to share, can we not share those gifts?
5. Joseph gives God credit for his ability to interpret dreams. What's the balance in your life for giving thanks to God and taking ownership for your life?
6. When Paul writes to the Galatians, he fears that they are getting mixed up. He fears the following of rules has become more important than Jesus' act of dying and rising. Why is it so tempting to put faith work – salvation work – in our realm of responsibility? For credit? For a sense of accomplishment? For control? What is it?
7. Have you ever had someone take credit for something you did? How did that feel?
8. Paul makes a strong statement in the latter part of verse 21: if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing. Salvation is not your responsibility but it is given to you! How is this good news to you? How is it challenging?
9. If it is about what Jesus has done for you, then what role do your actions have when it comes to faith and your relationship with God?
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](#)

[Galatians](#)

Luther Seminary: [Enter the Bible](#)

[Summary of Genesis](#)

[Summary of Galatians](#)