



Following Christ Together



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YOUR LIFEGROUP LEADER GUIDE

Thank you so much for choosing to serve as a Life Group leader! God can and will use you in powerful ways as you lead your friends and neighbors in Christ-centered community. Below is some instruction for leading your Life Group through this curriculum. This curriculum is meant to serve as a guide, not a strict template that must be followed to a tee. While it is good to have structure and consistency, make sure you prayerfully allow room for the Holy Spirit to lead your time together as a group.



WARM-UP

As you begin your Life Group, you have a couple options with how to get started:

1. **ASK.** Question your group about the challenge/application you ended with from the week before. Does anyone have an experience from this they would like to share? This is also a great opportunity to review last week's story.
2. **ICEBREAKER.** This is a fun, or sometimes serious, icebreaker question that relates to the passage you are about to discuss. Feel free to come up with your own! Give everyone a chance to engage in the conversation, but don't let it take too long. It's just a warm up!
3. **PRAY.** Don't forget this part as you begin your time together.



STORYTELLING

In this section, you'll find a summary of the text you're about to go over. Feel free to read this (try not to stare down at the page the whole time) or read the text for yourself and tell the story in your own words!

Remember, your job is to just tell the story, not to teach on any particular points.

Next, have everyone bring out their Bibles and read the passage together. Then rebuild the story, asking questions like, "Then what happened?" and "Who were the characters in this story?" This ensures that everyone is involved and starting on the same page — something especially important to any new or non-believers in your group.



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

In this section, you'll find questions to help your group discuss the passage. The questions are in no particular order, so feel free jump around or ask different questions that better follow where your group is going. Remember, try to lead your group from head-questions (facts) to heart-questions (emotions and faith), then to feet-questions (application).

This section also includes general questions that can be applied to any passage: What stuck out to you from this passage? What does this teach you about people? What does this teach you about God?



APPLICATION

These are extremely important questions for your group. They not only can stimulate great discussion and prompt your group members into action, they can also allow you to see into a person's heart in significant ways.

There are two ways to ask life application questions: (a) Use story specific questions provided in the guide, or (b) Form your own questions based on comments made during the discussion time.

These life application questions are the most important, because this is where people put their faith into action.



WRAP-UP

As you close your time together, lead the members of your group to come to an action-based conclusion. What is a take-away that God could be putting on your hearts? How can they put their faith into action? How can we live differently and become more like Christ? Then follow-up each week by asking how things went.

Lastly, conclude your group time with prayer. Ask for people's prayer requests and pray for God to continue to teach you about this passage throughout the week.

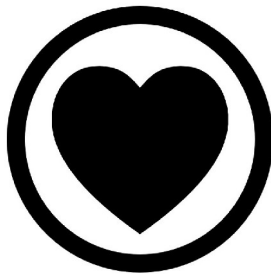
SOME HELPFUL TIPS :

- Do not skip the story rebuild or questions sections. They are intended to get everyone on the same page and help the discussion gradually become more serious. That being said, feel free to come up with your own questions within these sections
- Don't be afraid of the "awkward silences." Let the seconds pass by in these times — some great comments can come out of these moments.
- Manage your discussion time well to ALWAYS arrive at the application question(s) with at least 15 minutes of discussion time left. It is intended to be the most meaningful time of the group meeting.
- Make sure your group knows that these discussions take place in a safe environment where no one will attack them for having different perspectives or experiences. Keep an eye on the dynamics of the group so that everyone feels safe sharing personal thoughts and experiences with others.

Profile of a Disciple



A disciple makes a decision to follow Christ.



A disciple is being changed Christ.



A disciple participates in Christ's mission.



A disciple renounces all and responds to the call.

Following Christ Together

Title and scripture sections for Leaders Guide based on small group curriculum from *Real Life Ministries* (<http://www.reallifeministries.com>)

SIMON PETER'S BIG CATCH

LUKE 5:1-11



WARM-UP

1. **ICEBREAKER.** Introduce yourself and tell us your favorite type of weather.
2. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

Jesus looked out over the crowds pushing in towards Him and realized that he had to think of something or He'd run out of beach and end up in the water. Over on the shore were a couple of fishing boats where the fishermen were sitting mending their nets. He found Simon, whom He would later call Peter, and asked, "Would you mind if I used your boat to address the crowd?"

They both climbed in and Simon shoved off from the shore. Jesus sat in the front of the boat and addressed the crowd. The natural echo from the water worked to amplify Jesus' voice as He taught them about the Kingdom of Heaven and how much God loved them. When Jesus was finished He turned and looked at Simon Peter.

"Shove out into the deep and let's go fishing."

"Oh Master," Simon answered, "we worked all night and didn't catch a single fish." Jesus just smiled back at Simon. "But if you say so, I'll try again."

In just a minute the nets started to tighten and drag. The boat leaned way over to the side. Peter thought they were going to capsize! He called to his two business partners, James and John.

"Come on! I need help! We've got too many fish!"

The partners joined Simon, and using both boats, they started dragging the full nets towards the shore. When Simon Peter saw what was happening, he dropped to his knees at Jesus' feet and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Jesus looked at Simon and said, "Don't be afraid, from now on, you'll be catching men." At that point, Simon Peter knew what he was going to do. He left everything and started following Jesus.

Read through the passage as a group.
Rebuild the story as a group.

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SIMON PETER'S BIG CATCH

LUKE 5:1-11



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- How does Simon react when told to cast his nets again after an unsuccessful night? Why does he react this way?
- How do Simon and his companions react when they see the results of re-casting their nets?
- What changes in the lives of Simon, James and John, after their encounter with Jesus?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- What surprising, good things has God brought into your life?
- How have you responded to God's providence? How should you respond?
- Have you ever felt God calling you to do something?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

JESUS MINISTERS TO AN ENTIRE TOWN

MARK 1:21-39



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Have you ever been interrupted when you had something important to say?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

Jesus and His friends travelled into the seaside town of Capernaum where He immediately went into the synagogue on the Sabbath and began to teach the people. Everyone there was astonished at the authority with which Jesus taught. But right in the middle of the meeting, a man stood up and cried out:

“Leave us alone! What do You have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?” For he was possessed by an unclean spirit.

“Be quiet and come out of him!” Jesus commanded. After the spirit had convulsed the man one last time, it came out of him.

After His time in the synagogue, Jesus went with Simon Peter and his brother Andrew to their house. When they arrived, they found out that Simon’s mother-in-law was sick with a very high fever. Jesus went in, took her by the hand and lifted her up. At that moment, the fever was gone!

When word got out about Jesus, people from all over Capernaum brought their sick and demon-possessed to the house to be healed.

Then, early in the morning, Jesus got up and quietly slipped out to a lonely place where He spent extended time in prayer to His Father. Soon, Peter and the others found Him.

“Everybody’s looking for You.”

“Let’s go into the next town so that I may preach to them, too — for that’s what I’ve been called to do.” So they left Capernaum and Jesus continued preaching the Good News and casting out demons throughout all of Galilee.

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.

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JESUS MINISTERS TO AN ENTIRE TOWN

MARK 1:21-39



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- Why is prayer necessary for Jesus?
- How are the people experiencing Jesus?
- What is the crowd's response to His teaching and miracles?
- Do you believe God still performs miracles today?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- Why is prayer necessary for you?
- What has Jesus specifically brought to your attention lately? Do you accept His leading as authoritative?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

JESUS CHOOSES THE 12 AND PREACHES ON A MOUNTAINSIDE

LUKE 6:12-26



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** How did you get to know the person who is now your best friend?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

Jesus went to a mountainside to pray. He stayed there all night, and when morning came, he designated the 12 men who would be his disciples: Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, Simon, Judas son of James and Judas Iscariot.

Then, Jesus came down from the mountainside and was met by a crowd of his followers. People came from all around to hear Jesus. He started speaking to them, saying things like, “Blessed are you who are poor” and “Blessed are you when people hate you because of the Son of Man.” He said that when these things happened, their reward in Heaven would be great.

He also said, “But woe to you who are rich,” and “Woe to you who laugh now,” warning them not to get too caught up in the world.

So they left Capernaum and Jesus continued preaching the Good News and casting out demons throughout all of Galilee.

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.

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JESUS CHOOSES THE 12 AND PREACHES ON A MOUNTAINSIDE

LUKE 6:12-26



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- What character qualities of Jesus do you see here?
- How do the crowds respond to Jesus' healings and teaching in this passage?
- How do the "Beatitudes" (verses 20-26) differ from what society/culture values?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- How has Jesus called, healed, and taught you?
- How do His teachings here reform your thinking and behavior?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

REAPING AND SOWING

MATTHEW 13:1-23



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** What is your experience with gardening?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

Jesus left the house and headed down by the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Once again, He found a boat, sat down and began to teach the people.

“A farmer went out to sow seeds in the field.” The people listened intently.

Jesus continued. “As he sowed the seed, some of it fell by the side of the road and the birds came and devoured those seeds. Some other seed fell on the rocks where there was not much soil, so these seeds sprang up but never took root. Later, when the sun beat down on them, they were scorched and withered away. Some other seeds landed in the middle of the thorns, so even though the seeds started to grow, the thorns sprang up around them and choked the life out of them. But there were other seeds, and they fell on good, healthy ground and soon they yielded a large crop. If you have ears (and a heart!) to hear, then listen carefully!”

When Jesus was finished speaking, some of His disciples found Him. They were full of questions:

“Why do You always speak in parables?” They asked.

“Because of your seeking hearts, the mysteries of the Kingdom of God will be made known to you,” He answered. “But they’re not for everybody. To the others I speak in parables because even though they see, they don’t really see. And even though they hear, they’re not really listening. The prophet Isaiah predicted this would happen when he said, ‘Hearing, you will not understand; seeing, you will not perceive.’ But since you really see and you really hear, you’ll see things that the Old Testament leaders and prophets desired to see but never did.

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REAPING AND SOWING

MATTHEW 13:1-23



STORYTELLING CONTINUED

Then Jesus continued: “Here’s what the parable means: When someone hears the word of God’s Kingdom, but they don’t understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was deposited in their heart. They’re like the seed on the side of the road.

Then the person who hears the Word and responds immediately to it with joy and excitement is like the seed that fell on the rocks. But since that person has no roots, the minute hardships or trials arise, that person stumbles. The one who receives the seed in the thorns is the person who hears the Word, but is carried away by worldly worries and the lure of riches, and his life becomes unfruitful.

But the one who received the seed on good ground is the one who hears the Word, understands it and whose life becomes full of the fruitfulness of the Spirit of God.”

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- Explore the different explanations Jesus gives of how people respond to hearing God’s truth.
- What promises does Jesus make in verse 23?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- Which soil best exemplifies your response to God’s truth?
- What gets in the way of your bearing fruit? What must happen in order for you to bear fruit?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

JESUS WITH THE GREAT AND THE UNKNOWN

MARK 5:21-43



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application for last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Tell us about a time when a desperate gamble of yours paid off.
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

Everywhere Jesus went, huge crowds followed. At one point, a well-dressed man squeezed his way through the crowd. People let him through partly because of who he was and partly because of the desperation on his face.

“Sir, please! My young daughter is extremely ill,” he said kneeling at Jesus’ feet. “Come and lay your hands on her so that she may be healed.” His name was Jairus, one of the leaders of the synagogue. Jesus immediately left and followed the man towards his house. The great crowd followed.

As the mob moved through the crowded street a poor woman pondered her next move. She’d been ill with an uncontrollable flow of blood for twelve years and even though she’d spent all she had on doctors searching for a cure, things had only gotten worse.

“Maybe if I touch the hem of Jesus’ garment,” she thought to herself, “I’ll be made well.” So that’s what she did. As the Teacher passed by, she got down and reached out to touch the bottom hem of his robe. As soon as she did, she knew things were different. She was healed!

“Who touched my clothes?” Jesus asked as he stopped in the middle of the street.

“Who touched your clothes?” The disciples asked. “Are you kidding? Look at this crowd. They’re all jostling up against you. And You ask ‘Who touched me?’”

Then Jesus looked around and saw the woman. Shaking and fearful, she came forward and fell down in front of her Master. Jesus leaned down and gave her the opportunity to tell Him the entire story.

“Go in peace, Daughter,” Jesus said gently, “Your faith has made you well.” While He was still speaking, someone came from Jairus’ house and said, “Don’t bother the Teacher any longer. Your daughter just died.”

“Don’t be afraid,” Jesus said as He looked into Jairus’s tear-filled eyes. “Just believe.” Jesus allowed only Peter, John and James to follow Him to the house. As soon as He got there, Jesus saw all the people crying and grieving.

JESUS WITH THE GREAT AND THE UNKNOWN

MARK 5:21-43



STORYTELLING CONTINUED

“Why are you making all this commotion and weeping? The child isn’t dead, but sleeping.”

three disciples and came into the room where the little girl lay.

“Little girl, I say to you, arise,” Jesus said, taking her by the hand. Immediately, the girl arose and walked. Her parents (and Peter James and John!) were overcome with amazement.

“Don’t tell anyone about this,” He said. Then Jesus turned to the parents and told them to give their daughter something to eat.

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- Who are the main characters in these two vignettes?
- What do Jairus and the woman have in common? What obstacles do they have to overcome to receive what Jesus has to give?
- Why does Jesus tell Jairus and his family to keep quiet about the miracle?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- In hopeless situations, do you persevere in going to Jesus?
- Knowing that Jesus’ healings took power/energy out of Him, how much energy do you willingly expend to live and love as He did? What can you point to in the past few weeks?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

5,000 FOR LUNCH

MATTHEW 14:13-33



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application froms last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** What's the most delicious and/or memorable meal you've ever had?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

"John the Baptist is dead. Beheaded by Herod." When Jesus heard these words, He departed to a deserted place by Himself. He needed to be alone with the Father. But it wasn't long before the crowds discovered where He was. Jesus looked up and when he saw the people searching for Him, He was filled with compassion and immediately started healing their sick. With evening approaching, Jesus' disciples came to Him and said, "Send the crowds away, it's getting late. They need to go back and find something to eat."

"They don't need to go anywhere," Jesus answered, "You give them something to eat." The disciples looked at the crowd, then at their meager provisions. "We only have five loaves and two fish."

"Bring them here to Me," Jesus said.

He had all the people sit down on the cool, green grass. Then Jesus took the food, gave thanks and broke the loaves. He handed them to the disciples who began passing them out to the people. Soon, all of the people ate and were satisfied — in fact, there were twelve baskets left over! And there had been over 5,000 men there that day, not even counting the women and children.

In order to keep the people from proclaiming Him king, Jesus told His disciples to get in the boat and cast off to the other side of the lake. Meanwhile, He climbed up on the mountain to pray. As evening came, He was alone on the mountain, but the disciples were in the middle of the lake struggling against the fierce winds. Seeing His friends in trouble, Jesus went to them, walking on the water. As they saw Him approaching through the darkness, waves and spray, they were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they yelled.

"Don't be afraid, it's I," Jesus answered.

"Lord, if it really is You," Peter called out over the water, "command me to come to You."

"Come," Jesus said, and Peter climbed over the side of the boat. He was walking on the water! But when he looked around at the wind and the rough water, Peter began to sink.

"Lord, save me!" he shouted as he started to go under.

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5,000 FOR LUNCH

MATTHEW 14:13-33



STORYTELLING CONTINUED

Jesus reached out His hand and grabbed Peter.

“O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”

When the two of them made it back to the boat, the wind ceased and the sea was calm once again. After witnessing all of this, the disciples were astonished. They worshipped Jesus saying, “You truly are the Son of God!”

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.”



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- How does Jesus response to the intruding crowds differ from that of His disciples?
- How do the disciples respond to Jesus’ when he tells them to feed the crowd? How do they respond when He comes to them, walking on water?
- How does Jesus respond to Peter’s doubt?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- In which areas of your life do you need to rely more on God’s provision than your own?
- Is there a place in your life where you are sinking because you’ve taken your eyes off Jesus?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

JESUS IS THE BREAD OF LIFE

JOHN 6:22-40



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Have you ever spent a lot of money on something that was consumed or finished very quickly? A fancy dinner? Expensive shoes? Tickets to a one-time event?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

A crowd was following Jesus and was confused by how he ended up on the other side of the lake. They did not know that He had walked on water to get there. They asked Him when he had gotten there. Jesus could tell that they were asking because they wanted more food — this was the same crowd of 5,000 people that He had just fed with five loaves of bread and two fish.

“Do not work for food that spoils,” Jesus said, “but for food that endures to eternal life.”

The crowd was confused by this, so Jesus clarified that the work God desired for them to do was to believe in the one He had sent. The crowd, still confused, asked Jesus for proof — like the same kind of proof that God gave the Israelites when they were wandering in the desert, which was manna.

“It is not Moses who gives you this bread from Heaven,” said Jesus, “it is the Father.”

“Give us this kind of bread!” the crowd pleaded.

“I am the bread of life,” Jesus replied. “Whoever comes to Me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty.” Jesus continued, saying that He was sent by the Father to do His will. And the Father’s will is that all would believe in the Son and have eternal life.

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.

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JESUS IS THE BREAD OF LIFE

JOHN 6:22-40



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- How does Jesus respond to the crowd's questions?
- What is the "bread of life"?
- What does it mean to do the will of the Father?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- Have you ever asked God for more confirmation concerning something He'd already made quite clear? Why did you do that?
- Do you find yourself working for things that perish instead of eternal things? How should you change this?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

NOT ENOUGH BREAD

MARK 8:1-21



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Tell us about a time when you took someone literally when they were using a metaphor. How did you end up resolving the misunderstanding?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

Jesus had been teaching the people out in the wilderness for three days, and their food was beginning to run out. Jesus looked around at the people who had been listening to Him all this time and called His disciples to Himself.

“I’m feeling compassion for all these people who have continued with Me these three days and have had nothing to eat. I’m afraid if I dismiss them to go home they’ll faint on the way.”

“There’s no way we can get enough food to satisfy everyone out here in the wilderness,” Jesus’ disciples said.

“How many loaves do you have?”

“Seven.”

Jesus had the people — 4,000 in all — sit down on the ground while He gave thanks and started to break the seven loaves apart. He handed the pieces to the astonished disciples who started to distribute them to all the people along with a few small fish that Jesus also blessed and divided. After everyone was full, the disciples gathered up seven baskets full of the leftovers. After this amazing miracle, Jesus and the twelve got into the boat and headed across the Sea of Galilee towards the region of Dalmanutha. There, the Pharisees confronted them, demanding a sign from Jesus to prove He was who He said He was.

“Why does this generation always seek a sign? He asked. “I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.” Then He and the disciples got back into the boat and shoved off.

“Take heed; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod,” Jesus warned, but the disciples missed what Jesus was saying.

“Jesus is upset because we forgot to bring bread,” the disciples reasoned among themselves. “We only brought one loaf.”

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NOT ENOUGH BREAD

MARK 8:1-21



STORYTELLING CONTINUED

When Jesus perceived what they were talking about, He asked them, “Why are you trying to figure out what to do without enough bread? Do you still not understand? You still don’t see? You still don’t hear? When I broke the loaves for the 5,000 the other day how many baskets of leftovers were there?”

“Twelve,” the disciples answered quietly.

“And when I broke the seven loaves for the 4,000, how many baskets were left over?”

“Seven.”

“How is it you do not understand?”

**Read through the passage as a group.
Rebuild the story as a group.**



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- Why does Jesus not send the crowds away?
- Why does Jesus say “no sign will be given to this generation” immediately after performing a great sign (miracle)?
- What is Jesus talking about in verse 15? What do the disciples think He’s talking about? How does He respond to their misunderstanding?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- How has God sustained you in your life when He could have allowed you to suffer?
- Do you ever overlook the glory and power of God by focusing too much on the technical details of a spiritual truth? What actions can you take to remind yourself to see the bigger picture?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

JESUS EXPLAINS HIS RESURRECTION AND WHAT DISCIPLESHIP MEANS

MATTHEW 16:13-27



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Has anyone ever granted you a large amount of authority? How did you exercise it? Did things go well? Why or why not?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

Jesus asked his disciples, “What do people say the Son of Man is?” They gave him various answers about what people were saying. Then Jesus asked them, “But who do you say I am?” Simon was the first one to answer Him, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!”

Jesus replied to Simon, saying that he was blessed that this fact was revealed to him by the Father in Heaven. Jesus then gave Simon the name Peter — which means “rock” — and said, “on this rock I will build my church.” Jesus told Peter that whatever he binds on earth will be bound in Heaven, and whatever he loosens on earth will be loosened in Heaven. Then, Jesus spoke to all His disciples, ordering them not to tell anyone else that He is the Messiah.

From this time on, Jesus began to tell His disciples that He had to go to Jerusalem, where he would suffer and be crucified, but then rise again on the third day! After saying this one day, Peter took Jesus aside.

“Never Lord! This shall never happen to you!”

Jesus responded strongly: “Get behind me Satan! You are not thinking of God’s ways, but of your own!” Then, Jesus spoke to all of His disciples.

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Me will find it.” He went on to say that it is so much more valuable for someone to save their soul than to invest in their life on earth. He finished by saying that when He returns, with the angels, in His Father’s glory, each person will be rewarded according to what they did for the Kingdom of Heaven.

Read through the passage as a group.
Rebuild the story as a group.

continued on back...

JESUS EXPLAINS HIS RESURRECTION AND WHAT DISCIPLESHIP MEANS

MATTHEW 16:13-27



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- How does Peter respond to Jesus' words concerning His death? And why does Jesus respond to Peter so strongly?
- What do we have to do if we want to be called Jesus' followers?
- Why is it important for us to do what Jesus says here?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- Who do you say Jesus is?
- Do you sometimes have trouble setting your mind on God's interests, rather than your own?
- What does "denying yourself and taking up your cross" look like in your life?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

A GLIMPSE OF GLORY

MATTHEW 17:1-21



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** What is your favorite plant? Describe it, and tell what you like about it.
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

Jesus took Peter, James and his brother John aside and led them up a high mountain. After they reached the top, something really awesome happened. Jesus was transfigured right before their eyes! His face shone as bright as the sun, and His clothes became as white as light. Then suddenly Moses and Elijah were there talking to Jesus about His death and resurrection.

“Lord, it’s good for us to be here!” Peter shouted out, “If you’d like, we’ll make three tabernacles. One for You, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

But even as Peter spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice came from the cloud.

“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”

The disciples fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them and said. “Get up and don’t be afraid.”

When the disciples opened up their eyes, Moses and Elijah were gone and only Jesus remained. As they came down from the mountain, Jesus warned the three of them not to share what they had just witnessed until He had risen from the dead.

They asked Him, “Why do the recorders of the law say that Elijah must come first?”

“Elijah is coming first,” Jesus replied, “and will restore all things, but I say to you that Elijah has already come, but they did with him whatever they wanted. And soon the Son of Man will suffer the same way.”

Peter, James and John looked at each other. They knew that Jesus was talking about John the Baptist. As they approached the crowd below, a man burst through the throng and knelt before Jesus.

“Lord have mercy on my son; he’s an epileptic and suffers greatly. Sometimes the fits even throw him into the water and into the fire. I brought him to Your disciples, but they couldn’t do anything about it.”

continued on back...

A GLIMPSE OF GLORY

MATTHEW 17:1-21



STORYTELLING CONTINUED

“O unbelieving generation!” Jesus said, “How long shall I bear with you? Bring the boy here.” Jesus rebuked the demon that was in the boy, and he was cured from that moment on.

Later the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Why couldn’t we cast it out?”

“Because of your little faith,” Jesus said. “Assuredly I say to you if you have faith even as small as a tiny mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘move from here to there’ and it’ll do it. For nothing will be impossible for you. But this kind doesn’t come out except by prayer and fasting.”

Read through the passage as a group.
Rebuild the story as a group.



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- What is significant about the Transfiguration?
- Who does Jesus call “you unbelieving and perverted generation?” Why does he call them that?
- Jesus’ disciples would be strong contenders in a “biggest faith contest,” yet Jesus states that their faith is smaller than a mustard seed. Why? Is it really so hard to have mustard-seed-sized faith that even these chosen (future) Apostles didn’t have it?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- Are you tempted to glorify certain “giants of faith” on a level equal with Jesus, as Peter did with Moses and Elijah?
- What size is your faith? Have you moved any mountains lately? If not, why not?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

FORGIVING A BROTHER

MATTHEW 18:15-35



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** What debts do you have? What would you do if they were suddenly cancelled?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

Jesus spoke to His disciples about how to deal with people in the Church who are sinning. First, he said that they should confront the person on their own. Then, if they do not repent, two or three people should together confront the person who is in sin. If the person still refuses to listen, He said you should treat them as you would a pagan or tax collector. Jesus continued:

“Where two or three gather in My Name, I am there with them.”

Peter asked Jesus, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

“Not seven times, but seventy-seven times,” Jesus said. Then, he told them a story that relates to the Kingdom of Heaven:

There was a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. One of his servants owed him ten thousand bags of gold, but he was unable to pay. The king ordered that the man’s family be sold to pay the debt. The man fell on his knees, begging “Be patient with me, and I will pay everything back!” The king had mercy on his servant, and canceled his debt.

But then, the servant had the exact same situation with one of his own servants. His servant begged him, but the man refused to cancel the debt and instead threw his servant in prison.

When the king heard of this, he was outraged. “You wicked servant,” he said. “Shouldn’t you have had the same mercy on your own servant that I showed to you?”

Jesus concluded: “This is how My heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Read through the passage as a group.
Rebuild the story as a group.

continued on back...

FORGIVING A BROTHER

MATTHEW 18:15-35



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- Name the three steps of confronting a sin as given in verses 15-17.
- How does Jesus treat pagans and tax collectors?
- Do these conflict-resolution steps apply only to confronting sin within the church? What about non-sin issues? What about people outside the church?
- What are the most important points in Jesus' illustrative story? How does that explain His answer to Peter in verse 23?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- How do you usually deal with someone who has sinned against you?
- How can you encourage Christians in your life to resolve conflict in the way Jesus prescribes?
- Does this parable change your perspective on anything that is going on in your life now?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

LUKE 9:57-10:2



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Who is someone in your life that you follow after?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

Jesus and His disciples were walking along the road and a man said to Him, “I will follow You wherever You go.”

Jesus replied with examples from nature, explaining that He has no permanent home.

Another man came along, and Jesus said, “Follow me.” The man asked if he could first go and bury his father. But Jesus said, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”

Another man said, “Jesus, I’ll follow you. But first, let me go say goodbye to my family.” Jesus replied, saying that anyone who follows Him mustn’t look back at their old life.

Then, Jesus appointed 72 of His followers and sent them out two by two to go before Him to the towns that he would later visit. He said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest field.”

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.

continued on back...

THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

LUKE 9:57-10:2



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- What is the meaning of Jesus' response to the first potential follower?
- What reason does the second potential follower give to Jesus? Why is his excuse not valid?
- What reason does the third potential follower give to Jesus? Why is his excuse not valid?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- Verse 58 seems to imply that those who follow Jesus will experience loss. What comforts have you given up to follow Him?
- Have you placed your hand upon the plow, and then looked back?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

AN UNLIKELY SOURCE OF HOPE

LUKE 10:25-37



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Have you ever had a random stranger go out of their way to help you?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

“Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” The question came from a man who was supposed to be an expert in the law. He wasn’t asking out of genuine curiosity, he was trying to test Jesus.

Jesus turned the question back on him, “What does the law say? How do you read it?”

The man answered with the best known scripture in the Torah, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your strength, with all your soul and with all your mind. And your neighbor as yourself.”

“That’s exactly right,” Jesus said, “do this and you will live.”

“So who is my neighbor?” said the man who wanted to justify himself.

Jesus answered with a parable:

“A certain man was traveling down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by thieves who beat him, stripped him of his clothing and left him by the side of the road, half dead. Later a priest came down the road, but when he saw the man who’d been beaten, the priest quickly crossed over to the other side of the road and passed by. Then, a Levite came down the road, took a good look at the man who’d been robbed, and he too passed on by. But then a Samaritan came by and discovered the man. And when he saw him, he had compassion on him. He went to him, bandaged up his wounds and put the man on his own donkey. He brought him to an inn to recover.

The next day, as the Samaritan was leaving, he gave the innkeeper some money and said, ‘Take care of him and whatever else you need to spend on his care, I’ll repay it when I return.’”

Jesus turned and faced the man who had started this discussion. “Who was the neighbor to the man who was robbed and beaten?”

“He who showed mercy on him,” the man replied.

“Go and do likewise,” Jesus said.

Read through the passage as a group.
Rebuild the story as a group.

continued on back...

AN UNLIKELY SOURCE OF HOPE

LUKE 10:25-37



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- What are the two commandments that Jesus said would give life if they were obeyed?
- How does Jesus define a neighbor?
- What does the Samaritan show by aiding the injured man and even paying for his care?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- What does it look like to love God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind? Give one or two examples of how you personally can do this.
- Who is your neighbor and what do you need to do for that person? How can you have compassion and show mercy?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

JESUS' TEACHING ON PRAYER

LUKE 11:1-13



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Tell us about a time when persistence in the face of repeated failure resulted in eventual success.
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

One day after Jesus was praying, one of the disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. Jesus answered with an example.

When He finished with the prayer, He explained prayer to them with a parable. “Imagine it’s midnight, an unexpected visitor has come to your home, and you don’t have anything to feed him. So you go to your friend’s house, and ask him for some bread. Although it is late and his family is sleeping, he will give you whatever you need because of your boldness.”

“It’s the same with praying to the Father,” Jesus said. “How many of you would give your son a serpent when he asks for a fish? Or a scorpion when he asks for an egg? How much more does the perfect Father desire to give good gifts to you, His children, when you ask Him?”

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.

continued on back...

JESUS' TEACHING ON PRAYER

LUKE 11:1-13



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- What does Jesus' example of a prayer contain? What does it not contain?
- What is Jesus teaching us in verses 5 - 10?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- How do you tend to pray? What do you pray for? Does this match Jesus' example in the Lord's Prayer?
- Have you ever given up praying for something? Why?
- Do you ever feel like you've been given a snake or a scorpion, instead of a fish or an egg? Did your perception about this "gift" change later?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

THE COST OF BEING A DISCIPLE

LUKE 14:25-35



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Have you ever set out to accomplish something, only to find out partway through that it would cost you more than you expected? What did other people think of you, and what did you think of yourself?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

A huge crowd is following Jesus, but He wants to tell them what it really means to follow Him.

Jesus said that they need to love Him so much, it's like they hate the rest of their own family. He reminds them that they have to pick up their cross every day and follow Him. They also need to count up the costs involved with following Him. Otherwise it would be like a man who starts to build a tower, but then doesn't have enough supplies and funds to finish it. Or like a king in war, who doesn't calculate how many men he will need to win the battle. Both of those things sound so foolish!

He ends by talking about salt. He says that if salt loses its saltiness, it is no longer good for anything and must be thrown away.

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear," He said.

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.

continued on back...

THE COST OF BEING A DISCIPLE

LUKE 14:25-35



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- Why does Jesus say we must hate our families and ourselves in order to follow Him?
- What kind of hatred is He talking about? How do you know that's what He means?
- When should you count the cost of a venture? What happens to those who miscalculate? What happens to those who determine they can't afford the cost?
- What happens to salt that has lost its saltiness? What is this metaphor saying about Christians?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- Do you hate yourself and your family? Should you?
- How do we count the cost of following Jesus?
- What has following Jesus cost you? Do you think that will be the full cost of discipleship?
- Is there anything in your life that God is asking from you that you are not willing to give Him? What will happen if you do not?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

THE LOST SON

LUKE 15:11-32



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Tell us a funny story about farm animals!
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

“Father, I want my part of the inheritance now,” the younger of two sons in Jesus’ parable demanded. “Give me what falls to me.” The father gave him his portion and the boy took off. He journeyed to a far country and spent all that he had on wasteful, lavish living. It wasn’t long until all of his possessions were gone. At that point, a severe famine hit the land, leaving the young man destitute. The only job he could find was working for a farmer who sent him into the pig pens to feed the swine. The son became so hungry that he began considering eating the pods the pigs ate. Then he came to his senses.

“Even my father’s lowest servants always have enough to eat and here I am starving to death!” he said. “I know. I’ll go back home and say, ‘Father I have sinned greatly, I’m no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’” So the boy arose and headed home, but while he was still a long way off, his father spotted him on the road and ran to meet him. When he reached his son, he hugged him and kissed him.

“Father I have sinned greatly,” the boy began, “I am no longer worthy to be called your son.” But, ignoring his son’s words, the father called to his servants, “Bring out the best robe and the best ring and put sandals on his feet!” He turned to another,

“Bring the fatted calf at once: it’s time for a celebration! For my son was dead and now he’s alive; he was lost but now is found!” So the party began. When the older son heard all the noise, he asked one of the servants what was happening.

“Your younger brother has returned to us safe and sound, so your father has prepared the fatted calf in celebration.” When the older son heard this, he grew angry and refused to join the festivities. His father came out and pleaded with him to come in.

continued on back...

THE LOST SON

LUKE 15:11-32



STORYTELLING CONTINUED

“All these years I’ve served you faithfully,” the son said, “and you never gave me so much as a goat to celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours — yes the one who’s wasted all of your possessions — comes home you kill the fatted calf!”

“Son,” the father said, “You have always been with me and everything I have is yours. It was right that we celebrate when your brother returned. For he was dead and is alive again, he was lost and now is found!”

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- How do the younger son’s attitudes change as the story progresses? What causes his attitude to change?
- What kind of attitude does the older son have? Why does he feel that way?
- What kind of attitudes does the father have throughout the story? How does he react to the behavior of his sons?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- Which son do you identify with the most? Why?
- How do you act when you find yourself in the position of the younger son? How does this passage teach us to act in those scenarios?
- How do you act when you find yourself in the position of the older son? How does this passage teach us to act in those scenarios?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD

JOHN 11:1-44



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Have you ever been in a situation where everything was (or at least seemed) lost, but you came out ahead in the end?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

The message reached Jesus as He was on the other side of the Jordan: “Lord, one whom you love is sick.” It had been sent by Mary and Martha about their brother, Lazarus.

“This sickness won’t end in death, but that the Son of Man might be glorified by it,” He said to His disciples. He loved Mary, Martha and Lazarus. When Jesus heard about the illness, He stayed where He was for two more days.

“Let us go to Judea again,” He said to His disciples. And even though they protested because of the danger that awaited them there, they joined their Master and headed back.

“Our friend Lazarus sleeps so I must go and wake him up.”

“Lord if he sleeps, he’ll get better soon.”

“Lazarus is dead,” Jesus said plainly, “but for your sakes I’m glad I wasn’t there, that you may believe. Let’s go to him now.”

By the time Jesus and His disciples reached Bethany, Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days.

“Lord, if You had been here our brother would not have died.” Martha said through her tears, “But even now, I know that whatever You ask of God He will give to You.”

“Your brother will rise again,” Jesus answered.

“Yes, I know in the final resurrection, he’ll rise again.”

“I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live, and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD

JOHN 11:1-44



STORYTELLING CONTINUED

“I believe You are the Christ, the Son of God, who has come into the world.”

When Jesus met Mary on the road, He asked her, “Where have you laid him?”

“Come and see,” she replied. Jesus wept.

When they arrived at the tomb — a cave with a large stone sealing it off — Jesus commanded, “Take away the stone!” Then He looked up into heaven and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.” And then with a loud voice Jesus called, “Lazarus, come forth!” In just a couple seconds, Lazarus came forth out of the tomb. It was shocking to see him bound and covered with grave clothes.

“Loose him and let him go,” Jesus commanded the stunned onlookers. Lazarus was alive again!

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- Three times (verses 21, 32, and 37) people say that Jesus could have prevented Lazarus from dying. Why didn't He? Why did He wait until Lazarus was dead before going to Bethany?
- Why does Jesus weep? If He knew that He was going to raise him from the dead, what was there to weep about?
- How do the characters in this passage express faith? How do they express a lack of faith?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- What is your attitude towards misfortune? What should your attitude be?
- In this passage, Martha and Mary had their brother returned to them. In our lives, we don't always have everything made right again. How should we think and act in the face of unmitigated loss or defeat?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

SERVING OTHERS

MARK 10:32-45



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Whom do you rank among the greatest and most admirable people in the world?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

Jesus' disciples were following Him on the road towards Jerusalem. Jesus began speaking again about how the Son of Man would be betrayed, mocked and killed — but then, after three days, He would rise from the dead.

Later, as they were still walking, James and John said that they would do whatever Jesus asked them to.

“What do you want Me to do for you?” Jesus asked.

“Grant us to sit one at Your right hand and one at Your left, in Your glory.”

“You don’t understand,” Jesus said. He asked them if they would then drink the same cup as Him and be baptized as He would be, too. But more importantly, He said this position was not His to grant.

When the rest of the disciples heard about this, they were angry. How could James and John even request such a thing!

Jesus spoke to all of them, “Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came to serve.”

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.

continued on back...

SERVING OTHERS

MARK 10:32-45



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- What do James and John think they are asking from Jesus? What are they really asking from Him?
- What kind of people does the world value and respect most highly? Why are they considered so great? How do they behave towards people counted as lesser than them?
- What does Jesus say is the key to being great? Why does that make someone great? Are they great in the same way as the world measures greatness?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- Do you seek glory in God's Kingdom? How do you go about pursuing it?
- How should you go about pursuing glory? Give specific examples.



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

LUKE 19:28-48



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Have you ever arrived at a destination in a “less dignified” manner?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

“Go into the village opposite us,” Jesus instructed two of His disciples, “and untie the colt that you find there and bring it to Me.”

They did what He said, brought the colt and covered it with their cloaks. Then Jesus sat on him and headed down the road through the Kidron Valley to the gates of Jerusalem. As He made His way down the narrow road, a huge crowd began to gather. They laid their coats on the road and shouted, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

“Teacher, rebuke Your disciples!” some Pharisees ordered Jesus.

“I tell you if they should keep silent, these stones would immediately cry out.” Jesus replied.

As Jesus drew near the city He was overcome by emotion. He knew that the city’s near future would be filled with violence, death and destruction.

“All because you didn’t know the time of your visitation.”

When Jesus arrived in the temple, He began to drive out all of the buyers, sellers and moneychangers.

“My house is a house of prayer!” He shouted, “But you have made it a den of thieves.”

Watching from the shadows were the chief priests, the scribes and the leaders of the people. They were secretly looking for a way to destroy Jesus.

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.

continued on back...

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

LUKE 19:28-48



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- Who is Jesus talking about in verses 41 - 44? What is He saying will happen to them? Is He being metaphorical, literal, or both?
- Who does Jesus evict from the Temple, and why?
- How do different people react to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem? Why do they react in those ways?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- How did Jesus act toward Jerusalem, knowing He was headed toward His death? How do you feel and act towards people who have not accepted Christ?
- Is it ever okay to profit financially from a ministry? Why or why not? Do you think certain ministries deserve to have their compensation adjusted?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

THE LEAST OF ALL

JOHN 13:1-17



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Have you ever received an unexpected gift? Have you ever given a gift to someone who did not expect it?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

When Jesus realized that all things had been given into His hands by the Father, He did an odd thing. He took off His outer robe, picked up a basin and started washing the disciples' feet, a job usually reserved for the lowest servant.

"No, Lord, You can never wash my feet!" Peter protested.

"If I do not wash you," Jesus answered, "You'll have no part of Me."

"Lord, then wash my hands and my head too!"

"He who is bathed needs only to have His feet washed and then he is completely clean. And you are clean, but not all of you." Jesus said this because He knew who was going to betray Him.

When Jesus finished, He sat down and looked at His disciples.

"Do you know what I have done for you? If I, your Teacher and Lord, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. I've given you an example that you should do as I have done to you. A servant isn't greater than his master, nor is the messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.

continued on back...

THE LEAST OF ALL

JOHN 13:1-17



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- Why does Jesus wash His disciples' feet? Is it a symbolic gesture, or a practical service?
- How does Peter react when Jesus tries to wash his feet? Why does he react this way?
- What lesson is Jesus teaching His disciples?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- Has your pride ever prevented you from accepting a gift?
- How do you serve the people around you? If you don't, why not? Are those really valid excuses?
- Whom do you serve? Are they people close to you, random strangers, or people in between?
- Whom should you be serving?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

THE WAY TO THE FATHER

JOHN 14:1-15



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Tell about a time that you got really lost trying to get somewhere.
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

Jesus was talking to His disciples. He told them to believe in God and to not be afraid. He said that His Father's house has many rooms, and he is going to prepare a place for them there.

"But Lord," Thomas said, "how can we find You if we don't know where You are going?"

"I am the Way, and the Truth and the Life," said Jesus. "No one comes to the Father except through Me." Jesus said that to know Him is to know the Father.

Then, Philip asked for Jesus to show them the Father, and that would be enough.

But Jesus asked him, "How is it that I've been with you so long, but you still don't understand? The Father and I are one."

Jesus then says that those who follow Him will do even greater work than He Himself, because He is going to be with the Father. But although He's going to be with the Father, He will never really leave them.

"If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it."

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.

continued on back...

THE WAY TO THE FATHER

JOHN 14:1-15



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- What are the disciples troubled about? How does Jesus address their concern?
- What aspect of Jesus' relationship to the Father does He describe in verses 7 - 11?
- What impact does Jesus' relationship with His Father have on us?
- What does it mean to ask something in Jesus' name? Is it as simple as adding "in Jesus' name" to your prayers?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- Do you truly make your prayers in Jesus' name? What can you do to make sure that you are doing so?
- What about this passage do you find encouraging? How does this encouragement impact you?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

JESUS IS THE TRUE VINE

JOHN 15:1-17



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Have you ever had a hobby (a sport, activity, collection, club, etc.) that you got really into? What did it look like to deeply immerse yourself into the world of that hobby? Did you memorize stats and practice obsessively? Dedicate all your spare time to research and working on “your project?” Are you still doing this, or has the enthusiasm faded?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

Jesus speaks to His disciples using gardening, vines and branches as a metaphor.

“I am the vine and You are the branches,” He says. “If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.” He says that just like in gardening, if a branch doesn’t produce fruit, it is of no use! And in order for a branch to produce fruit, it must stay connected to the vine.

It’s just the same in our relationship with God, Jesus says. It brings God glory when we produce “fruit” in our lives — but in order to do this we must stay connected to Him. Then, Jesus begins talking about love:

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

Jesus says that He calls those who follow Him His friends. And as friends, we are called to love one another.

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.

continued on back...

JESUS IS THE TRUE VINE

JOHN 15:1-17



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to “abide in Jesus”? Does it look anything like being immersed in a hobby? In what ways is it the same and/or different?
- What does it mean to be “pruned” (or “cleaned,” as in the Greek)?
- What kind of fruit are we intended to bear?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- How much fruit are you bearing? Do you need to be pruned?
- What should you be doing to better abide in Jesus? What kind of fruit would you bear if you did these things?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES

JOHN 17:1-26



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Have you ever been a negotiator between two parties, or acted as a middleperson? What kind of relationship did you have with each side, and what relationship did the two parties have with each other?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

In this passage, Jesus is with His disciples and begins to pray.

First, He speaks to the Father, saying, “the hour has come.” He prays that the Father would be glorified through Himself and what is about to happen. Jesus restates His purpose on earth, which was to do the Father’s work and bring eternal life to all who believe in Him.

Then, Jesus prays for His disciples, knowing that He will soon leave them. He asks that the Father would protect them, sanctify them by His truth and give them unity with one another.

Lastly, Jesus prays for all believers throughout all time. He asks that the Father would use them to keep bringing salvation to the world, and that He would grant them unity with one another. Jesus asks that all believers would someday be with Him in Heaven and experience God’s glory.

Jesus ends His prayer by restating what He has done on earth — He has made God known to the world. And He says that He will continue to make God known so that all may know God’s love.

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.

continued on back...

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES

JOHN 17:1-26



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- How does Jesus relate to and interact with His Father in this passage?
- How does Jesus relate to His followers (including us) in this passage?
- What kind of relationship is Jesus building between us, Himself and the Father?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- How do you most frequently relate to Jesus? Does your behavior align with Jesus' prayer in this passage?
- How do you most frequently relate to the Father? Does your behavior align with Jesus' prayer in this passage?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

PETER'S BETRAYAL

LUKE 22:31-62



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** How many swords do you own? If you don't own any, why not?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

"Simon," Jesus said, "Satan has asked to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail."

"Lord, I'll go to prison or even die for you," Peter answered.

"I tell you, the rooster shall not crow today before you will deny three times that you know Me." As they headed out of the city and up towards the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said to His disciples, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation."

When they reached the garden, Jesus withdrew from them and prayed. "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me. But nevertheless not My will, but Yours be done." As He prayed in agony, Jesus' sweat became like drops of blood running down His face. When He arose and returned to the disciples, He found them all asleep. "Rise and pray," He said, "Lest you fall into temptation."

As Jesus was speaking, a large crowd appeared out of the darkness. They were armed with torches, swords and clubs. Peter grabbed a sword and swung wildly at Jesus's accusers, cutting off the ear of one of the high priest's servants. But Jesus reached out and healed the man.

They escorted Jesus away to the high priest's residence to hold a mock trial. Peter followed at a safe distance. As he sat outside by the fire warming his hands, a young servant girl studied his face in the firelight.

"This man was also with Him."

"Woman," Peter protested, "I do not know Him."

Then another saw Peter and said "You also are of them."

continued on back...

PETER'S BETRAYAL

LUKE 22:31-62



STORYTELLING CONTINUED

“Man, I am not!” Peter exclaimed.

About an hour later a third person spoke up, “Surely this fellow was also with Him, for he’s from Galilee.”

“Man, I don’t know what you’re saying!” Peter shouted. At that exact moment a rooster crowed. Jesus turned and looked at Peter. Remembering how Jesus had predicted his betrayal, Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- Why were the disciples so excited about swords? What did Jesus intend when he told them to buy swords?
- How does the disciples’ behavior in Gethsemane compare with Jesus’ behavior?
- Why did Peter deny that he knew Jesus? Why did he follow the officers who arrested Jesus if he wasn’t going to admit his association? How should Peter have responded when questioned about whether he knew Jesus, and what might have been the outcome of his reply?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- How do you allocate your resources for the purpose of spreading the Gospel? What do you buy, sell, trade, or donate to further this mission?
- How do you respond when you are faced with inevitable suffering? How should you respond? If these are not the same, why not? What will you do to improve the way you think and act?
- Why do you deny knowing Jesus? Are you denying him in nonverbal ways as well as out loud? How can your behavior change to acknowledge Jesus in thought, word, and deed?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

THE KING ON A CROSS

MARK 15:1-39



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Did you ever do something that you knew was right, but ended up being punished for it?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

After the chief priests had conferred together, they decided they needed to take Jesus to Pilate, the Roman Governor of the region.

“Are you the King of the Jews?” Pilate asked Jesus.

“It is as you say,” Jesus answered.

The chief priests accused Jesus of all kinds of things, but Jesus kept silent. He wouldn’t answer their accusations. Now Pilate knew that during the feast of Passover, he would release a prisoner to the people. He called out to the crowd that had gathered outside his residence, “Do you want me to release the King of the Jews?” But the chief priests stirred up the crowd so that Pilate would release Barabbas, a known insurrectionist and murderer instead. “What do you want me to do with Him you call the King of the Jews?” Pilate asked.

“Crucify Him!” they shouted. So Pilate had Jesus scourged and beaten and led off to be crucified. They brought Him to a place called Golgotha — the place of a skull — where they crucified Him along with two others. So the Scripture was fulfilled: “And He was numbered with the transgressors.” The inscription hung over Jesus read: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

The scribes and Pharisees stood back and hurled insults at Jesus as He hung on the cross, the life pouring out of Him.

Finally, after hanging on the cross for six hours, Jesus cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” After some people offered Jesus sour wine on a sponge, He cried out with a loud voice and breathed His last.

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THE KING ON A CROSS

MARK 15:1-39



STORYTELLING CONTINUED

At that moment, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

As the centurion who had watched Jesus through this entire ordeal saw Him breathe His last, he said, “Truly this Man was the Son of God!”

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- Why did the chief priests want to execute Jesus? Why did the crowd want to execute Jesus? Why did Pilate want to execute Jesus?
- Jesus is God and the Son of God, and had a better relationship with the Father than any other human ever has or ever will have. However, He still asked God “why have You forsaken Me?” Was Jesus really forsaken? If so, for how long? If not, why did He think (or at least act) like He was?
- What about the death of Jesus inspired the centurion to state “Truly this man was the Son of God”?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- Do you ever feel like Jesus did, that your God has forsaken you? How do you deal with that?
- Do you believe that your own sin has contributed to Jesus being beaten, mocked and crucified? Have you ever thought deeply about this?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

JESUS IS ALIVE!

LUKE 24:1-49



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Have you ever had a conversation with someone who clearly knew you, but you couldn't remember them?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

It's early in the morning, and three women are walking to the tomb with spices to anoint Jesus' body. But as they near the tomb, they are dumbfounded. The stone covering Jesus' tomb is gone...and so is His body! Suddenly, two men in gleaming clothes appear before them. The women are terrified, and bow with their faces to the ground. The men began to speak:

"Why do you look for the living among the dead? Jesus isn't here, He is risen! Remember, He told you this would happen!" The women rushed back and told the eleven remaining disciples what they had just seen and heard, but the men did not believe them. But Peter wanted to see for himself if it was true. He ran to the tomb, and when he got there he saw for himself that Jesus' body wasn't there.

On this same day, two of the disciples were traveling to Emma's, talking about everything that had happened. As they were talking, a man came up and walked beside them. They didn't recognize Him, but it was Jesus! Jesus asked them what they were talking about, so they told Him the whole story.

Jesus responded, "You are so foolish! Why do you not believe this? It's exactly what the prophets said would happen!" He then went through the Scriptures with them, explaining each prophecy. As they entered Emmaus, the disciples urged this man to stay with them. And it wasn't until they were eating together that they realized that this man was Jesus. And the moment they realized it, he vanished before their eyes.

At once, they got up and returned to Jerusalem — they had to tell the other disciples what had happened! As they were talking to them, Jesus again appeared with them!

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JESUS IS ALIVE!

LUKE 24:1-49



STORYTELLING CONTINUED

“Why are you troubled and why do you doubt?” Jesus asked them. “Look at my scars, see for yourself that it is me! This is exactly what I told you would happen. Through me, the Scriptures have been fulfilled.”

Jesus opened their minds so they could understand what he was saying.

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- Why didn't the disciples believe Jesus was the Messiah until He appeared after His death? Hadn't they seen His miracles? Didn't they know what the Scripture said about Him? Wasn't the report that He was alive enough to convince them?
- Why did Jesus not reveal Himself to the two disciples on the road?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- Have you ever known something really important, but didn't really recognize it? How did you react when you realized what you knew? Has this ever applied to a spiritual truth?
- Think about the incredible complexity of sending a text message. Most barely understand how it works, but we use it every day. Do you think you have, in a similar way, “normalized” the Gospel?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

JESUS RESTORES PETER

JOHN 21:1-23



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Whom do you love spontaneously, and whom do you love deliberately?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

Some of Jesus' disciples were together after His resurrection. Simon Peter stood up and said, "I'm going fishing." The others decided they would go, too. But after fishing for the entire night, they didn't catch anything.

As the sun was rising, and the disciples were still out in the boat, Jesus appeared on the shore, calling out to them across the water, "Children, have you caught any fish?" The disciples did not know it was Him. They answered back, "no." Jesus called back out and told them to cast their nets onto the other side of the boat, promising that they would then find some fish. They did so, and sure enough, the couldn't even pull the nets back in because they were so heavy with fish!

When this happened, John looked at Peter and said, "It is the Lord!" — referring to the man on the shore. At this, Peter took off his outer garment and jumped into the sea, desperately swimming towards Jesus. When Peter and the other disciples reached the shore, Jesus had built a fire and was cooking. "Come and have breakfast with me," He said.

After breakfast, Jesus looked at Simon Peter and said, "Simon, do you love Me more than these?" Simon responded, "Yes, Lord. You know that I love You." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again, Jesus said, "Simon, do you love Me?" And again, Simon said, "Yes, Lord." Jesus said, "Then take care of My sheep." A third time, Jesus asked His question, and a third time Simon answered, "Yes." And Jesus said, "Feed My sheep." Then He continued on, proclaiming how Simon would someday die for the glory of God.

Then, John came up. Simon Peter, having just heard about his own death, asked Jesus about John: was John going to die, too? Jesus responded to Simon, "It shouldn't matter to you what My plan is for John. Will you follow Me?"

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.

continued on back...

JESUS RESTORES PETER

JOHN 21:1-23



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- Jesus uses the Greek word *agapao* (meaning a deliberate love involving the will) in his first two questions of Peter (verses 15 - 16), and *phileo* (a spontaneous love) in his third question (verse 17). Peter uses *phileo* all three times. What is the significance of this?
- Three times Jesus instructs Peter to take care of His flock. What does that mean? Why does He say it so many times?
- In verses 19 - 22, Jesus commands Peter to follow Him, and then Peter immediately turns around and looks back. How does Jesus respond to this?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- Peter was super excited to see Jesus, even though he had seen Him. Are you always that excited about Jesus? Why or why not?
- How do you “tend His sheep”? If you don’t, why not?
- In what ways do you sometimes get caught up in thinking about what other people are doing, instead of focusing on your own walk with Jesus (verses 18 - 23)?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!

WAITING ON JESUS' SIGNAL

ACTS 1:1-11



WARM-UP

1. **ASK.** Did anyone do the challenge/application from last week?
2. **ICEBREAKER.** Tell us about a time when you were really excited about something, but you had to wait a long time for it. Or did it not ever happen?
3. **PRAY.** Ask the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts and minds as you study this passage.



STORYTELLING

Luke is writing to Theophilus, filling him in on all that has happened since Jesus rose from the dead.

“After Jesus rose,” Luke explains, “He appeared to His disciples many times to show them that He was alive.” On one particular occasion, Jesus appeared to them and ate a meal with them. While they were eating, He told them to stay in Jerusalem until they received the gift that the Father promised them.

“For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit,” Jesus said. When they heard this, the disciples got really excited.

“Does this mean you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” they asked.

“It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority,” Jesus responded. But He told them that they will receive power by the Holy Spirit, then go out and tell the whole world about Him.

After He said this, Jesus was taken up to heaven, before their very sight. The disciples stood looking up at the sky, like they were expecting Jesus to come back down. But then, two men dressed in white came up to them and said, “Why are you looking up? Jesus will come back in the same way you have just seen Him leave.”

Read through the passage as a group.

Rebuild the story as a group.

continued on back...

WAITING ON JESUS' SIGNAL

ACTS 1:1-11



DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- What were the disciples expecting that Jesus had returned for?
- Did Jesus plan on doing what they anticipated? Why or why not?
- How did the disciples respond to Jesus' answer to their question in verses 7 - 8?

GENERAL QUESTIONS: What does this teach us about people? What does this teach us about God?



APPLICATION

- What do you eagerly await? Do you have a time or manner in which you expect it to happen? Does God agree with your expectations? How do you know?
- How can we align our desires and actions with God's delivery schedule?
- What should we do while we are waiting? How should our behavior change after we receive our desires? Or should it stay the same?
- How do you deal with the potential of never getting what you want?



WRAP-UP

1. How are you going to take action to apply this passage to your daily life?
2. Pray!