

GENESIS: A VIEW FROM THE BEGINNING

Series Overview for Leaders

SERIES OVERVIEW

This six-week small group study will help teenagers get a glimpse of some of the key stories from the book of Genesis. The first week looks at the creation account and focuses on helping students understand the intrinsic value they have as a result of being made in God's image. Week two looks at The Fall and serves to remind students that even though God made them in his image, the sin in their life creates a barrier to the impact their lives could be having.

Week three moves ahead a few chapters and examines Noah and the amazing faith he showed, even though he didn't know all the details of where God was taking him. Week four, an examination of Abraham and his great faith, echoes the theme of trust and faith in God; students will discover that faith and obedience are the keys to unlocking the amazing purpose God has for their lives. Week five looks at Jacob and challenges your students to do the right thing even when doing so seems like the toughest road to take. Finally, week six is a snapshot of Joseph's life and the importance of staying positive in the most challenging situations.

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Week 1: Reflecting the Creator (Creation): Genesis 1:26-31

Week 2: Trouble in Paradise (The Fall): Genesis 3:1-13; 22-24

Week 3: Trust When Trust Is Hard (Noah): Genesis 6:9-22

Week 4: Called for a Purpose (Abraham): Genesis 12:1-9; 15:1-6

Week 5: Choose Correctly (Jacob): Genesis 27:1-14, 30-35, 41-45

Week 6: Strength in Adversity (Joseph): Genesis 37:1-28; 39:1-6

SERIES OBJECTIVES

1. WHAT: Genesis provides powerful evidence of God's desire to interact with his people from the very beginning.
2. WHY: Teenagers can learn about God's character and the way he dynamically involves himself in the lives of his followers.
3. HOW: Help students to understand that even the earliest truths in Scripture are relevant to their lives today.



A Word About Translations: It is important to choose a readable Bible translation to use in your small groups. You don't want to add unnecessary confusion. You also don't want to spend all your time mastering pronunciation and trying to define unfamiliar words.

Although there are many great translations on the market (and your own church may have a chosen favorite), we've decided to rely on the easy-to-read, teenage-friendly translation called the New Living Translation (NLT). Editors for the NLT have done a great job making God's Word accurate and understandable.

Regardless of the translation you choose, it may be helpful for your own preparation to read the assigned passage(s) in a few different translations to get a broader depth to the text(s).

A Word About Media Clips: Some of our lessons include clips from movies, TV shows, and other media. Please know that these are put here as *suggested options*—they aren't vital for the success of the lesson. If you choose to use them, we strongly encourage you to review each clip prior to group time. We've done our best to suggest clips that will generate meaningful conversations, but we understand that using any type of media can be controversial. Because of that, we trust that you understand the dynamics of your congregation better than anyone else and will discern if our media selection will work with your group.

Your Feedback Will be a Gift to Others: This small group curriculum is an evolving work-in-progress that will continue to take shape over many years. We know that together we can continue to make it better—**especially with your help**. Your ideas and feedback can improve this curriculum for other youth workers using this material in the future. If you have a good idea that would improve it, please send it to us (no matter how small the change/edit/idea might be). We understand that this will require more work on your part, and the team at Simply Youth Ministry would consider your input a gift to your youth ministry co-laborers. Send all thoughts and ideas to ideas@simplyyouthministry.com. Thanks so much!



SECTION DESCRIPTIONS

Each of our lessons has two sections:

1. Leader Preparation
2. Lesson Guide

Let's explore these in detail.

1. LEADER PREPARATION

The first section—LEADER PREPARATION—is designed to give you, the leader, tools to help prepare for each lesson. To create a meaningful, impacting experience for your teenagers, we encourage you to spend as much time as you can in preparation. No one better understands the value of a youth worker's time than the team at Simply Youth Ministry. Since day one we have been creating resources that save you time so you can spend more time with teenagers. We've designed each lesson to be easy-to-use, but you'll still benefit from spending some prep time with this curriculum. Actually, **your preparation is vital to small group success**. For you to be effective with this curriculum, we believe it's important to do four things:

1. Pray! Ask God to give you his wisdom for facilitating this material.
2. Read the LEADER PREPARATION section for each lesson. (10 minutes)
3. Choose which teaching points and questions you want to use from the LESSON GUIDE. (10-20 minutes)
4. Determine a specific way that you will end the lesson. (10-20 minutes) We don't tell you how to wrap up each lesson—that's up to you and/or your youth ministry team.

Below, you will find a brief description of each component in the LEADER PREPARATION section.

LESSON OVERVIEW

This provides a “big-picture” perspective for the lesson. It's a quick summary that will prepare you for what you'll be discussing and sharing with your teenagers.



LESSON OBJECTIVES

There are three objectives for each lesson.

- The first objective answers the “what” question: *What* content will my teenagers learn?
- The second objective answers the “why” question: *Why* is this content important to teenagers?
- The third objective answers the “how” question: *How* might teenagers apply this content when they leave small group?

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

This will be the main verse or section of Scripture used in each lesson.

SECONDARY SCRIPTURES

This is a list of other selected Scriptures referenced in the lesson.

TEACHING PREP

We offer some ideas and insights that might be helpful for each lesson that will help you gain a deeper understanding of the passage. You can pick and choose what you will share with your group. Or you may not share any of it and simply digest it for your own benefit.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

These are ideas you can use to get your teenagers thinking about the lesson *prior* to your meeting and families talking *after* the small group experience.

Text Message Questions

These questions can be sent prior to the small group time to get teenagers thinking about something that will be discussed in small group.

Parent Email

This is a short email the youth pastor or small group leader can send to parents after the lesson. It provides an overview of the lesson along with a few questions parents can ask at home to get students talking about what they learned in small group. You're encouraged to personalize and modify this email to fit the needs of your youth ministry.



2. LESSON GUIDE

This is the content part for your small group lesson. Please feel free to (1) personalize the illustrations, (2) rephrase the teaching points, and (3) pick-and-choose what content you feel like you will be able to use during your particular small group time.

THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND: We provide more material than you can probably use during your small group time. **You will need to be the editor of the content.** Don't try to use all of it. [NOTE: If you're a volunteer small group leader, we recommend you submit to the teaching strategy/desires of the lead youth worker. He/she may or may not give you the freedom to make changes within the lesson. Please seek unity and support his/her leadership.]

You'll want to review the LESSON GUIDE before each of your meetings to get a clearer idea of the activities, teaching points, discussion questions, and overall purpose of the lesson. In each LESSON GUIDE you'll find the following:

GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]

This includes a quick illustration, an activity, or a few opening questions to warm up, prepare, and focus your small group time. You understand the dynamics of your teenagers better than we do so please adapt this section, modify it, change it, delete it, or use as is. Some of the ideas require a little extra preparation prior to your small group meeting.

You'll also notice that the GETTING THINGS STARTED section is not included in every lesson. We've only included it when we feel it's beneficial. Again, if you create an activity of your own, please send it to us at ideas@simplyyouthministry.com so we can evaluate it and potentially include it in future versions of this product to help other youth workers.

TEACHING POINTS

This part of the lesson provides you with an intentional interactive component. We don't believe that small groups should be lecture-driven. The best small groups are the ones where the teenagers are talking and the small group leader is facilitating conversation and discovery. When teenagers talk more than adults, that's a good thing!



Please understand, **this material is NOT intended to be lecture.** We've included several questions designed to generate conversation. You'll quickly notice that we aren't fans of closed-ended questions—you know, the ones that can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.” That's why we offer questions that should cause students to think, discuss, and debate. We encourage you to insert your own insights during this discussion time as well, but primarily as a facilitator who is challenging teenagers to learn/think. It's sort of like a dance—let your students lead the discussion a bit by wrestling with the teaching point, then insert your own insights to help get the main teaching point across. There may be times when it's best NOT to give your own insights. Your small group doesn't have to be like a sitcom where all the problems are solved in 30 minutes. Most of the questions don't have right or wrong answers but will serve as a platform to help teenagers learn better.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

This is an opportunity to continue the conversation by asking more open-ended questions about the selected Scripture for this lesson. Or if you have a more spiritually mature group, you could send your teenagers home to think about and/or journal and/or message board their answers to these questions. [NOTE: Most groups won't have time for more questions since we've already provided several during the teaching points.]

APPLICATION

We have provided some “first step” ideas and/or questions that challenge your teenagers to put what was discussed into immediate action (or in the days following). The retention of a lesson will be dramatically increased when students—and you—move into action immediately following the small group.

SUMMARY

We have intentionally designed this curriculum to be so flexible that the summary or the close of each lesson is dependent on the small group facilitator. We believe that good curriculum provides a foundation for healthy dialogue, but that the summary or take-home challenge relies on the insight and wisdom of the facilitator who (1) knows the content, (2) has heard all the dialogue, (3) knows the hearts/issues/struggles of the teenagers involved, and (4) understands the big picture of the youth ministry and what the leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching/discussion time.



THIS IS BIG! We've given you a lot of material and questions to ask, but the most important part in all of this is narrowing down the questions you'll ask to those that best fit your group. This is where the caring, spiritually sensitive, personally growing small group leader really makes a difference in teenagers' lives. After doing this a couple of times, it becomes easier, and when this curriculum was used in real, live ministry settings, this proved to be the leaders' favorite part—feeling empowered to figure out a way to close out the session with wisdom, sensitivity, and challenge.

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

This is a selected verse that students can be challenged to memorize following the lesson. We encourage you to return to these verses throughout the series to facilitate long-term memorization. We also encourage you to join them in committing the verses to memory. They'll follow your lead. Again, because this curriculum is adaptable and editable you may choose to have them memorize a different verse—that's great.

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