

Small-Group Material

The journey of faith with Joseph

Reconciliation

Welcome

Opening question: Can you think of any particular ways in your life that your faith has impacted how you relate to people close to you?

Leader to introduce the theme (Reconciliation). The passage from Genesis focuses on the powerful story of reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers and points us to the greatest form of reconciliation, that is between God and humans through Jesus Christ. The love of God revealed to humanity through forgiveness and redemption flows out from us to those around us, transforming relationships and community.

Worship

Read and meditate on Psalm 143 together. Either have one person read it aloud or go around in the group reading a verse each.

If you have time you could listen to 'How deep the Father's love' (no singing of course).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZSirSqpM54&ab_channel=DemonRobinson

Word Genesis 45: 1-15

1. What does Joseph's reaction in verses 1-2 tell us about the reality of reconciling fractured human relationships?
2. In verses 3-5 Joseph invites his brothers to draw close to him despite their fear and distress. How does this help us to understand Jesus' attitude towards us?
3. Joseph's encounter with his brothers offers a similar experience to that of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32. How does this parallel help us to understand how we become reconciled to God?
4. Looking at verses 5-7, how do Joseph's words here speak to us about God's sovereignty amid hurt and broken relationships?
5. Paul writes to the Corinthians saying that Christians are to be 'ministers of reconciliation' (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). Taking the example of Joseph, how might we understand our vocation as Christians to be people who bring about reconciliation in the world around us?

Witness

Matthew 6: 14-15 says "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

1. Take some time alone, and in quiet, using a pen and paper write down hurt from the past and grudges you might still be holding on to. Offer these things to God and ask that in time he might help you forgive.

2. Then, write down ways in which you know you have hurt others.
3. Ask someone to read this prayer of confession on behalf of everyone:

Father,
We have sinned against heaven and against you.
We are not worthy to be called your children.
We turn to you again.
Have mercy on us,
Bring us back to yourself
As those who were once dead
But now have life through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

4. Take time to share either in pairs or in the group, the places you spend time (work, home life, social life etc) and the people you encounter. Pray for each other and these places, that by the Holy spirit we all might be more effective grace-filled ministers of reconciliation.