



Essentials: Genesis

The small group sessions for Genesis have concluded, but we invite you to journey into this foundational book from the Old Testament on your own. Our hope is that your knowledge of scripture grows as you engage with the story of God's people. While session covers several chapters of Genesis, we focus more intently on a particular story, as noted below.

Session 1. Chapters 1 – 5

Assigned Reading: Gen 1:26-31. Creation of man in God's image

This session addresses the *imago dei* as well as gender, dominion, and God's declaration of goodness. It also touches upon some of the basic discussions around the way a creation myth functions as a *true, scriptural* account of our beginnings in relation to evolution as a theory of origins.

Session 2. Chapters 6 - 11

Assigned reading: Gen 8:18-9:1. The story of the covenant with Noah after the flood

This session addresses the emergence of sin and the content of the covenant with Noah: God will endure with what he has made despite the fully orbbed impact of sin. It should also note the reestablishment of creation in God's command to be fruitful and multiply.

Session 3. Chapters 12 – 16

Assigned Reading: Gen15:1-7. The covenant with Abram and his belief

This session enters into greater detail on the nature of what a covenant is, Abram's background, God's gracious (and somewhat mysterious) election of Abram, and the righteousness of Abram's belief. It also expounds upon the radical specificity of God's calling Abraham.

Session 4. Chapters 17 – 20

Assigned Reading: Gen 17:1-11. The Covenant of circumcision

This session addresses the centrality of the covenant of circumcision, explaining its relationship to futurity, family, and, eventually, baptism. This session also explains the way God renames his chosen people.

Session 5. Chapters 21 – 25

Assigned Reading: Gen 22: 1-17a. The Akedah (The "Binding" of Isaac)

This session describes the way God tests his people while also acknowledging the extraordinary strangeness of this text. It gives background to the importance of Isaac in relation to God's promise to Abraham. Finally, it shows the connection between Isaac and the person of Christ, the way the story figures a God who *does* sacrifice his son for the sake of our life.

Session 6. Chapters 26 - 30

Assigned Reading: Gen 28:10-18. Jacob's dream and God's promise

This session speaks to the continuation of the covenant through the patriarchs. The significance of the ladder and its relation to Jacob's own calling and God's promise—the heavens will be opened through this family. This session also gives some introduction and background on Jacob as a biblical figure.

Session 7. Chapters 31 – 35

Assigned Reading: Gen 32:22-32. God blesses Jacob and renames him Israel

This session explores the topic of “wrestling” with God and the renaming of Jacob—Israel—the name of God's people. It also enters into some of the contextual material regarding Jacob's flight from Esau and his dire circumstances. What could it mean that Jacob is renamed? What could it mean that Jacob wrestles God and lives with a limp?

Session 8. Chapters 36 – 40

Assigned Reading: Gen 39. Joseph and Potiphar's wife (and prison)

This session discusses some of the contextual material on who Joseph is and how he came to be in Egypt. It addresses the way faithfulness can take strange forms—Joseph is in prison for doing what is right! What then might it look like to act faithfully in challenging conditions—prison and false accusation?

Session 9. Chapters 41 – 45

Assigned Reading: Gen 45:1-9. Joseph reconciles with his brothers

This session touch on the beauty of reconciliation and God's providence. It speaks specifically to the way God's covenant faithfulness brings about a reconciliation of the patriarchal legacy and the continued future of God's promise despite the affliction of famine.

Session 10. Chapters 46 – 50

Assigned Reading: 49:28-50:3. Jacob dies

This session addresses the transition of the patriarchs to the 12 tribes, God's creative carrying forth of the covenantal promise into the form of a people, a nation. It also enters into the topic of death and God's providence, his ability to carry forth the plans of salvation even after our lives are over. It also notes who the tribes are and what they become.