

**Small Group Material**  
**A Journey of Faith with Joseph**  
**Blessings**  
**Genesis 47:28-49:28**

**Welcome question**

Describe an occasion when someone's actions resulted in a surprising and happy consequence

Or:

What would you like to be written on your tombstone?!

**Worship**

Play this song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rw4H5t3TwHM>

Encourage folk to name the blessings that come to mind as they listen.

Join together to express thanksgiving for those blessings.

**Word**

This is a long passage which divides into two sections

**Genesis 47:28 – 48:22 Jacob blesses Joseph through Manasseh and Ephraim**

48 v.4 We meet Jacob in the last years of his life when he recalls the promise of blessing that God had given him at Luz in his younger years. How had the story of Joseph appeared to prevent and then helped this promise become reality?

What part of the promise seems not to have occurred?

How can our knowledge of the future Exodus and the return to Canaan help us deal with our unfulfilled hopes?

v.5 Why does Jacob adopt Manasseh and Ephraim?

(ans. They then become equal to his sons and through them Joseph inherits a double portion)

v.13 & v.17 &18 What is Joseph hoping to achieve by his positioning of his sons?

What do you think happens when Jacob crosses his hands?

What do you think Joseph might be feeling as Jacob insists?

Reflect on how we deal with situations that result in our plans unravelling.

Encourage folk to share experiences

Reflect on how this can still result in blessing

**Genesis 49 Jacob blesses his sons**

The key verse to note is v.28. How do the blessings illustrate the point made in this verse?

How do the blessings appear to show that the legacy each son is given, matches the character that they have each cultivated during their lives? Particularly note Judah and Joseph.

- Here's some help - maybe pick out Reuben, Simeon, Levi as well?
  - **Reuben's** passion and strength results in his attempt to oust his father when he sleeps with his father's concubine. He is also characterized by indecision and lack of leadership in being unable to rescue Joseph from his brother's intentions. (37:21)
  - **Simeon & Levi** share traits of cruelty and anger which result in them killing many of their neighbours in revenge. The tribes are both scattered as the Levites are dispersed throughout the land and the tribe of Simeon are absorbed into the territory of Judah (Jos 19:1,9)
  - **Judah** is the brother that confesses the sin that all the brothers are guilty of (44:16). He saves Benjamin offering himself as his redeemer. The symbols of the lion representing leadership and the sceptre, authority, speak of the kingship that came from the tribe of Judah, the ancestry of the Messiah (Micah 5:2) and ultimately, Jesus (Rev. 5:5)
  - Zebulun - The tribe was located between the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee

- Issachar - The tribe was located in fertile land
- Dan – The tribe often became a centre of idol worship (Judges 18:30) But Samson was from the tribe of Dan
- Gad – the tribe had to contend with foreign armies. They were often fighting the Moabites for their land
- Asher – the tribe was prosperous
- Naphtali – the tribe were located on the hills surrounding Galilee. They were renowned for their free spirit.
- **Joseph** brings blessings to his brothers and is blessed with the double portion  
He is the prince – the tribe of Ephraim takes ascendancy and becomes Israel (Isaiah 7:1-2 & Hosea 13:1)
- Benjamin – the tribe is characterized by their fierce nature (Saul & Jonathan were Benjaminites)

What can you draw out of this for the way we can hope to receive God's blessings?

*(If anyone wants to do any more research on the tribes, this is a good video)* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KP-EXMy4Xas>

## **Witness**

Spend this time firstly in a time of quiet, before you have a time of confession. You may choose to ask people to write down anything that weighs on their conscience.

Then choose some words of confession to read out, such as –

*Lord our God,  
in our sin we have avoided your call.  
Our love for you is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away  
early.  
Have mercy on us; in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

If you asked folk to write things down, then invite everyone to tear up their papers as you finish the prayer.

Spend some time praying for the needs and concerns that people bring to the group and for the coming week.

You may like to use the Blessing UK to end the meeting  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtI13mNj5U>