

Love and Live...



Parables and Stories of the Bible



Riverside Church LIFEGROUPS

VOLUME 12
Winter 2016

The Life of Jesus

MAKING
DISCIPLES
WHO LOVE & LIVE
LIKE JESUS

Attend

Connect

Serve

Share

Lead

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THE STORY SET LIST

FIND THIS STORY SET ONLINE AT riversidechurch.org

When there are multiple scriptural references, feel free to choose which reference you'll use, OR better yet, try to get a volunteer for each reference. This will really demonstrate how these are the same story, just from different perspectives/witnesses.

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WEEK 3	MARK 1:12-13 MATTHEW 4:1-11 LUKE 4:1-13	THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL

FLOATING WEEK:

****Plan a Group Social sometime before April****

Be strategic and intentional. Be willing to interrupt the curriculum schedule to celebrate what's happening in your group and have fun together. We've intentionally left a margin in the schedule for you to do this, but are encouraging you to discern the best timing.

This is a time to have fun and get to know your group better. Encourage others to invite someone new, someone who might otherwise feel a bit intimidated. If you haven't done so recently, this is also a good time to briefly vision cast .

SUGGESTIONS:

BBQ	Progressive Dinner	Game Night	Group worship and fellowship
Bowling	Dessert Buffet	Potluck	Campfire and s'mores

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Why tell our stories?

It gives us the opportunity to share who we are, where we've come from, and how God has worked in our lives over the years. It gives us compassion and understanding for others, allowing us to more easily extend grace and care for each other. This is part of how we become "family."

Small Group Ground Rules

HOW WE LOVE EACH OTHER

These are guidelines more than rules.

CONFIDENTIALITY: What is shared in the group stays in the group. Unless given permission to share, keep what is shared confidential. This must be a safe environment where people can be real, open and honest with their struggles and their victories.

TRANSPARENCY: We encourage you to share from your heart—to let your walls down, so that others can really know you. It's difficult to love someone as God calls us to do without really knowing them in a deep and meaningful way.

NO CROSS-TALK: Be considerate of others as they are sharing; don't have side conversations. Please silence your phones and leave the room if you have to respond to an urgent call or text message.

NO CONVINCING: Share your opinions—a different opinion is welcome. However, please don't try to convince others to your way of thinking. Be aware of Riverside's core beliefs. If someone is trying to convince you, offer to discuss the issue further at a later time.

DON'T FIX: Let's try to hear what people are sharing without trying to fix them. If they want advice, they'll ask for it. If you have been through a similar circumstance, it's okay to let the person know and that you're available to talk more about it later if they're interested. Very rarely does a Christian cliché or quoted scripture help right in this moment. It's uncomfortable to see someone in pain or struggling, and if we're honest with ourselves, often we speak out primarily to ease our own discomfort. Let them NEED Jesus and ASK you for help when they're ready.

DON'T RESCUE: When someone is sharing something deeply personal and/or painful, a tension builds that may feel uncomfortable for you. There can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation or relieve the tension with a smart remark or quick wit. Often this will cause people to stop sharing and results in their not going as deep as they might have gone. There is a let-down, like "the moment" has passed. Resist the temptation to pass them a tissue, touch them, or remark. This is hard, but it really is loving to give people the uninterrupted time to get it all out.

LISTEN: Let's value one another during the discussion by really listening to what is being shared. Nurture your sense of curiosity about someone else by focusing on the other person, rather than trying to figure out what you're going to say next or how you're going to respond. Be aware of how much you're talking—we want to give everyone a chance to share.

Small Group Ground Rules

PAUSE: After someone shares, allow a pause in conversation to give the person sharing the chance to finish and the group the opportunity to consider what was just shared before responding.

SILENCE: It is important to allow silence in the group; it provides an opportunity for someone to share and for members in the group to process the topic or question being considered.

USE “I” STATEMENTS: It’s easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Self-reflect. This is one time that it is kind of all about you. Try to use “I” statements, rather than “we”, “the church”, “Christians”, or “us”, etc.

SELF-ASSESS: Be self-aware of how you are personally effecting your small-group environment through your words, actions, and non-verbal communication. All of this takes practice. We don’t want you to be overly self-conscious, but it’s important that you pay attention to your own behavior and how well you’re loving others as they share. For example, if you catch yourself trying to “fix” someone, call yourself out, “Oops, I just tried to fix you. I’m sorry.”

COMMIT TO RESOLVING CONFLICT: The two things that bond a group more than anything else are conflict and crisis. Nobody wants either, but this is real life. Try to view conflict within the group as an opportunity to grow closer, to learn more about each other, and to extend grace. “Travel light.” Commit to working through the conflict, rather than sweeping it under the rug or holding on to a grudge. Pretending everything is okay, putting up walls, or venting with someone else breaks down relationships and is not loving. If you’re not sure how to resolve the conflict and need help, ask your facilitator or another ministry leader.

LETTER TO THE FACILITATOR

My Friends,

*FIND THIS STORY SET ONLINE AT riversidechurch.org

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas celebration and enjoyed all the stories leading up to Christ's birth last fall. We will spend at least the next two story sets exploring the life and lessons of Jesus in all four Gospels.

You'll notice that some weeks have more than one scriptural reference. Our intention is to draw the Gospels together and give a broader picture of each story. We want to imagine each witness telling the story from his own recollection of what was inspiring or most important. When I was a police officer, I took multiple statements at the scene of an accident, hearing different accounts from different perspectives of the same event. By interviewing several witnesses, I heard different details and often had a better picture of what really happened. The same thing is true with scripture. There are sometimes different perspectives and details given in the different accounts, but we can embrace any differences with curiosity, rather than doubt or fear. Our hope is that, when there are multiple scriptural references, you'll try to get a volunteer for each reference to tell the story from a slightly different perspective. However, we realize that isn't always feasible, especially in new groups, so feel free to just choose one to tell, and perhaps just read the others.

As these will be familiar stories, we again challenge you (and your groups) to look at each with fresh eyes, recognizing that God's Word is truly living, able to reveal something new to us each time we read it. In this season of your life, how is God breathing new life into *your* life through each story?

We continue to work together with a team to create the questions, discipling others to develop story sets. While we are ultimately trying to listen to what the Holy Spirit is telling us about our own lives through these scriptures, we hope you find the questions to be helpful prompts and, as always, look forward to your input.

Continue to challenge your folks with the "Digging In" exercises. We recommend you mention them during group and then include them in your weekly email/prayer request list. You can just copy and paste them from the Riverside's website*. They're designed to help us develop a passion for delving into God's Word, study from a place of curiosity, and grow in our relationships with God and others.

Continue to challenge your group members to step out of their comfort zones and get involved: reading scripture, opening or closing in prayer, telling the story, organizing a

LETTER TO THE FACILITATOR

social or a service project, sending out the prayer requests, etc. This helps others feel a part of this community; it helps create “buy-in” and a safe environment where it’s okay to try new things. Look for opportunities to really care for your group members, asking God, “How can I model your love?” While it’s important that you model caring for others in your group, encourage others to step into that role as well. Are they calling each other or checking in with each other periodically and especially during hard times? Prayerfully raise-up apprentices and branch your small group when it’s ready, making more room as there’s a need. **Frequent vision casting is really key** to preparing your group and maintaining alignment. Be sure to ask for help if you need it.

It is my prayer that you continue to lead with love and purpose and that you truly enjoy the relationships you’re building with others as you grow in your knowledge and love for Jesus. I am so thankful I get to “run the race” with this awesome team.

Standing and serving beside you,
Ron

Ron Detwiler
Pastor of Spiritual Formation
Riverside Church
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ron@riversidechurch.org

“Pursue faith and love and peace, and enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.” 1 Timothy 2:22b

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” Hebrews 12:1

LETTER TO THE FACILITATOR

BRIEF GOSPEL HISTORIES

The following is included in the story background of week 2.
I've included it here so you can get a better feel for where we're heading.

Much of this information is paraphrased from The Touchpoint Bible by Tyndale House Publishers.

As we move through the four Gospels, it is important and interesting to note that these are four accounts of Jesus' life, written by four very unique authors with different audiences in mind.

Before **Matthew** became a follower of Jesus, he was a rich tax collector, corrupt and spiritually bankrupt. As a disciple, he was transformed. He wrote his account of Jesus' life between A.D. 60 and 65 for the Jewish people, including Joseph's long family history all the way back through King David to Abraham. It includes numerous quotes and references to the Old Testament, emphasizing that the Jesus he followed was indeed the Messiah foretold by the ancient prophets.

Mark wrote for the fast-paced, action-oriented Roman Christian society and was the young man who went with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey that we will read more about in Acts. Chronologically, Mark is the first gospel written and is a short book that focuses more on miracles and action stories than Jesus' teachings. Many scholars believe that Peter was actually the eye witness for Mark's account.

Luke was a doctor and one of Paul's close companions. His Gospel account records a detailed account of Jesus' birth and includes many references to diseases and diagnosis. Luke also focuses on Jesus' compassion, his relationships with people, and the role that various women played in his life. While Matthew wrote about the King, Luke wrote about the Great Physician. Many scholars believe Luke was Greek, making him the only gentile writer in the New Testament.

John probably wrote his account between A.D. 85 and 90, a time when Christians were being heavily persecuted throughout the Roman Empire and needed encouragement. John was one of Jesus' 12 disciples and seems to have had an especially close friendship with Jesus. He writes more eloquently about love than any of the other Gospel accounts, focusing more on the kind of person Jesus was and is than on what he actually did. Clearly in awe of his Creator and Savior, John's account is described more as a descriptive portrait of Christ than a biography of his life. Often this is the book new believers are told they should read first.

FACILITATOR resources

VISION CAST

- This is where you remind the group why we are here and how we are going to accomplish what God has called us to do, the purpose of our small groups.
- It is important to vision cast periodically, maintaining alignment and helping the group prepare for the process of branching.

Mission of Riverside Church: To make disciples who love and live like JESUS

Discipleship Process: Create Intentional Relational Environments where people grow in their relationships with God and each other.

BASIC COMPONENTS IN THE DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS

Intentional Leader

Small Group Facilitators who intentionally guide, nurture and love the people in their groups.

Biblical Foundation

Studying & applying God's words through the stories of the Bible.

Relational Environment

Intentionally creating an environment where people can share what God is showing them, so they can grow in their maturity in Jesus.

Reproducible Process

An Intentional Leader creates a Relational Environment with a Biblical Foundation and raises up an apprentice so that the group can branch as it grows.

FACILITATOR resources

SMALL GROUP BASICS

- Especially when you're starting a new group, it's important to go over the basics of your small group.
- Also, pass around a sheet for each person to list the contact information they want shared with the group. Then make copies or email it out to the group.

OUR SMALL GROUP

- When we start and end
- Our general format (Example: Fellowship, Worship, Study, Prayer Requests, Refreshments)
- “Storying”
Jesus is the Master Storyteller. We practice Biblical Storytelling because this is one of the ways Jesus revealed God's Truth. It helps us to apply scripture to our own lives and share our hearts with others. It teaches us how to tell the stories to others so we can show them God's love.
- Logistics
 - Where to park
 - How childcare is provided (or not)
 - Snack list (allergies?)
 - How we will contact each other
 - Pass around a notepad. Ask people to list the contact information they feel comfortable sharing with the group, so you can pass out a contact list next week.
 - Caring for each other in crisis/need (meals, hospital visits, etc.)
 - Inviting new people, etc.
- Courtesies
 - Let your facilitator know if you can't make group or if you have to leave early.
 - Keep interruptions to a minimum by silencing cell phones and answering urgent calls/texts in another room.
- Ground Rules
We use the ground rules to help create a loving environment that promotes authenticity. They are more guidelines than rules.

FACILITATOR

Review the Ground Rules/guidelines. Consider discussing why they're important.

WEEK 1

JESUS GOES TO THE TEMPLE

GOING ABOUT HIS FATHER'S BUSINESS

LUKE 2:41-52

PRAY

THERE'S NO HURRY:

If you are starting a new group, or you have a lot of new people, be sure to spend some time vision casting and going over the basics for your small group (See the last few pages). Don't worry if you don't actually get to the story this week. You can start "Week 1" next week. There's a reason why the stories are not dated. We remain flexible, keeping in mind the needs of the group and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

REVIEW GROUP GROUND RULES

How we practice loving each other

FACILITATOR

- Do this each week for the first few weeks and then again whenever there is someone new or you feel your group could benefit from a review.
- Remember to keep it conversational, eventually quizzing them, "What does it mean to be self-aware?"

RECAP

FACILITATOR

- We ended the last story set with the story of Jesus' Birth.

BACKGROUND TO THIS WEEK'S STORY

FACILITATOR

This is to help connect the dots from where we ended to where the next story starts. It is here as a help for you and as an option.

God promised his chosen people a savior long, long ago—a savior from the line of David. For centuries this nation experienced rebellion, destruction, repentance, and restoration, over and over again—a people struggling to remain faithful. Numerous times the ancient prophets had foretold of the coming Messiah. Then, God was silent for 400 years. At last, the Messiah was born. Jesus, God's own son, had come to live among us.

WEEK 1

He was born in Bethlehem in Judea, but he spent most of his youth growing up in Galilee, in a town called Nazareth. *THIS is where our story begins.*

TELL THE STORY

LUKE 2:41-52

REMINDERS

If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).

- With their Bibles closed and yours open, tell the story as a story.
- Have the group open their Bibles and rebuild the story.
- Have a volunteer read the story directly from the Bible to make sure nothing is missed.

THE QUESTIONS

FACILITATOR

You have the freedom to come up with HEART QUESTIONS for your group, but keep in mind that these should be FROM A PLACE OF CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a desire to teach them something.

SUGGESTIONS

Please don't try to cover all of these. Pick the one/s that God is leading you to ask your specific group.

- Who do you most relate to in this story and why?
- How do you personally grow in favor with God and man? On which are you most focused?
- Jesus did not allow his age to keep him from his Father's business. What excuses keep you from being about your Heavenly Father's business?
- What do you learn about Jesus in this story?
- How does this story challenge you in your current circumstances?

THE NEXT STORY

MARK 1:1-11, MATTHEW 3:1-17 & LUKE 3:21-22 THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

FACILITATOR

- Encourage the group to read the stories at least once before next week.
- Unless you have just branched or started a new group, **ASK FOR VOLUNTEERS TO TELL THE NEXT WEEK'S STORY/IES** (*When there are multiple scriptural references, feel free to choose which reference you'll use, OR better yet, try to get a volunteer for each reference. This will really demonstrate how these are the same story, just from different perspectives/witnesses*). Encourage and remind them that it's just telling the story, not memorizing it. Hopefully your apprentice is telling many of the stories by now, but especially as we study the Gospels and often

WEEK 1

draw from more than one book, continue to ask for volunteers. ***Anyone can story! Don't miss this great opportunity to disciple others.*** We're always encouraging and inviting people to "get in the game," take a risk, and get out of their comfort zones.

PRAYER REQUESTS

FACILITATOR

- Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests.
- Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don't have to have something to share every week.

PRAY

DIGGING IN

FACILITATOR

- Try copying and pasting this into your Meeting Notes (Find this story set online at riversidechurch.org) when you record attendance on *Church Teams* each week. Then you can send it out in a group email along with the group's prayer requests.
- This is an opportunity for group members to do some further Bible study on their own, if they choose to. The desire is to help them find a passion to get into the Bible and study it for themselves from a place of curiosity.

On your own this week...

The Passover is still a richly celebrated festival. Check out this video to learn more:

<http://www.history.com/topics/holidays/passover>

WEEK 2

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

GOD PREPARES THE WAY

MARK 1:1-11, MATTHEW 3:1-17
& LUKE 3: 21-22

PRAY

REVIEW GROUP GROUND RULES

How we practice loving each other

FACILITATOR

- Do this each week for the first few weeks and then again whenever there is someone new or you feel your group could benefit from a review.
- Remember to keep it conversational, eventually quizzing them, “What does it mean to be self-aware?”

RECAP

FACILITATOR

- Last week we looked at the story of Jesus going to the temple.
- What’s something that you took away from that story, something that stands out or you had to “chew on” this week?

BACKGROUND TO THIS WEEK’S STORY

FACILITATOR

This is to help connect the dots from where we ended to where the next story starts. It is here as a help for you and as an option.

As we move through the four Gospels, it is important to understand and interesting to note that these are four accounts of Jesus’ life, written by four very unique authors with different audiences in mind.

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WEEK 2

references to the Old Testament, emphasizing that the Jesus he followed was indeed the Messiah foretold by the ancient prophets.

Mark wrote for the fast-paced, action-oriented Roman Christian society and was the young man who went with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey that we will read more about in Acts. Chronologically, Mark is the first gospel written and is a short book that focuses more on miracles and action stories than Jesus' teachings. Many scholars believe that Peter was actually the eye witness for Mark's account.

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Picking up with our story, we know that after Jesus visited the Temple in Jerusalem, he grew up in Nazareth as a carpenter's son with several brothers and sisters. Scholars estimate that he began his ministry around A.D. 26 or 27. He is now a man. *THIS is where our story begins.*

TELL THE STORY

MARK 1:1-11, MATTHEW 3:1-17 & LUKE 3:21-22 THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

REMINDERS

If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).

- With their Bibles closed and yours open, tell the story as a story.
- Have the group open their Bibles and rebuild the story.
- Have a volunteer read the story directly from the Bible to make sure nothing is missed.

WEEK 2

THE QUESTIONS

FACILITATOR

You have the freedom to come up with HEART QUESTIONS for your group, but keep in mind that these should be FROM A PLACE OF CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a desire to teach them something.

SUGGESTIONS

Please don't try to cover all of these. Pick the one/s that God is leading you to ask your specific group.

- What does this story reveal to you about Jesus?
- Do you live as though the Kingdom of God is near or far off? Why?
- God introduced his son after his baptism. How do you picture Him introducing you?
- What defines you personally as wheat or chaff?
- How does this story challenge you (i.e. Have YOU been baptized after confessing your sins and accepting God's free gift of salvation? Are there areas in your life that don't align with God's mission for your life? Is God asking you to make a you to change?)?

THE NEXT STORY

MARK 1:12-13, MATTHEW 4:1-13 & LUKE 4:1-13 THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

FACILITATOR

- Encourage the group to read the stories at least once before next week.
- Unless you have just branched or started a new group, **ASK FOR VOLUNTEERS TO TELL THE NEXT WEEK'S STORY/IES** (*When there are multiple scriptural references, feel free to choose which reference you'll use, OR better yet, try to get a volunteer for each reference. This will really demonstrate how these are the same story, just from different perspectives/witnesses*). Encourage and remind them that it's just telling the story, not memorizing it. Hopefully your apprentice is telling many of the stories by now, but especially as we study the Gospels and often draw from more than one book, continue to ask for volunteers. **Anyone can story! Don't miss this great opportunity to disciple others.** We're always encouraging and inviting people to "get in the game," take a risk, and get out of their comfort zones.

WEEK 2

PRAYER REQUESTS

FACILITATOR

- Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests.
- Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don't have to have something to share every week.

PRAY

DIGGING IN

FACILITATOR

- Try copying and pasting this into your Meeting Notes (Find this story set online at riversidechurch.org) when you record attendance on *Church Teams* each week. Then you can send it out in a group email along with the group's prayer requests.
- This is an opportunity for group members to do some further Bible study on their own, if they choose to. The desire is to help them find a passion to get into the Bible and study it for themselves from a place of curiosity.

On your own this week...

Read: Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:37-42, Acts 8:36-39, Acts 10:48, Acts 22:16, Romans 6:4, & Colossians 2:12

Why is baptism important? If you have not been baptized, or have questions about it, consider talking to your life group leader or a pastor about it soon.

WEEK 3

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL

MARK 1:12-13, MATTHEW 4:1-13 & LUKE 4:1-13

PRAY

REVIEW GROUP GROUND RULES

How we practice loving each other

- Do this whenever there is someone new or you feel your group could benefit from a review.
- Remember to keep it conversational, eventually quizzing them, "What does it mean to be self-aware?"

RECAP

FACILITATOR

- Last week we looked at Jesus' baptism.
- What's something that you took away from that story, something that stands out or you had to "chew on" this week?

BACKGROUND TO THIS WEEK'S STORY

FACILITATOR

This is to help connect the dots from where we ended to where the next story starts. It is here as a help for you and as an option.

This story begins directly after last week's story.

TELL THE STORY

MARK 1:12-13, MATTHEW 4:1-11 & LUKE 4:1-13 THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

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THE QUESTIONS

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SUGGESTIONS

Please don't try to cover all of these. Pick the one/s that God is leading you to ask your specific group.

- When is the opportune time for you to fall into temptation?
- What questions does the devil use to cause you to doubt God?
- How do you fight temptation and are you prepared to fight it?
- Have you ever been tested after God has called you to do something big?
- What do you learn about God from this story?

THE NEXT STORY

MATTHEW 4:18-22, MARK 1:14-20 & LUKE 5:1-11

CALLING THE DISCIPLES

FACILITATOR

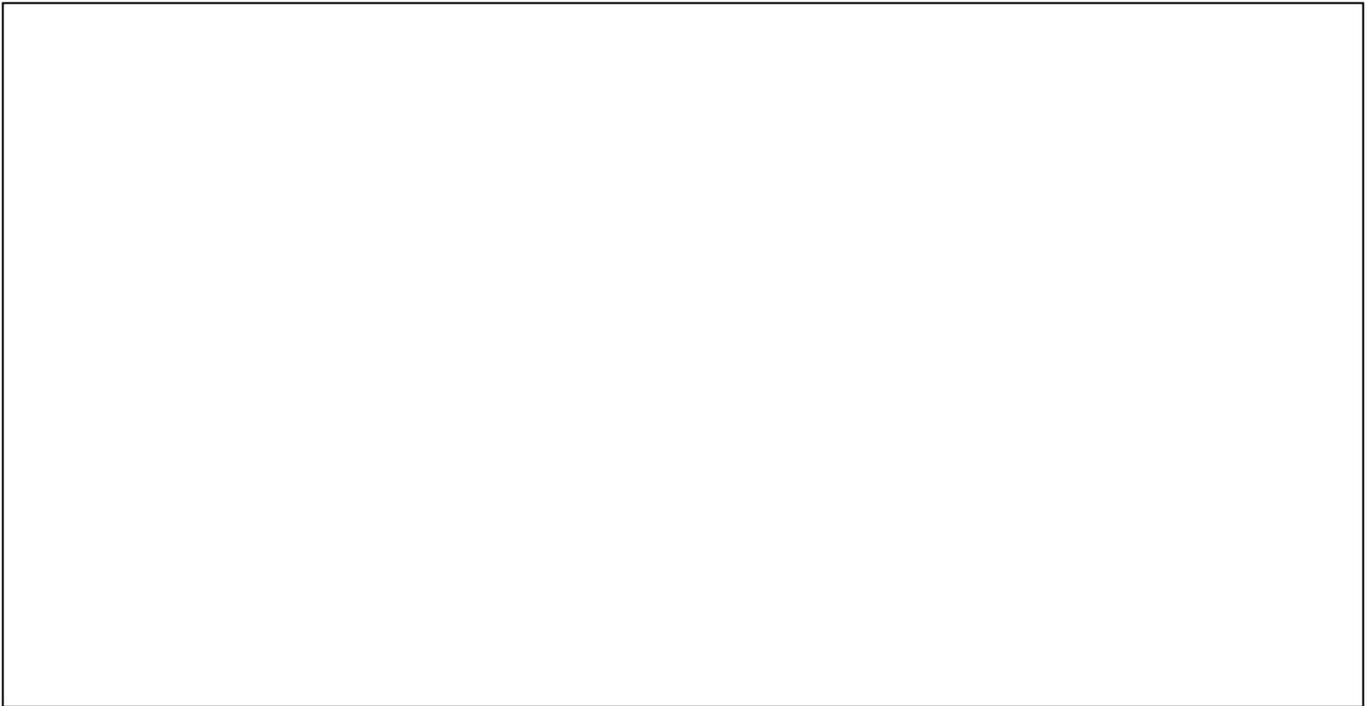
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WEEK 3



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DIGGING IN

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On your own this week...

Jesus was tempted in three different areas that could be summarized as self-sufficiency, security, and greed/power. In which of these areas do you feel you are most vulnerable to temptation? Using a topical bible, find scripture that will help you fight that battle, reminding you of God's truth. Try memorizing them or keeping them posted/pasted somewhere you will see them frequently.

WEEK 4

CALLING THE DISCIPLES

THE POWER OF THE INVITATION

MATTHEW 4:18-22, MARK 1:14-20 & LUKE 5:1-11

PRAY

FACILITATOR

- Start inviting others to open or close the group in prayer.

REVIEW GROUND RULES (IF NECESSARY)

FACILITATOR

- Do this whenever there is someone new or you feel your group could benefit from a review.
- Remember to keep it conversational, eventually quizzing them, “What does it mean to be self-aware?”

RECAP

FACILITATOR

- Last week we looked at the story of Jesus’ temptation.
- What’s something that you took away from that story, something that stands out or you had to “chew on” this week?

BACKGROUND TO THIS WEEK’S STORY

FACILITATOR

This is to help connect the dots from where we ended to where the next story starts. It is here as a help for you and as an option.

After Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, he returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit’s power. He taught in many synagogues and was well-known and praised by everyone except for those in his home village of Nazareth. After speaking in the synagogue in Nazareth, the people actually mobbed him, took him to the edge of a hill, intending to push him off the cliff, but he slipped away and left them. Jesus cast out demons, healed many people and continued to preach in the synagogues throughout all of Judea. *THIS is where our story begins.*

WEEK 4

TELL THE STORY

MATTHEW 4:18-22, MARK 1:14-20 & LUKE 5:1-11

CALLING THE DISCIPLES

REMINDERS

If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).

- With their Bibles closed and yours open, tell the story as a story.
- Have the group open their Bibles and rebuild the story.
- Have a volunteer read the story directly from the Bible to make sure nothing is missed.

THE QUESTIONS

FACILITATOR

You have the freedom to come up with HEART QUESTIONS for your group, but keep in mind that these should be FROM A PLACE OF CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a desire to teach them something.

SUGGESTIONS

Please don't try to cover all of these. Pick the one/s that God is leading you to ask your specific group.

- What “nets” do you have to drop to follow God’s calling in your life?
- How has the power of “the invitation” affected your life choices?
- Have you ever walked away from God’s calling? How do you feel about it now?
- Who do you most relate to in this story?
- How does this story challenge you in your current circumstances?

THE NEXT STORY

JOHN 2:1-12 THE WEDDING AT CANA

FACILITATOR

- Encourage the group to read the stories at least once before next week.
- Unless you have just branched or started a new group, **ASK FOR VOLUNTEERS TO TELL THE NEXT WEEK’S STORY/IES** (*When there are multiple scriptural references, feel free to choose which reference you’ll use, OR better yet, try to get a volunteer for each reference. This will really demonstrate how these are the same story, just from different perspectives/witnesses*). Encourage and remind them that it’s just telling the story, not memorizing it. Hopefully your apprentice is telling many of the stories by now, but especially as we study the Gospels and often draw from more than one book, continue to ask for volunteers. **Anyone can story! Don’t miss**

WEEK 4

this great opportunity to disciple others. We're always encouraging and inviting people to "get in the game," take a risk, and get out of their comfort zones.

PRAYER REQUESTS

FACILITATOR

- Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests.
- Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don't have to have something to share every week.

PRAY

DIGGING IN

FACILITATOR

- Try copying and pasting this into your Meeting Notes (Find this story set online at riversidechurch.org) when you record attendance on *Church Teams* each week. Then you can send it out in a group email along with the group's prayer requests.
- This is an opportunity for group members to do some further Bible study on their own, if they choose to. The desire is to help them find a passion to get into the Bible and study it for themselves from a place of curiosity.

On your own this week...

Why did the disciples drop everything to follow Jesus? For fascinating historical context that will perhaps shed more light on this question, read the article by Ray Vander Laan titled "Rabbi and Talmidim" (particularly the sections under "Jesus the Rabbi" and "The Disciples as Talmidim") found at www.thattheworldmayknow.com/rabbi-and-talmidim.

WEEK 5

THE WEDDING AT CANA

HIS GREAT PROVISION

JOHN 2:1-12

PRAY

FACILITATOR

- Start inviting others to open or close the group in prayer.

REVIEW GROUND RULES (IF NECESSARY)

FACILITATOR

- Do this whenever there is someone new or you feel your group could benefit from a review.
- Remember to keep it conversational, eventually quizzing them, “What does it mean to be self-aware?”

RECAP

FACILITATOR

- Last week we looked at the calling of Jesus’ disciples.
- What’s something that you took away from that story, something that stands out or you had to “chew on” this week?

BACKGROUND TO THIS WEEK’S STORY

FACILITATOR

This is to help connect the dots from where we ended to where the next story starts. It is here as a help for you and as an option.

Jesus had traveled to Galilee where John the Baptist called him the Lamb of God and Jesus has begun calling his own disciples. *THIS is where our story begins.*

TELL THE STORY

JOHN 2:1-12 THE WEDDING AT CANA

REMINDERS

If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).

- With their Bibles closed and yours open, tell the story as a story.

WEEK 5

- Have the group open their Bibles and rebuild the story.
- Have a volunteer read the story directly from the Bible to make sure nothing is missed.

THE QUESTIONS

FACILITATOR

You have the freedom to come up with HEART QUESTIONS for your group, but keep in mind that these should be FROM A PLACE OF CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a desire to teach them something.

SUGGESTIONS

Please don't try to cover all of these. Pick the one/s that God is leading you to ask your specific group.

- When has Jesus provided for you in your time of need?
- When you ask Jesus for help, do you expect him to lavish you with his great provision or just the necessary minimum? Why?
- Do you ask Jesus just for your needs or do you also include your desires? Why?
- Are you generous when somebody asks for help with something they want rather than need?
- How does this story challenge you in your current circumstances?

THE NEXT STORY

MATTHEW 8:1-4, MARK 1:40-45 & LUKE 5:12-16 JESUS HEALS THE LEPER

FACILITATOR

- Encourage the group to read the story at least once before next week.
- Unless you have just branched or started a new group, **ASK FOR VOLUNTEERS TO TELL THE NEXT WEEK'S STORY/IES** (*When there are multiple scriptural references, feel free to choose which reference you'll use, OR better yet, try to get a volunteer for each reference. This will really demonstrate how these are the same story, just from different perspectives/witnesses*). Encourage and remind them that it's just telling the story, not memorizing it. Hopefully your apprentice is telling many of the stories by now, but especially as we study the Gospels and often draw from more than one book, continue to ask for volunteers. **Anyone can story! Don't miss this great opportunity to disciple others.** We're always encouraging and inviting people to "get in the game," take a risk, and get out of their comfort zones.

WEEK 5

PRAYER REQUESTS

FACILITATOR

- Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests.
- Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don't have to have something to share every week.

PRAY

DIGGING IN

FACILITATOR

- Try copying and pasting this into your Meeting Notes (Find this story set online at riversidechurch.org) when you record attendance on *Church Teams* each week. Then you can send it out in a group email along with the group's prayer requests.
- This is an opportunity for group members to do some further Bible study on their own, if they choose to. The desire is to help them find a passion to get into the Bible and study it for themselves from a place of curiosity.

On your own this week...

Consider: What's the historical context of this story? Why did running out of wine seem like such a big deal? Why would God choose *this* scenario for Jesus' first miracle? Check out www.wildolive.co.uk/weddings.htm to gain an understanding of ancient Jewish wedding traditions and www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-blogs/163376-the-wine-that-never-fails.html for an interesting article by Frank Viola titled "Water into Wine" to gain some of the historical context and symbolism this miracle brings forth.

WEEK 6

JESUS HEALS THE LEPER

A WILLING SAVIOR

MATTHEW 8:1-4, MARK 1:40-45
& LUKE 5:12-16

PRAY

FACILITATOR

- Invite others to open or close the group in prayer.

REVIEW GROUP GROUND RULES

How we practice loving each other

FACILITATOR

- Do this each week for the first few weeks and then again whenever there is someone new or you feel your group could benefit from a review.
- Remember to keep it conversational, eventually quizzing them, “What does it mean to be self-aware?”

RECAP

FACILITATOR

- The last story we looked at was the story of Jesus call his disciples.
- What’s something that you took away from that story, something that stands out or you had to “chew on” this week?

BACKGROUND TO THIS WEEK’S STORY

FACILITATOR

This is to help connect the dots from where we ended to where the next story starts. It is here as a help for you and as an option.

Jesus and his disciples went to Capernaum and then throughout the whole region of Galilee preaching, casting out demons and healing many people. He spoke about the Beatitudes, being the salt and light, the law, anger, adultery and divorce, taking vows, revenge, loving their enemies, and giving to the needy. He taught about prayer and fasting, money and possessions, how to treat others, what it means to bear fruit, and how to be a true disciple. The crowds that followed Jesus and his disciples were amazed by his teachings and the authority with which he spoke. *This is where our story begins.*

WEEK 6

TELL THE STORY

MATTHEW 8:1-4, MARK 1:40-45 & LUKE 5:12-16 JESUS HEALS THE LEPER

REMINDERS

If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).

- With their Bibles closed and yours open, tell the story as a story.
- Have the group open their Bibles and rebuild the story.
- Have a volunteer read the story directly from the Bible to make sure nothing is missed.

THE QUESTIONS

FACILITATOR

You have the freedom to come up with HEART QUESTIONS for your group, but keep in mind that these should be FROM A PLACE OF CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a desire to teach them something.

SUGGESTIONS

Please don't try to cover all of these. Pick the one/s that God is leading you to ask your specific group.

- Do you believe Jesus wants to heal or help you?
- How do you approach Jesus with your needs--your attitude and expectations?
- When has doubt ever prevented you from even praying?
- How do you respond when Jesus answers your prayers? What about when it's "no" or "wait"?
- How does this story challenge you in your current circumstances?

THE NEXT STORY

MATTHEW 8:5-13 & LUKE 7:1-10 THE FAITH OF THE CENTURION

FACILITATOR

- Encourage the group to read the story at least once before next week.
- Unless you have just branched or started a new group, **ASK FOR VOLUNTEERS TO TELL THE NEXT WEEK'S STORY/IES** (*When there are multiple scriptural references, feel free to choose which reference you'll use, OR better yet, try to get a volunteer for each reference. This will really demonstrate how these are the same story, just from different perspectives/witnesses*). Encourage and remind them that it's just telling the story, not memorizing it. Hopefully your apprentice is telling many of the stories by now, but especially as we study the Gospels and often draw from more than one book, continue to ask for volunteers. **Anyone can story! Don't miss this great opportunity to disciple others.** We're always encouraging and inviting people to "get in the game," take a risk, and get out of their comfort zones.

PRAYER REQUESTS

FACILITATOR

WEEK 6

- Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests.
- Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don't have to have something to share every week.

PRAY

DIGGING IN

FACILITATOR

- Try copying and pasting this into your Meeting Notes. (Find this story set online at riversidechurch.org) when you record attendance on *Church Teams* each week. Then you can send it out in a group email along with the group's prayer requests.
- This is an opportunity for group members to do some further Bible study on their own, if they choose to. The desire is to help them find a passion to get into the Bible and study it for themselves from a place of curiosity.

On your own this week...

While the leper was healed and his sins forgiven, Jesus knew the law and what would be required for him to be restored back into society, to be considered "clean." During biblical times, leprosy was widely viewed as a curse or punishment from God for sin, a visible illustration of how sin spreads and destroys. To learn more about this disease, look it up on webmd.com. Then read Leviticus 13 and 14 and Numbers 5:2 to discover why Jesus gave such specific instructions after he healed the leper.

WEEK 7

THE FAITH OF THE CENTURION

A MAN OF GREAT FAITH

MATTHEW 8:5-13 & LUKE 7:1-10

PRAY

FACILITATOR

- Start inviting others to open or close the group in prayer.

REVIEW GROUND RULES (IF NECESSARY)

FACILITATOR

- Do this whenever there is someone new or you feel your group could benefit from a review.
- Remember to keep it conversational, eventually quizzing them, “What does it mean to be self-aware?”

RECAP

FACILITATOR

- The Last story we looked at the story of Jesus healing the leper.
- What’s something that you took away from that story, something that stands out or you had to “chew on” this week?

BACKGROUND TO THIS WEEK’S STORY

FACILITATOR

This is to help connect the dots from where we ended to where the next story starts. It is here as a help for you and as an option.

Jesus continued to preach, heal and cast out demons with his disciples. He had just taught the crowds and his disciples about the importance of building on a solid foundation and just healed a man of leprosy. *THIS is where our story begins.*

TELL THE STORY

MATTHEW 8:5-13 & LUKE 7:1-10 THE FAITH OF THE CENTURION

REMINDERS

If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).

- With their Bibles closed and yours open, tell the story as a story.

WEEK 7

- Have the group open their Bibles and rebuild the story.
- Have a volunteer read the story directly from the Bible to make sure nothing is missed.

THE QUESTIONS

FACILITATOR

You have the freedom to come up with HEART QUESTIONS for your group, but keep in mind that these should be FROM A PLACE OF CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a desire to teach them something.

SUGGESTIONS

Please don't try to cover all of these. Pick the one/s that God is leading you to ask your specific group.

- What do you learn about Jesus in this story?
- How do you need to live so that Jesus will marvel at your faith?
- Do you find it easier to pray with boldness for someone when they are right in front of you? If so, why do you think that is?
- Is there a problem you're struggling to take to Jesus? Why?
- What is the hardest problem or need you've had to trust Jesus with?
- How does this story challenge you in your current circumstances or beliefs?

THE NEXT STORY

JOHN 4:7-26 THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

FACILITATOR

- Encourage the group to read the story at least once before next week.
- Unless you have just branched or started a new group, **ASK FOR VOLUNTEERS TO TELL THE NEXT WEEK'S STORY/IES** (*When there are multiple scriptural references, feel free to choose which reference you'll use, OR better yet, try to get a volunteer for each reference. This will really demonstrate how these are the same story, just from different perspectives/witnesses*). Encourage and remind them that it's just telling the story, not memorizing it. Hopefully your apprentice is telling many of the stories by now, but especially as we study the Gospels and often draw from more than one book, continue to ask for volunteers. **Anyone can story! Don't miss this great opportunity to disciple others.** We're always encouraging and inviting people to "get in the game," take a risk, and get out of their comfort zones.

PRAYER REQUESTS

FACILITATOR

- Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests.

WEEK 7

- Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don't have to have something to share every week.

PRAY

DIGGING IN

FACILITATOR

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- This is an opportunity for group members to do some further Bible study on their own, if they choose to. The desire is to help them find a passion to get into the Bible and study it for themselves from a place of curiosity.

On your own this week...

Read and meditate on (Pray and take time to reflect on) Luke 14:15-24. How does this parable relate to what Jesus says in Matthew 8:11?

WEEK 8

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

THE SPRING OF ETERNAL LIFE

JOHN 4:7-26

PRAY

FACILITATOR

- Start inviting others to open or close the group in prayer.

REVIEW GROUND RULES (IF NECESSARY)

FACILITATOR

- Do this whenever there is someone new or you feel your group could benefit from a review.
- Remember to keep it conversational, eventually quizzing them, “What does it mean to be self-aware?”

RECAP

FACILITATOR

- The Last story we looked at The Faith of the Centurion.
- What’s something that you took away from that story, something that stands out or you had to “chew on” this week?

BACKGROUND TO THIS WEEK’S STORY

FACILITATOR

This is to help connect the dots from where we ended to where the next story starts. It is here as a help for you and as an option.

After leaving Jerusalem, Jesus and his disciples stayed in Judea, baptizing there. John the Baptist was baptizing nearby, and John’s disciples became concerned that many people were going over to Jesus instead of coming to him. John reminded them that he himself was not the Messiah, but that he had only come to prepare the way for him. He assured them that the Messiah must become greater and greater, and he must become less and less. He testified that those who believe in God’s Son will have eternal life, but those who do not will experience only God’s wrath. Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard he was baptizing (although only his disciples actually did) and making more disciples than John, so he left Judea and returned to Galilee. He passed through Samaria where he stopped at Jacob’s well around noon to rest. *THIS is where our story begins.*

WEEK 8

TELL THE STORY

JOHN 4:7-26 THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

REMINDERS

If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).

- With their Bibles closed and yours open, tell the story as a story.
- Have the group open their Bibles and rebuild the story.
- Have a volunteer read the story directly from the Bible to make sure nothing is missed.

THE QUESTIONS

FACILITATOR

Before asking the question/s, if possible, please play the video that at <http://youtu.be/Q49BbfgJbto>

You have the freedom to come up with HEART QUESTIONS for your group, but keep in mind that these should be FROM A PLACE OF CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a desire to teach them something.

SUGGESTIONS

Please don't try to cover all of these. Pick the one/s that God is leading you to ask your specific group.

- How would you respond if Jesus approached YOU for a drink?
- What "well" do you continue to draw from that does not satisfy?
- Is there a "Woman at the Well" in your life who needs the living water you can offer?
- What do you learn about Jesus in this story?
- What do you learn about your own relationship with Jesus from this story?

THE NEXT STORY

MATTHEW 8:23-27, MARK 4:35-41 & LUKE 8:22-25 JESUS CALMS THE STORM

FACILITATOR

- Encourage the group to read the story at least once before next week.
- Unless you have just branched or started a new group, **ASK FOR VOLUNTEERS TO TELL THE NEXT WEEK'S STORY/IES** (*When there are multiple scriptural references, feel free to choose which reference you'll use, OR better yet, try to get a volunteer for each reference. This will really demonstrate how these are the same story, just from different perspectives/witnesses*). Encourage and remind them that it's just telling the story, not memorizing it. Hopefully your apprentice is telling many of the stories by now, but especially as we study the Gospels and often draw from more than one book, continue to ask for volunteers. **Anyone can story! Don't miss**

WEEK 8

this great opportunity to disciple others. We're always encouraging and inviting people to "get in the game," take a risk, and get out of their comfort zones.

PRAYER REQUESTS

FACILITATOR

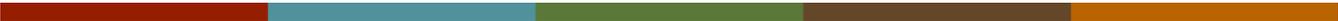
- Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests.
- Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don't have to have something to share every week.

PRAY

DIGGING IN

FACILITATOR

- Try copying and pasting this into your Meeting Notes (Find this story set online at riversidechurch.org) when you record attendance on *Church Teams* each week. Then you can send it out in a group email along with the group's prayer requests.
- This is an opportunity for group members to do some further Bible study on their own, if they choose to. The desire is to help them find a passion to get into the Bible and study it for themselves from a place of curiosity.



WEEK 8

On your own this week...

Look up John 4 in a reliable commentary (e.g. Matthew Henry's Commentary, biblehub.com, or biblegateway.com).

- What was the relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans at the time of this story?
- Why is it so significant that Jesus went *through* Samaria?
- Ask God if there is a “Samaria” in your life that you are going out of your way to avoid...and what he wants you to do about that.

WEEK 9

JESUS CALMS THE STORM

OVERCOME WITH FEAR

MATTHEW 8:23-27, MARK 4:35-41
& LUKE 8:22-25

PRAY

FACILITATOR

- Start inviting others to open or close the group in prayer.

REVIEW GROUND RULES (IF NECESSARY)

FACILITATOR

- Do this whenever there is someone new or you feel your group could benefit from a review.
- Remember to keep it conversational, eventually quizzing them, “What does it mean to be self-aware?”

RECAP

FACILITATOR

- The Last story we looked at The Woman at the Well.
- What’s something that you took away from that story, something that stands out or you had to “chew on” this week?

BACKGROUND TO THIS WEEK’S STORY

FACILITATOR

This is to help connect the dots from where we ended to where the next story starts. It is here as a help for you and as an option.

After teaching and healing many people one day, the crowds had grown very large. Jesus asked the disciples to take him to the other side of the lake. *THIS is where our story begins.*

WEEK 9

TELL THE STORY

MATTHEW 8:23-27, MARK 4:35-41 & LUKE 8:22-25 JESUS CALMS THE STORM

REMINDERS

If you have new people, explain this intentional process (Story it, Rebuild it, Read it).

- With their Bibles closed and yours open, tell the story as a story.
- Have the group open their Bibles and rebuild the story.
- Have a volunteer read the story directly from the Bible to make sure nothing is missed.

THE QUESTIONS

FACILITATOR

You have the freedom to come up with HEART QUESTIONS for your group, but keep in mind that these should be FROM A PLACE OF CURIOSITY AS TO WHAT GOD IS SHOWING THEM, rather than a desire to teach them something.

SUGGESTIONS

Please don't try to cover all of these. Pick the one/s that God is leading you to ask your specific group.

- When was the last time you thought you were “going to sink?” To whom or what did you run to first?
- Are you in the midst of a scary or stormy situation right now?
- Have you ever felt like Jesus was “asleep” in the midst of your pain or struggle? What about right now?
- If you could inject yourself into this story, how would you like to see yourself handling the storm? Where would you be, and what would you be doing?
- How does God want you to handle your fear?

THE NEXT STORY

TELL YOUR STORY

FACILITATOR

- Next week tell your own stories.
- Explain that you'll take about 15-20 minutes to share highlights of your own lives: the key things that shaped you and brought you to where you are and who you are today—**the ways God has been working in your lives.**
- If you have not done this in your group before, model by going first.
- **Especially if this is new to your group:** Try to create an intimate/campfire-type atmosphere. Consider sharing a meal or dessert together around a large table while sharing stories or even sitting around a campfire if you're able.

WEEK 9

PRAYER REQUESTS

FACILITATOR

- Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests.
- Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don't have to have something to share every week.

PRAY

DIGGING IN

FACILITATOR

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On your own this week...

According to merriam-webster.com, fear is defined as

- to be afraid of (something or someone)
- to expect or worry about (something bad or unpleasant)
- to be afraid or worried

God's Word actually tells us to "fear not" 365 times. Do a scriptural word search and find 5 things God has to say about fear. Consider memorizing one that is particularly powerful to you.

WEEK 10

YOUR STORY

PRAY

FACILITATOR

- Invite others to open or close the group in prayer.

REVIEW GROUP GROUND RULES

How we practice loving each other

FACILITATOR

- Do this each week for the first few weeks and then again whenever there is someone new or you feel your group could benefit from a review.
- Remember to keep it conversational, eventually quizzing them, “What does it mean to be self-aware?”

TELL YOUR STORY

FACILITATOR

- Explain that you’ll take about 15-20 minutes to share highlights of your own lives: the key things that shaped you and brought you to where you are and who you are today—**the ways God has been working in your lives.**
- If you have not done this before in your group, model by going first.
- Ask for volunteers.
- Depending on the dynamics of the group, sometimes it’s fun to let the person who tells a story pick the next “volunteer.” Be careful not to pressure someone to tell their story, though.

THE NEXT STORY

CONTINUE TO TELL YOUR STORIES

FACILITATOR

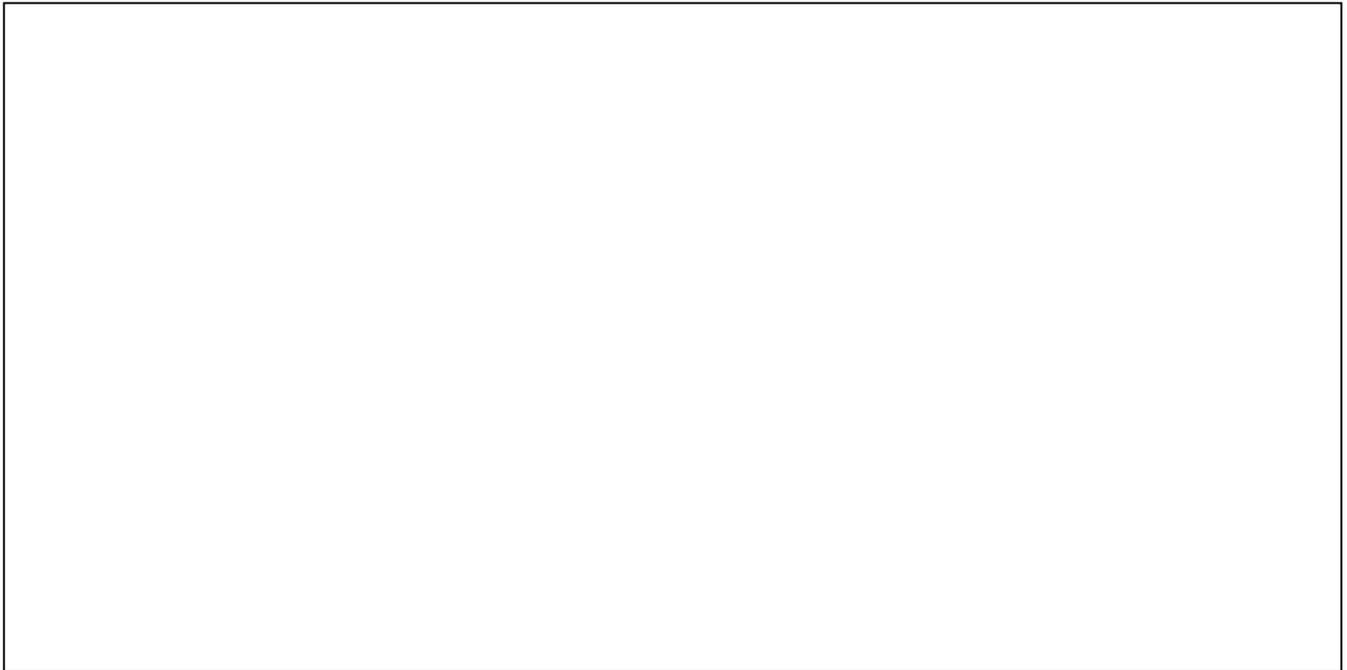
- Ask for volunteers.
- Remind them to share highlights of their own lives (15-20 minutes): the key things that shaped them and brought them to where they are and who they are today—**the ways God has been working in their lives.**

PRAYER REQUESTS

FACILITATOR

- Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests.
- Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don’t have to have something to share every week.

WEEK 10



PRAY

DIGGING IN

FACILITATOR

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- This is an opportunity for group members to do some further Bible study on their own, if they choose to. The desire is to help them find a passion to get into the Bible and study it for themselves from a place of curiosity.

On your own this week...

How do you tell your own story? Here are some great helps:

<http://evangelism.intervarsity.org/how/conversation/30-minutes-shareable-testimony>

<http://www.relevantmagazine.com/god/what-we-get-wrong-about-giving-our-testimony>

<http://rickwarren.org/devotional/english/share-your-testimony-of-gratitude>

<http://www.cru.org/train-and-grow/how-to-tell-your-story-worksheet.html>

WEEK 11

YOUR STORY

PRAY

FACILITATOR

- Invite others to open or close the group in prayer.

REVIEW GROUP GROUND RULES

How we practice loving each other

FACILITATOR

- Do this each week for the first few weeks and then again whenever there is someone new or you feel your group could benefit from a review.
- Remember to keep it conversational, eventually quizzing them, “What does it mean to be self-aware?”

TELL YOUR STORY

FACILITATOR

- Explain that you’ll take about 15-20 minutes to share highlights of your own lives: the key things that shaped you and brought you to where you are and who you are today—**the ways God has been working in your lives.**
- If you have not done this before in your group, model by going first.
- Ask for volunteers.
- Depending on the dynamics of the group, sometimes it’s fun to let the person who tells a story pick the next “volunteer.” Be careful not to pressure someone to tell their story, though.

NEXT WEEK

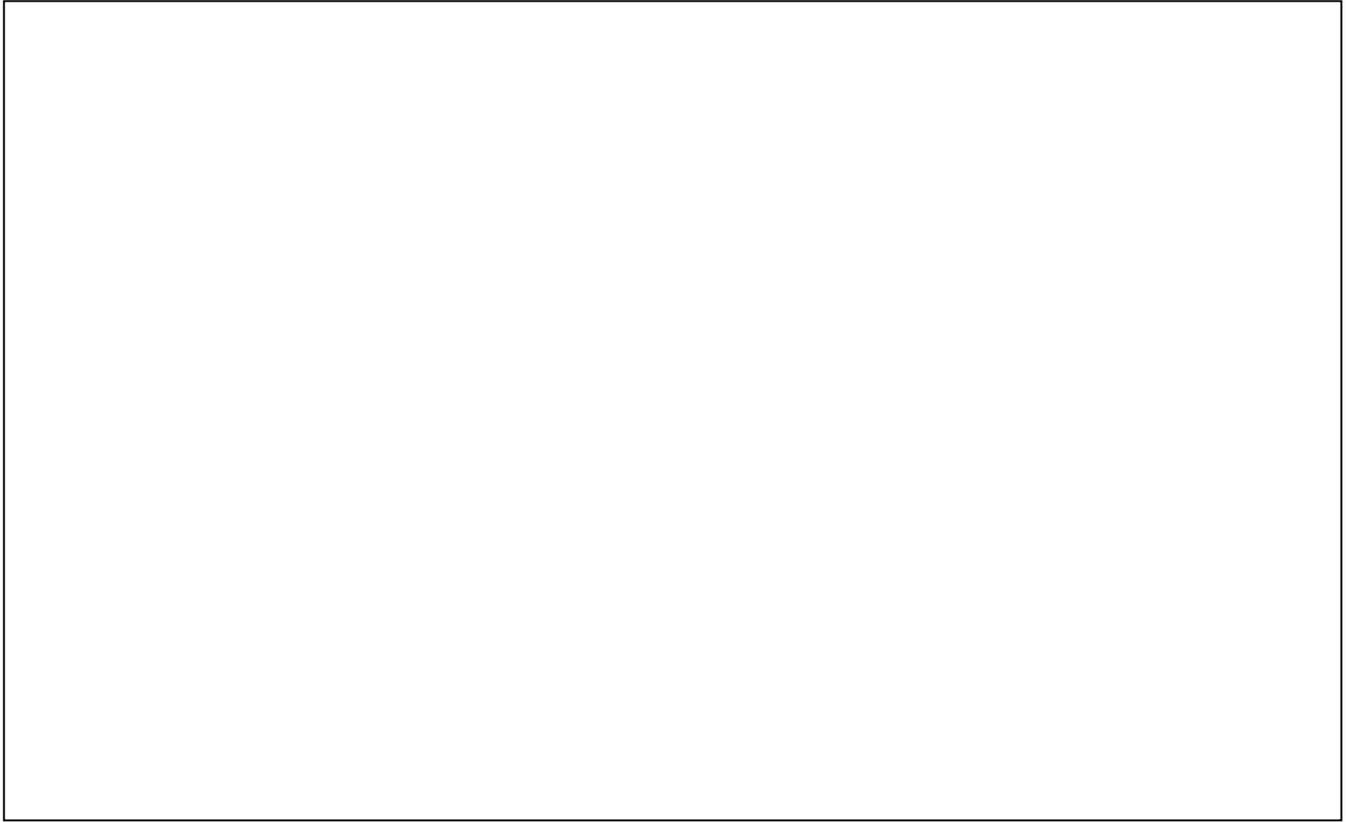
Plan a Group Social or continue to tell your own stories until the next story set comes out in April.

PRAYER REQUESTS

FACILITATOR

- Encourage the group to keep it personal and brief, allowing others time to share their praises and requests.
- Explain that they are invited to share if God has put something on their heart, but they don’t have to have something to share every week.

WEEK 11



PRAY

DIGGING IN

FACILITATOR

- Try copying and pasting this into your Meeting Notes. (Find this story set online at riversidechurch.org) when you record attendance on *Church Teams* each week. Then you can send it out in a group email along with the group's prayer requests.
- This is an opportunity for group members to do some further Bible study on their own, if they choose to. The desire is to help them find a passion to get into the Bible and study it for themselves from a place of curiosity.

On your own this week...

Contact someone who has told their story in your life group. Encourage them, explaining how it affected/moved you.

Ice Breakers

TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

Going in a circle, have each person say 3 statements about him/herself—2 of them true and 1 a lie. Each should be equally plausible. The group members then guess which is a lie and why they think it's a lie.

WHO'S THAT?

Each person writes down 3 things about him/herself that others might not already know. Put all the papers in a hat. The reader pulls one, reads it, and the group attempts to identify the author. Finally, if the group cannot guess, the author identifies him/herself. You don't have to draw all the papers; it's fun to save some for other weeks.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Ahead of time, cut out several questions—more than the number of people you have in your group. Fold up the questions and put them in a basket or container. Pass it around the group. Each person draws out a question and reads it silently. If they don't like their question, they can exchange it. Allow enough time for each person to read and answer the question to the group.

Or, ask random questions to the group and have each person answer it.

- Below are questions that we have used in the past.
- I suggest using 5-6 questions depending on the size of your group.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF...

1. You could become an animal for one day?
2. You could go anywhere in the world for a week?
3. You could go back in time for a week?
4. You could be someone else for a week?
5. You could have any job you wanted?
6. You could be invisible for a day?
7. You could spend the day with anyone you wanted?
8. You could change one thing in your past?
9. You could change one thing about yourself?
10. You could audibly hear God answer one question you asked?

(Continued...)

Ice Breakers

RANDOM

1. What's one thing you're afraid of?
2. What one quality do you look for most in friends?
3. When was the last time you cried? Why did you cry?
4. Share one of the happiest days of your life.
5. What do you want to be doing in ten years?
6. What do you like most about yourself?
7. In what ways do you act like a child?
8. What do you like to do in your spare time?
9. What is something that really "bugs" you?
10. Where would you like to go for a vacation if you could go anyplace in the world?
11. What makes you laugh?
12. What is your favorite room in your house? Why?
13. What would you like to invent to make life better?
14. Where would you most like a shopping spree?
15. What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail?

"ME, TOO!"

This is a great way to get a group to open up and start talking about themselves while learning how much they have in common with each other. Remember, the focus is to share little tidbits of information about yourselves.

Supplies needed: Spool of twine or string at least 100ft long for each group of 8-10

Give each group a spool of string. Note: If your group is larger than 10, you'll want to break up into smaller groups of 8-10 people.

Choose someone to start by telling their group something about him/herself such as:

- My favorite color is green.
- I like to sing in the shower.
- I have two children.
- I dip my pizza in ranch dressing.

Once the person with the string says something that applies to another person in the group, that person calls out, "Me, too!" The first person holds on to the end of the string and passes the spool to the other person. If more than one person has a "me, too" then the string passes to all those people, and ends at the last person to say "me, too." The person with the ball of spool then says something else about him/herself. In the end, a group will end up with a web of connections. Point out how much you have in common with each other.