

Introduction: *Engage your group members in review.*

Show the group the six-minute video testimony of Clemson University football coach Dabo Swinney titled “Average Joe.” This can be found on Vimeo:
<https://vimeo.com/106174215>

Coach Swinney’s testimony touches on the unit themes of patience while seeking God, faith as we respond to God, and suffering during times of uncertainty.

Your group can decide if a famous football coach is ever looked at as an “average Joe.” Also, do we view Joseph in this passage as average in any way?

Point 1: *Observe God in the details.*

Today’s lesson depicts, yet again, a troubled family, “warts and all.” But more importantly we observe God’s hand at work in the smallest details of Joseph’s life. Consider using Psalm 37:1-20 as a parallel passage that encourages righteous attitudes and waiting on God in the midst of suffering.

Engage your group members by asking them to locate the word *hated* in Genesis 37:3-11. [Caution: This discussion may be painful for group members, but hopefully God’s presence throughout Joseph’s life will be instructive and encouraging.] Next, ask group members to identify the causes of these feelings of hatred.

Points 2–3:

In Genesis 37 and 39, Joseph is placed in a pit, enslaved, and imprisoned. Ask your group members about past experiences in which they have suffered difficult circumstances. How did they get through these tough times? Look again at the passages and find examples where the Lord was clearly working in each situation.

Challenge your group members to discover these examples before disclosing them:

- Genesis 37:26—Judah redirects the plot to kill Joseph.
- Genesis 39:2—The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man.

- Genesis 39:21—The Lord was with Joseph and extended him kindness.
- Genesis 39:23—The Lord was with him, and He made everything that he did successful.

Ask the question, “What qualities were manifest in Joseph’s life as he dealt with adversity?” Here are some suggestions:

- Continued obedience to God’s instructions (39:9b)
- Integrity (39:8-9)
- A positive, productive life that blesses others (39:3)
- Grit and perseverance (39:10)
- Servanthood (39:4)

How would things have turned out differently if he had disobeyed God, if he had been sullen and bitter, or if he had refused to work?

Check for comprehension regarding the overall theme of *The Gospel*

Project: Challenge group members to keep a running list of events in the narrative of Joseph's life that foreshadow events in the life of Christ. For a helpful place to start, check out the “Voices from the Church” sidebar on page 148 of the leader's guide. *[Decide what works best for your group and your teaching style. Group members can respond each time they identify an example or you can wait until you complete the last section of Scripture to discuss their findings.]*

Conclusion: *Encourage character growth with note cards.*

Distribute a notecard for each group member. Ask them to pray and consider which character quality is needed in their respective lives as they face suffering. Do not collect the cards but save time for testimonies or members to request pray for difficult situations in their lives.