

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Structure of each session:

Sharing God's Word

- Open in prayer.
This prayer should be brief. More in-depth prayer will occur at the end of the discussion time.
- Follow-up
When appropriate, follow up on charges or questions from the last session's Application.
- Ice Breaker
A question to lead in to the big ideas and essential questions for today's discussion. Allow any responses to these. Don't look for right or wrong answers.
- Reading
Read the text together. Round robin style, individual readers, etc. Use whatever method works for your group. It is recommended to try and involve all in reading at some point in the quarter together.
- Reflection Questions
Open questions to get the group thinking about what they have just read – suggested questions on discussion guides are merely suggestions. It may be simple enough just to ask something like "What do you notice here?" or "What strikes you in this text?" as a starting point.
- **Essential Questions**
A key question about the ideas presented in the text. Be sure to address these and allow time for thinking and responses. **This should take the bulk of your discussion time (20 minutes or so).**
- Applications
Prompts to move the conversation into personal applications of the text.

Prayer

Identify members of the group each time to lead prayer (possibly more than one each time) and perhaps someone to take note of prayer requests.

Prompt the group with a question like "How can we help you in prayer tonight?"

Fellowship Time

Set aside time intentionally to talk to each other. Work on sharing life and faith together.

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Passages & Key Concepts

- 1. January 13, Matthew 1-9 What Did Jesus Stand For?**
What was Jesus doing and saying that made Him stand out?
- 2. January 20, Matthew 10-13 With Whom Did Jesus Spend Time?**
How did Jesus train His disciples?
- 3. January 27, Matthew 14-18 What Did Jesus Come to Do?**
When did Jesus begin to build His church and what was it built to do?
- 4. February 3, Matthew 19-23 What is the Kingdom of Heaven Like?**
How did Jesus describe the kingdom of heaven?
- 5. February 10, Matthew 24-26 Jesus Came Prepared to Die**
How did Jesus demonstrate his willingness to be a servant?
- 6. February 17, Matthew 27- Mark 2 Jesus is the Son of God**
How did Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection prove that He is the Son of God?
- 7. February 24, Mark 3-7 How did Jesus Handle Opposition?**
What did Jesus do when He faced opposition?
- 8. March 3, Mark 8-11 Jesus' Followers**
Why did people come to Jesus and how did He receive them?
- 9. March 10, Mark 12-14 There's a Great Day Coming!**
What does Jesus say about the future?
- 10. March 17, Mark 15- Luke 2 Jesus' Amazing Birth**
What does Luke's account give us about Jesus' birth that the others do not?
- 11. March 24, Luke 3-6 Jesus Enters His Ministry**
What things did Jesus do to begin His ministry?
- 12. March 31, Luke 7-9 Jesus' Service to Others**
What kinds of things did Jesus do for others?
- 13. April 7, Luke 10-12 Jesus' Teachings**
What subjects did Jesus teach on?
- 14. April 14, Luke 13-17:10 Jesus Parables**
What Parables Did Jesus Tell?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

15. April 21, Luke 17:10 – Luke 20 Jesus' Focus on the Wealthy

What did Jesus teach about those who are rich but faithful?

16. April 28, Luke 21-24 Jesus Fulfills the Old Testament

How did Jesus fulfill the Old Testament law and prophets?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. January 13, Matthew 1-9 What did Jesus stand for?

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- What does it mean to stand for something?

Reading

- Matthew 5:1-20

Reflection

- What strikes you in this text?
- What does Jesus stand for in this text?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How are God's blessings fitting with our condition in the beatitudes?
- How do we join with Jesus in standing for His values and priorities?
- What did Jesus teach us about His words and why is this important?

Application

- What do you stand for as a Christian?
- How does God bless you and work in you as you follow Jesus?
- What can you do to demonstrate that you stand for Jesus Christ?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

2. January 20, Matthew 10-13 Spending Time with Jesus

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- What makes a person influential in your life?

Reading

- Matthew 10

Reflection

- What strikes you in this text?
- How did Jesus prepare his disciples to do their mission?
- Why did they trust Jesus?
- What were they supposed to do on this mission?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How does spending time with Jesus in His word prepare you to do His will?
- Why do you trust Jesus and what has this done to shape your life?

Application

- What's the hardest thing about taking time to be with Jesus?
- What can you do to be closer to Him and with Him more?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

3. January 27, Matthew 14-18 What did Jesus come here to do?

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- What's the most important thing you have done in the past week?

Reading

- Matthew 16:13-28

Reflection

- What strikes you in this text?
- What is Jesus telling His disciples here and why?
- How do His disciples struggle with Jesus' plans and what do they do?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How is the church able to overcome the gates of hades (death)?
- What does Jesus say we must be ready to do as a part of that church?
- What does Psalm 21:1-6 say that God gave to the King?

Application

- What does Jesus expect from us according to this passage?
- What victories does Jesus promise when we follow Him?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

4. February 3, Matthew 19-23 The Kingdom of Heaven

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- Why are you a member of this church?

Reading

- Matthew 21:28 – 22:14

Reflection

- What strikes you in this text?
- How does Jesus describe those who are in the kingdom of heaven?
- Who is welcomed and who is cast out of the kingdom?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is this kingdom of heaven that Jesus is talking about?
- What do we do to enter this kingdom?
- When do all these things take place?

Application

- How does God expect us to live under Him as our King?
- What makes this challenging in our time and place?
- What kind of servants are we?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

5. February 10, Matthew 24-26 Jesus Prepares to Die

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- Why should you prepare a will?

Reading

- Matthew 26

Reflection

- What strikes you in this text?
- What did Jesus do to prepare the disciples for His death?
- What did He do to prepare Himself?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- If you knew you only had a week to live, how would you spend it?
- How does being a follower of Jesus make a difference in your plans?
- Why is it so hard for some people to talk about dying?

Application

- What do you hope people remember about you after you die?
- How would your faith in Jesus be remembered if you died tonight?
- When you see Jesus in glory, what do you expect?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

6. February 17, Matthew 27 – Mark 2 Jesus is the Son of God

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- How would you describe your father?

Reading

- Mark 1

Reflection

- What strikes you in this text?
- How does the first verse of Mark's gospel describe Jesus Christ?
- What does it mean that God is the Father of Jesus Christ?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What does the Son of God have that you don't have?
- How does Jesus coming give us more than what we have without Him?
- When do we become children of God?

Application

- How does the Fatherhood of God impact your life?
- As a child of God, how is your relationship with your Father in heaven going?
- What do you do to let others know God is your Father, like Jesus did?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

7. February 24, Mark 3-7 When Opposition Comes

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- Name some things you stand against and tell why.

Reading

- Mark 3

Reflection

- What strikes you in this text?
- Who had problems with Jesus in this chapter and what did they do?
- How did Jesus handle the opposition, what did He do?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Why was Jesus opposed?
- How serious did the opposition become and why?
- How do people oppose Jesus today?

Application

- Are you ready to face opposition for your faith in Jesus Christ?
- What have we learned from our reading thus far that shows us how to prepare and respond to opposition?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

8. March 3, Mark 8-11 Jesus Followers

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- Is it hard or easy for you to follow someone and why?

Reading

- Mark 8:27-37

Reflection

- What strikes you in this text?
- What makes Jesus so hard to follow? What makes Him easy to follow?
- What does it mean to follow Him?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How serious is Jesus about the commitment of His followers?
- What does Jesus expect?
- Why would anyone keep following Jesus when the expectations are so high?

Application

- How serious are you are following Jesus Christ?
- We sing, “Where He leads me I will follow” but what does that mean?
- Where does following Jesus Christ lead in this life on earth, before we see Him in glory?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

9. March 10, Mark 12-14 There's a Great Day Coming!

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- Have you ever made a prediction that came true? What was it?

Reading

- Mark 13

Reflection

- What strikes you in this text?
- What does Jesus say about the future?
- How did Jesus describe it and what did He say to look for?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- When Jerusalem was destroyed by Rome, how did it fulfill Jesus' prophecy here?
- Is this talking about more than Jerusalem, why do you think that?
- Jesus speaks as a prophet here, what does this tell us about Him?

Application

- What are we supposed to do in response to Jesus' words here?
- How do they impact our decisions today?
- How are you preparing for the final day of the Lord?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

10. March 17, Mark 15 – Luke 2 Jesus' Amazing Birth

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- What do you think about angels?

Reading

- Luke 2

Reflection

- What strikes you in these texts?
- What does Luke's gospel tell us about Jesus' birth that the other's do not?
- Who is Simeon and what is he looking for and what does he see in baby Jesus?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is wonderful about Jesus' birth?
- What does His birth story do to your faith in Him?
- Shepherds, Simeon and Anna all saw something in this baby that they shared with others. What do you see?

Application

- Births are beginnings. What began when Jesus was born?
- How did His birth bring peace on earth? What is this Peace?
- Jesus said that we must be born again to see the kingdom of God, what does that mean?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

11. March 24, Luke 3-6 Jesus Enters His Ministry

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- When did you start your career?

Reading

- Luke 4

Reflection

- What strikes you in these texts?
- What scripture did Jesus use in the synagogue to describe His ministry?
- How was this received?
- What did Jesus do to show He had authority to carry out His ministry?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How did the devil try to shape Jesus' ministry?
- What did Jesus use to shape His ministry?
- Why was He not received well by the people of Nazareth?
- What did He do thereafter to demonstrate His authority and the kind of work He would do in His ministry?

Application

- What temptations do people face when choosing a career path?
- How do most people decide on their career?
- What might happen if everyone looked to Jesus for direction in this?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

12. March 31, Luke 7-9 Jesus' Teachings

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- Did you ever have a favorite teacher in school? What were they like?

Reading

- Luke 7

Reflection

- What strikes you in this text?
- How was Jesus life as a teacher impressive to others?
- What kinds of things did Jesus like to talk about?
- What kinds of people were drawn to Jesus?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Jesus' teaching included His miracles, how did He use them to teach?
- Jesus also used parables and illustrations, how did He use them?
- When people heard Jesus, they realized He was different, why?

Application

- What has Jesus taught you?
- How can you be like Him and share His word with others?
- Why would anyone not do that?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

13. April 7, Luke 10-12 Jesus' Teachings

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- What teachers do you remember from high school and why?

Reading

- Luke 11:1-28

Reflection

- What strikes you in this text?
- What does Jesus teach in this text?
- Who is His audience?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What did Jesus teach about prayer?
- What did Jesus teach about His power to cast out demons?
- What did Jesus teach about obeying the word of God?

Application

- How have the teachings of Jesus shaped your life?
- What teachings of Jesus have you struggled with most?
- How can this group support you in following Jesus' teachings?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

14. April 14, Luke 13:1 – 17:10 Jesus' Parables

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- Why do people tend to enjoy a good story?

Reading

- Luke 15

Reflection

- What strikes you in this text?
- What about these parables is so powerful?
- What message do they all bring out?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- To whom was Jesus telling these parables and why?
- What do the parables of the lost sheep and lost coin show us about joy in heaven?
- How did the father show his love to both of his sons? Which one appreciated it most and why?

Application

- What can you do to bring joy to God according to these parables?
- When did God find you and bring you back rejoicing?
- Who do you know who needs to hear this and when will you share it with them?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

15. April 21, Luke 17:10 – Luke 20 Jesus' Message to the Rich

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- What does it mean to be poor?

Reading

- Luke 17:18-29, 19:1-10

Reflection

- What strikes you in this text?
- What does Jesus say to the rich young ruler?
- What does Jesus say to Zacchaeus?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How are the rich ruler and Zacchaeus different?
- How are they alike?
- Why did they respond so differently to Jesus?

Application

- How are riches a blessing? What dangers do they pose for followers of Jesus?
- What does God expect us to do with our wealth? Why?
- What did Jesus give up so that He could redeem you?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

16. April 28, Luke 21-24 Jesus Fulfills the Old Testament

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- How is the past an indicator of the present?

Reading

- Luke 24

Reflection

- What strikes you in this text?
- What does Jesus say about the Old Testament in this text?
- List some ways Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What was the main purpose of Jesus coming to this earth?
- What did Jesus say about the Old Testament in Luke 24?
- Look at verses 45-49. What is our part in fulfilling Jesus words here?

Application

- How can you share the gospel with others?
- What do you need to know?
- Who can you reach out to this week and share the gospel?

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