



No Greater Joy
June 9 | Group Guide

Begin by praying, catching up on your week, and reflecting together (10 minutes).

First, like each week, begin your time together by having someone pray. Then, spend a few moments talking about how your time in God's Word has been this past week. What have you read? What has stood out to you? What has resonated? What are you trying to integrate into your life?

Next, read this introduction to this week's story:

Joseph's story is a rollercoaster of emotions and dramatic twists you'd almost think came straight out of a novel. He was one of Jacob's twelve sons and was definitely his favorite. You can tell because Joseph got this fancy coat, which made his brothers jealous.

This jealousy turned pretty ugly. When Joseph shared some dreams he had (which, to be fair, implied that he would rule over his brothers someday), that was the last straw. His brothers sold him into slavery in Egypt and told their dad he was dead. Pretty harsh, right?

In Egypt, Joseph started off as a slave to a guy named Potiphar. He did well because he was hardworking and smart, but he ended up in jail thanks to some false accusations from Potiphar's wife. Even in jail, Joseph stood out because of his ability to interpret dreams, which eventually caught the attention of Pharaoh. Pharaoh had these confusing dreams that no one could explain, but Joseph nailed them and even advised Pharaoh on what to do next.

Thanks to his insight, Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of basically all of Egypt to prepare for a famine he predicted. When the famine hit, it was as bad as Joseph said it would be, but Egypt was ready.

The twist? Joseph's brothers came to Egypt seeking food, not realizing who he was. Joseph revealed his identity after a series of tests to see if his brothers had changed. It was a pretty emotional reunion, and instead of seeking revenge, Joseph forgave them, saying it was all part of a bigger plan to save lives.

In the end, Joseph brought his whole family to live in Egypt, saving them from the famine. He reconciled with his family, and when he died, he was remembered as the guy who turned a series of unfortunate events into a story of survival and forgiveness. Quite the journey, huh?

Read Genesis 45 and discuss the passage in smaller groups (20 minutes).

Break your life group down into smaller reading groups of 2-3. In those smaller groups, read Genesis 45. Then, discuss the following questions from the text:

- I don't know about you, but after reading Joseph's story, I don't think I can complain much. What a complex and unfair road. However, he chooses to forgive his family and save all of them. Are there any unfair parts of your life that God used for his good?
- How do you think Joseph's brothers felt once they realized who they were talking with?
- How does Joseph's journey from slavery to becoming a leader in Egypt demonstrate God's providence?
- Reflect on Joseph's statement in Genesis 50:20, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good." How can we apply this perspective to our own conflicts?
- How does Joseph's story challenge your understanding of forgiveness within your family or community?

Come together as a large group and discuss how Joseph's story can challenge you to bring forgiveness to your family culture (20 minutes).

You may not get through all the questions, but that's okay. Feel free to read these beforehand and pick a couple that fit your group best!

- What stood out from your reading of Joseph's story? Any moments that particularly struck you?
- Joseph faced immense betrayal and hardship. Discuss times when forgiving someone led to personal growth and healing.
- How does Joseph's ability to forgive his brothers challenge us in our relationships today?
- Discuss the impact of holding grudges or withholding forgiveness in familial relationships. What are the dangers?
- What steps can we take to cultivate a spirit of forgiveness, especially within our families?

Pray for personal and communal challenges in forgiveness (15 minutes).

- Spend a few minutes praying for anyone struggling with forgiveness, whether forgiving others or seeking forgiveness themselves.
- Pray for families within the group or community experiencing strife and division.
- Pray for wisdom and compassion to handle conflicts that honor God and promote healing and reconciliation.

Closing thoughts:

Encourage group members to continue reflecting on Joseph's story and to seek practical ways to apply the lessons of forgiveness in their own lives.

Suggest keeping a journal on forgiveness challenges and breakthroughs to monitor progress and encourage continual growth.