

Facilitator:

1. Open with Prayer
2. Welcome any newcomers
3. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

CONNECT Group study questions for April 2, 2017

Title: Lessons From a Dysfunctional Family—Genesis 37

Announcement:

April 8th, 10 a.m. is our annual Egg Hunt outreach. Families, round up some friends and come out for a fun morning hunting eggs and celebrating our risen Savior! Don't have young kids, but want to be a part of the fun? That's ok! We'd love to have some friendly faces come out to welcome neighbors from our community or help pass out candy bags or refreshments. If your interested in helping, email Christine Young (christine@crossroads-Summerville.org) or Jennifer Moore (Jennifer@crossroads-Summerville.org)

Children:

Have you ever been jealous of someone else? Why were you jealous? What did you do?

For those with brothers and sisters, are there times you don't get along? Why? Are there things your parents do or say that help you when that happens?

KidConnect Review question: What made Jesus' baptism different from any other baptism? (He is the only person to be baptized who never sinned!)

Read: Genesis 37

Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan.

These are the generations of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. But when his brothers

saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.

Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed: Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and ^lbowed down to my sheaf." His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come ⁿto bow ourselves to the ground before you?" And ^ohis brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near ^qShechem. And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." And he said to him, "Here I am." So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me word." So he sent him from the Valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. And a man found him wandering in the fields. And the man asked him, "What are you seeking?"

"I am seeking my brothers," he said. "Tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock."

And the man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan." So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams." But when ^vReuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him"—that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his

robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a ^zcaravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him. Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and ^fsold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.

When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes and returned to his brothers and said, "The boy is gone, and I, where shall I go?" Then they took ⁱJoseph's robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, "This we have found; please identify whether it is your son's robe or not."

And he identified it and said, "It is my son's robe. ^jA fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces." Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him. Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

Facilitator: Encourage your members to **BRING THEIR BIBLES** and use them during Connect Group.

Question: Can you name other dysfunctional families in the Bible? **Facilitator:** Here are a few: Adam and Eve leading to Cain murdering Abel (Genesis 2-4); The high priest Eli—his sons showed their contempt for the Lord (1 Samuel). The story of the Prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32).

Question: What would you say is the common source of conflict in the dysfunctional families you named in the first question? Is it possible to avoid conflict in a family? When conflict does arise, how should it be addressed to return to being a functioning family?

Question: Conflict in a dysfunctional family is usually accompanied by misdirected anger.

Share with the group examples of conflict in your family when anger is aimed at the wrong target. With whom do you get angry? With whom should you get angry?

Question: Why did God accept Abel's offering and not Cain's? Why did Cain kill Abel (see Genesis 4)?

Question: Joseph was clearly Jacob's favorite over his other sons, leading to Pastor Peppy's four consequences of a parent showing favoritism: sibling rivalry, a sense of rejection, jealousy, and blind arrogance.

Identify principles in God's Word that address these reactions to parental favoritism. These would be principles that lead us away from becoming dysfunctional. Cite Scripture passages that pertain to the principles you identify. **Facilitator:** some examples are Philippians 2:3 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, but press group members to offer more.

Question: Was God showing favoritism when he chose Jacob over Esau? Was Isaac showing favoritism when he preferred Esau over Jacob, leading Jacob to cheat Esau out of a blessing that was rightfully his? **Facilitator:** These are questions that may not have a clear-cut answer, at least not during a Connect Group session. Encourage group members to search the Scriptures for answers while at the same time by faith standing firm on God's sovereignty, righteousness, justice, mercy and love. God's character and attributes are key. Don't let your members overlook the presence of sin in human favoritism and God's absolute righteousness and sovereignty.

Bible study homework:

—Favoritism is not God's will for our lives. See Romans 2:11 and Ephesians 6:9.

—The Bible teaches Christians to show no favoritism. See James 2:1.

—The Bible calls favoritism sin. See James 2:8-9.

—Church leaders are especially charged to not show favoritism. 1 Timothy 5:21 and John 3:16.

Research: Compare Joseph to Jesus. List as many facts as you can find about Joseph that parallel Jesus.