

Tips and Tricks:

The sermon notes are designed to be used as a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you have to use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through and others will be over in a few seconds.

Don't teach the lesson. The sermon was just preached. Just ask the questions and let everyone else talk.

Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway! Have fun. Don't forget to laugh and crack up. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our ministry. Remember: We have to build a relational bridge strong enough to hold the truth!

Agenda for Group Time

Ice Breaker - Lighthearted ice breaker question (10 minutes)
Discussion - Bible study, sharing and application. (25 Minutes)
Prayer - Pray together (5 minutes)
Planning - Remember to talk about what's coming up.

Icebreaker Did you ever run into someone where you least expected them? How did that go?'

God is Relentlessly Working Everything for Your Good...

... Through What He Sends

Read Genesis 45:1-15

The brothers' response to finding out Joseph was one of "dismay" (ESV) or "terror" (NIV), what might have been going through their heads?

Look back over Joseph's speech to the brothers (v4-13). Who does Joseph describe as the main actor?

- Himself
- His brothers
- God
- His father
- Other: _____

Follow-up: How does this give the brothers comfort? How can it give us comfort?

In what ways have you seen God use evil in your life (or the lives of others) for good?

Think of the story from Jacob's perspective. He hasn't seen any of this development, just the loss of Joseph and risk to other sons. Have you ever felt like Jacob, blindsided by providence?

...Through Who He has Sent

In the sermon we said "testing has been the name of the game." How have Joseph's brother's finally passed the test?

God provides reconciliation, writing a new story over the old story of strife. After revealing himself, Joseph embraces his brothers. Why did Joseph wait until this moment?

- He wanted to make sure it was actually his brothers, not secret impostors
- He wanted to make sure everyone was still alive
- He wanted to see how the brothers had changed
- He wanted to make sure Jacob would protect him

Although you have probably never sold anyone into slavery, all of us need to seek the forgiveness of others we have wronged. What are some barriers that make asking forgiveness difficult?

These brothers had been terrible to Joseph, yet he knows they are not beyond God's power to change people. Are there relationships in your life you need to be reminded God can still change, such as:

- A difficult coworker?
- An unkind family member?
- A weird small group leader?
- A political leader?

What is it about the presence of Jesus that gives you the most comfort?

- The wisdom of Jesus - He always has the right answer
- The faithfulness of Jesus- there's nothing I can do that would make Him reject me
- The power of Jesus- Everything that happens He works for my good
- The kindness of Jesus- He always is to me exactly what I need, even when I don't know what I need
- The provision of Jesus- He always gives to me exactly what I need, even when I don't see how it could happen

Work It Out!

One thing I'll do differently because of this sermon:
