

Lesson 1: LEARNING TO DEAL WITH ADVERSITY (Gen 37)

Small Group Discussion

Intro

These small group guides are intended to promote discussion on the lessons in the Origins series. If you sense that the Holy Spirit is leading your group to have a different discussion, feel free to lead your group as you see fit.

Note

Students will likely all want to be in their beds during your cabin discussion, but this can make conversation tough, especially if some are on the top bunk. Pick one small section of your cabin to be in, and have your group sit in a circle on the floor and any beds in the immediate area.

Housekeeping

Remind students where the schedules are in their booklet, and ask if anyone has any questions about the schedule or other details about the weekend.

Warm up

Ask every student to introduce themselves and answer the following questions:

- Name/grade/school?
- What's one thing you are looking forward to about this weekend?
- You've just been given a free week's vacation where you can go wherever you want, and do whatever you want. Where will you go, what will you do, and who will you bring with you?

Discussion

Note

Remind students that the group is a safe place. What is said in the group stays in the group, unless someone is in danger. If someone is in danger you (the leader) will share that with the retreat leader.

It's an expectation that group participants will keep what is shared in these discussions confidential. In addition, remind students that they should feel comfortable asking any questions or disagreeing with something that was said during the session. We want students to share what they are thinking.

Questions

How familiar were you with the story of Joseph before tonight?

Describe your relationship with your siblings. Can you relate to some of the feelings in Joseph's family? Explain.

If you were Joseph, how would you feel about being sold into slavery? How would this affect your feelings toward God? Would you be angry with God? Explain.

Describe a time when you had to overcome a big obstacle in your life. This could be anything from learning to forgive someone who hurt you to working hard to get a good grade in a class. What did this experience teach you about adversity?

Why do you think God allows adversity into our lives?

Read Deuteronomy 31:8. What does this verse teach us about how God helps us in the midst of adversity?

How will learning to depend on God in all circumstances help you in the future?

Note

Over the course of this conversation, allow plenty of time for students to express their thoughts and feelings, whatever they may be. Don't try and teach, but promote discussion.

Keep in mind that the teenagers in your group have come from a broad range of spiritual backgrounds. Try to have an honest conversation about adversity and the positive and negative feelings that go with it.

Prayer

Be sure to allow time for prayer. Don't just tack it on at the end, but give your group space to intentionally pray for one another. Ask your group to share requests. Pray as a group in a circle, and have one student or leader finish the prayer.

Make a note of any follow up conversations you want to have with any of the students based on this discussion.

Lesson 2: LEARNING TO DEAL WITH TEMPTATION (Gen 39)

Small Group Discussion

Intro

Housekeeping

Make sure everyone in your group is doing okay. Take note of anyone in your group that seems isolated, or who hasn't made any connections with other students during the weekend. Some students need a little more encouragement for them to come out of their shell.

Discussion

Note

Give a quick reminder that what's said in the group stays in the group, unless someone is in danger. Now that you have gone through a lesson together, feel free to elaborate on questions or add your own based on your group dynamics.

Questions

Have you ever gotten into trouble for doing the right thing? Explain.

How would you describe Joseph's character in Genesis 39?

Read Genesis 39:9. Why is Joseph unwilling to give into the temptation of Potiphar's wife?

What does Joseph's response to Potiphar's wife teach us about handling temptation?

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. What are the promises to Christians in 1 Corinthians 10:13? How did this verse come true for Joseph?

List some ways that you can overcome temptation in your own life.

Prayer

Pray as a group in a circle, and have one student or leader finish the prayer. Pray for one another that each of you would be able to flee temptation.

Make a note of any follow up conversations you want to have with any of the students based on this discussion.

Lesson 3: LEARNING TO DEAL WITH WAITING (Genesis 40-41)

Small Group Discussion

Intro

Warm up

Discuss what everyone did during free time, or ask: What's been the best thing about the weekend? What's been the hardest thing about the weekend?

Note

Don't let the warm up time go on too long. Be sure to discuss the lesson.

Discussion

Note

Make sure you give a quick reminder that what's said in the group stays in the group, unless someone is in danger. Feel free to take as much time as you need for this session.

Questions

What's the longest you have had to wait in line or at a doctor's office?

If you were Joseph, stuck in prison for a crime you didn't commit, how would you feel? What would have been your attitude toward God in prison?

Read Genesis 39:20-23. What was Joseph's attitude in prison?

What does it mean to become bitter? Have you ever been bitter at someone or about some situation? Explain.

What do you think would happen if God gave us everything we wanted the moment we wanted it?

Read Romans 8:28. How can this verse help you to deal with difficult times? According to Romans 8:28, who are the people who can expect God to work for good in their lives?

Have you put your faith in Christ so that Romans 8:28 is true for you?

Prayer

Pray as a group in a circle, and have one student or leader finish the prayer. Pray for one another that each of you would be able to flee temptation.

Make a note of any follow up conversations you want to have with any of the students based on this discussion.

Lesson 4: LEARNING TO DEAL WITH INJUSTICE (Gen. 42-50)

Small Group Discussion

Intro

Housekeeping

Make sure everyone knows the procedure for cleaning up the cabin and packing after small groups.

Note

This will be a quicker discussion on the lesson. Be sure to leave time for the final activity ("Taking it home") in your small group and prayer.

Discussion

Note

Make sure you give a quick reminder that what's said in the group stays in the group, unless someone is in danger.

Questions

Have you ever had a difficult time forgiving someone? Explain.

Read Genesis 50:18-21. Why didn't Joseph take revenge on his brothers for what they did to him? What would you have done if you had been in Joseph's place?

Read Ephesians 4:32. How does understanding God's forgiveness to us help us forgive others?

Write down the name of a friend, family member, or other person in your life that you need to forgive. If you are willing, share this with your group.

Taking it home

Note

Share something like the following: We've had a great weekend up here. I've had a great time and learned a ton, and I hope you have too. However, I've found that when I have this great experience at camp, I often forget just about everything God did up here when I go back to my everyday life.

To keep that from happening, we are all going to write down one thing in our guides that we have learned, experienced, or felt here that we want to continue to impact our lives. Try to be specific. For instance, I bet we all made great friends up here, but just writing "Friends" won't really remind you later on when you look at your card what you want God to continue to do in your life.

Allow five minutes for everyone to write something down. Have everyone share what they

wrote.

My memory from camp:

Prayer

Ask: "How can our group be praying for you as you go home today?"

Have students pray for one another. If a person isn't prayed for, be sure to pray for them at the end of the prayer time.

Make a note of any follow up conversations you want to have with any of the students based on this discussion.

Notes from Sessions, Small Groups, or Leader's Meetings