

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Big Picture / Week 5

BEFORE GROUP

BOTTOM LINE

When you can't see the bigger picture, choose to forgive.

SCRIPTURE

Joseph could stand it no longer. There were many people in the room, and he said to his attendants, "Out, all of you!" So he was alone with his brothers when he told them who he was. Then he broke down and wept. He wept so loudly the Egyptians could hear him, and word of it quickly carried to Pharaoh's palace.

"I am Joseph!" he said to his brothers. "Is my father still alive?" But his brothers were speechless! They were stunned to realize that Joseph was standing there in front of them. "Please, come closer," he said to them. So they came closer. And he said again, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into slavery in Egypt. But don't be upset, and don't be angry with yourselves for selling me to this place. It was God who sent me here ahead of you to preserve your lives." (Genesis 45:1-5 NLT)

"You can live in the region of Goshen, where you can be near me with all your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and everything you own. I will take care of you there, for there are still five years of famine ahead

of us. Otherwise you, your household, and all your animals will starve" (Genesis 45:10-11 NLT).

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage students to take steps toward forgiving those who have hurt or wronged them.

THINK ABOUT THIS

Your middle schoolers may open up about a number of ways they feel they've been wronged or hurt. Some of the things may be seemingly small and inconsequential to you, while others may be obviously big and heavy. Either way, remember that these things *are* a big deal to your few, so be careful not to dismiss what they're sharing or how they're feeling just because it seems like an obviously small offense to you. Remind your few that as they're sharing about ways they may have been wronged or hurt, they should avoid using names or talking about others in a negative way. And if a student does open up about a hurt or wrong they've experienced that needs more attention (for example, abuse), follow up quickly and keep in mind that for them, forgiveness will be a much bigger and more complicated process.

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here.

DURING GROUP

ICE BREAKER

What's the craziest example of getting back at someone that you've seen in a movie or TV show?

DISCUSS THIS

Transition: I've never done anything like that, but I've definitely been tempted to get back at someone who has wronged me! Haven't we all?

1. What's one example of a situation where a middle schooler might be tempted to get back at someone? (SGL: *Avoid letting your students focus on specific names or people here!*)
2. Why do you think people want to get back at someone when they've been hurt or wronged?
3. How do you think most people *think* they'll feel when they get back at someone who's hurt them?
4. How do you think most people *actually* feel when they get back at someone who's hurt them?
5. How might choosing forgiveness help...
 - a) You?
 - b) Your family?
 - c) Your friendships?
 - d) Your relationship with God?

DO THIS (EXPERIENCE)

This week, you'll finish helping your middle schoolers create their "Big Picture" puzzle. You'll hand out the final provided worksheet to each of your students and ask them to fill it out during group. When they're done, give them back the worksheets they filled out over the past four weeks in this series and ask them to assemble the sheets to reveal their puzzle.

**WHEN I CAN'T SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE,
I CAN CHOOSE TO FORGIVE.**

These are three small ways I can start showing grace, forgiveness,
and peace to those who have hurt or wronged me:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

This is a step I can take to forgive someone who has wronged
me (Don't write down the name of the person!):

This is a person I can talk to who can encourage me toward
choosing forgiveness:

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