

07. God Is Everywhere and Nearby

Small Group Lesson

Knowing more about God’s character—who he is, and what he’s really like—can fuel our love for him. God isn’t just the powerful creator of the universe; he’s a personal, loving God who invites us to know him through an intimate relationship with Jesus. God is everywhere and nearby. That may sound like a contradiction, but it shows us the beautiful character of God. This lesson will help teenagers experience how God, through the Spirit of Jesus, can be close to them when things are going well, and also on the worst days.

Lesson Objectives

1. **WHAT:** God is everywhere and nearby, all at the same time—which means no matter what we experience in life, we are never alone.
2. **WHY:** Teenagers can see how God is always present, how Jesus makes it possible for them to know him in their everyday life, and how they can practice “God Sightings” in their lives.
3. **HOW:** Students will explore how to look for evidence of God’s presence, and how to respond when God seems far away, uninterested, or absent.

Primary Scripture: Genesis 39:19-23

Secondary Scriptures: Proverbs 15:3

Joseph went through some really good times and some really rough times in life, and this passage just covers a couple of those moments. Let’s take a closer look at the one thing that was constant in Joseph’s life—no matter what was going on.

1. God is near you on your best days

When do you feel God’s presence the most?

Describe a recent time when everything was good—it seemed like everything was going your way. How did God show you “his faithful love” in the midst of all of that?

If you’d been in Joseph’s shoes, how would it have been easy to trust God—and hard to trust him?

Is it easier to remember God in your life when things are going great, or when things are going badly? Explain.

When things are going well, it's tempting to think that it's all because of us—our own efforts. When we don't feel like we need him, we forget that he is always working on our behalf. When Jesus was telling his disciples about all the great things they were about to do to change the world, he told them: "Be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

2. God is near you on your worst days

Describe a recent worst day—how did God show you "his faithful love" in the midst of all of that?

When things work out, we tend to think that God has been faithful to us—but how is he faithful to us when things don't work out?

If God is present and sees the bad things that are going on in our lives, why doesn't he simply fix what's wrong?

Is it harder for you to trust God on your worst days? Why or why not?

What is a benefit of expressing thankfulness to God on a really crummy day?

It's pretty easy to lose focus on our worst days. When things aren't going our way, we're tempted to think God has abandoned us, doesn't care, or doesn't see what's going on. But here's the truth: We're never alone. Jesus has promised to be with us always—no matter what. It might mean that we have to slow down and pay better attention to see his presence on difficult days, but we'll find him there.

3. You can practice "God Sightings"

Even though God is near us all the time, we don't always recognize his presence. But if we practice paying attention to God's influence in our life, we'll notice him more and more. Let's call these moments "God Sightings." They're little reminders that God is present—evidence that he is doing something in our lives and in the lives of other people around us.

How might your life be different if you could literally see God near you all the time?

What's the difference between a God Sighting and a "feel-good" moment?

Tell us about a "God Sighting" from this past week or two—evidence God has given you of his nearness. [NOTE: Be prepared to share a God Sighting from your own life, to help get students thinking. Examples could include God's response to a prayer, peace in a friend's life during a stressful situation, or deeper

compassion for a specific person in need.]

BGroup Questions

1. What things can you do each day to be more aware of God's presence—what would help you notice more God Sightings?
2. When God feels distant, what do you do to draw near to him?
3. Think about a time when Jesus interacted with someone—what do you know for sure about what he values in his relationships, based on that interaction?

TAKE ACTION: Memorize this Scripture this week! *“But the Lord was with Joseph in the prison and showed him his faithful love. And the Lord made Joseph a favorite with the prison warden” (Genesis 39:21).*

**Leaders, leave 3-5 minutes for prayer at the end of your group time.