

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.
- 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.
- 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.

Passages & Key Concepts

1. Jesus Commissions the Twelve - Matthew 10:1-42

What was the first message of Jesus to the people of Israel and how did He get the message out?

2. Jesus Offers the Bread of Life - John 6:1-70

In what ways is Jesus the living bread? What does that mean for us?

3. Jesus Reveals His Identity and the Church He Came to Establish - Matthew 16:13-17:13

How did Jesus envision His mission and what part do the disciples play in it?

4. Who Do You Say Jesus is - Liar, Lunatic, or Lord? - John 7:1-53

How did others label Jesus and how did Jesus answer them?

5. Jesus Is the Good Shepherd - John 10:1-21

What does Jesus as “the Good Shepherd” do and how do His “sheep” respond?

6. The Cost of Following Jesus - Luke 14:25-35, Matthew 19:16-30

How does Jesus expect us to value being His follower compared to other relationships?

7. God’s Plan for Jesus - John 12:20-36

Why did Jesus, the Prince of Life, come to earth to die? What does He tell us here?

8. God’s Plan for His People - John 14:1-31, 16:1-15

What’s love got to do with it, and how does that show in God’s people?

9. The Execution - of God’s Son and God’s Plan - Matthew 27:27-66

How did Jesus’s death fulfill God’s plan?

10. The Resurrection - of God’s Son and Our Hope - John 20:1-31

What changes took place in the lives of those who witnessed Jesus’s resurrection and what about we who believe in their testimony?

11. Jesus Gives the Great Commission - John 21:15-17, Matthew 28:16-20

How does sharing our faith prove our love to Christ and bring others to do the same?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Jesus Commissions the Twelve - Matthew 10:1-42

What was Jesus's message to the people of Israel and how did He get the message out?

Who was to receive the good news first, and how and where was it to spread from there?

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- What important thing in your life did you announce publicly and why?

Reading

- **Matthew 10:1-42**
- (This week's Bible readings: Jeremiah 41- Ezekiel 8)

Reflection

- What strikes you in the Matthew text?
- How did Jesus prepare the disciples to announce His message?
- What are some surprising things He told them to do?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What dangers did the disciples face?
- What benefits could they expect from doing this assignment?

Application

- Does Jesus expect us to share our faith?
- How does Jesus equip us to spread the gospel?
- What difference does it make in your life if you do this or not?

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2. Jesus Offers the Bread of Life - John 6:1-70

In what ways is Jesus the living bread? What does that mean for us?

Who was the True Bread from heaven, and what life does He give?

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- What is your favorite food and why?

Reading

- **John 6:1-70**
- (This week's Bible readings: Ezekiel 9-31)

Reflection

- What strikes you in the John text?
- Why did Jesus refer to His body and blood as food and drink?
- What effect did this have on those who heard Him?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How is Jesus body the Bread of Life for His people?
- When do we partake of the Body of Christ and why?

Application

- What about Jesus's words are hard to accept?
- How did Jesus expect us to understand and apply this message in our lives?
- What difference does it make whether or not we do what Jesus said here?

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3. Jesus Reveals His Identity and the Church He Came to Establish - Matthew 16:13-17:13

How did Jesus envision His mission and what part do the disciples play in it?

Who is the Messiah, why did He come, and what did He want to establish?

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- Who helped you choose your career?

Reading

- **Matthew 16:13-17:13**
- (This week's Bible reading: Ezekiel 32- Daniel 4)

Reflection

- What strikes you in the Matthew text?
- What did Jesus's career involve?
- What challenges did Jesus face and who encouraged Him as He moved toward His goal?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is this church that Jesus built to be and do?
- What price is Jesus willing to pay to build it?

Application

- If Jesus gave His life to build the church, how should we treat His work?
- How are WE His workmanship and how is that seen in our lives?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

4. Who Do You Say Jesus is - Liar, Lunatic, or Lord? - John 7:1-53

How did others label Jesus and how did Jesus answer them?

Who labeled Jesus a liar, who labeled Him a lunatic, who labeled Him Lord, and whom do you say He is?

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- Why do people sometimes call one another bad names?

Reading

- **John 7:1-53**
- (This week's Bible readings: Daniel 5, Hosea, Joel, Amos and Obadiah)

Reflection

- What strikes you in the John text?
- When people did not believe in Jesus, what did they call Him?
- What questions did people have about Jesus identity and why?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How does unbelief effect their relationship with Jesus?
- How does belief effect their relationship to Him?

Application

- How do you define Jesus?
- How does your definition of Jesus effect your life?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

5. Jesus Is the Good Shepherd - John 10:1-21

What does Jesus as “the Good Shepherd” do and how do His “sheep” respond?

Why is Jesus the Good Shepherd, and what does that mean for His sheep?

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- What kind of people do you trust?

Reading

- **John 10:1-21**
- (This week’s Bible reading: Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)

Reflection

- What strikes you in the John text?
- What is the difference between a good shepherd and a hireling?
- How does Jesus demonstrate Himself to be the Good Shepherd?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Psalm 23 describes the Lord as our Shepherd, what does Jesus imply when he claims to be the Good Shepherd?
- What kind of relationship does Jesus teach concerning Him and His sheep?

Application

- How much do you trust Jesus?
- In what ways is He the Shepherd of your life?
- How can you become closer to Him?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

6. The Cost of Following Jesus - Luke 14:25-35, Matthew 19:16-30

How does Jesus expect us to value being His follower compared to other relationships?
What is the cost of following Jesus and is it worth the reward?

Open in prayer:

Ice Breaker

- How does Genesis 29:31 describe Jacob's relationship with Leah? What does "hate" mean there?

Reading

- **Luke 14:25-35, Matthew 19:16-30**
- (This week's Bible reading: Matthew 1-20)

Reflection

- What strikes you in this text?
- How can things and other relationships stand in the way of following Jesus?
- How did Jesus describe the cost of following Him?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How would you describe a follower of Jesus after reading Jesus's words here?
- Why would anyone give up everything and follow Jesus?

Application

- What have you given up to follow Him?
- What did Jesus give up to save you?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

7. God's Plan for Jesus - John 12:20-36

Why did Jesus, the Prince of Life, come to earth to die? What does He tell us here?

Why would the Son of God come to die for us?

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- Whom do you know who has BIG plans?

Reading

- **John 12:20-36**
- (This week's Bible reading: Matthew 21 - Mark 7)

Reflection

- What strikes you in the John text?
- What is God's plan for Jesus?
- How does that bring glory to Him?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How much did God and Jesus commit to our Salvation?
- Why does God love us so much?

Application

- How much do you commit your life to Jesus?
- How much do you love God?
- How can you grow in your commitment and love for Him?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

8. God's Plan for His People - John 14:1-31, 16:1-15

What's love got to do with it, and how does that show in God's people?

How could sinners like us ever enjoy the relationship with God that He intended?

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- How do you show that you love someone?

Reading

- **John 14:1-31, 16:1-15**
- (This week's Bible reading: Mark 8 - Luke 6)

Reflection

- What strikes you in this text?
- What questions do Thomas and Philip and Judas have for Jesus (in John 14) and how does He answer them?
- How did Jesus offer comfort to His disciples?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How much did Jesus love His disciples? How are they to show their love for Him?
- What does Jesus tell His disciples about the person and work of the Holy Spirit?

Application

- How is God working in your life to help you follow Jesus?
- Where have you seen His hand and experienced His comforts?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

9. The Execution - of God's Son and God's Plan - Matthew 27:27-66

How did Jesus's death fulfill God's plan?

What was required to execute God's plan for His people?

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- What are some good but hard things in life?

Reading

- **Matthew 27:27-66**
- **(This week's Bible reading: Luke 7-20)**

Reflection

- What strikes you in the Matthew text?
- Why did Jesus have to be crucified?
- How did His death fulfill God's plan?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How did death begin and who is responsible for it?
- Why does Jesus take on the responsibility and punishment for sin and death?

Application

- How can we benefit from Jesus's death on the cross?
- How can we forfeit that benefit?

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

10. The Resurrection - of God's Son and Our Hope - John 20:1-31

What changes took place in the lives of those who witnessed Jesus's resurrection and what about we who believe in their testimony?

Why was Jesus's resurrection a necessary part of God's plan?

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- What's the best news you've heard about this week?

Reading

- **John 20:1-31**
- (This week's Bible reading: Luke 21 - John 10)

Reflection

- What strikes you in the John 20:1-31 text?
- How would you describe the disciples after Jesus died, but before His resurrection?
- How would you describe them when they saw Him alive again?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Why is it hard for some to believe in the resurrection of Jesus?
- Why was it hard for the disciples to believe in the resurrection of Jesus?
- How does the resurrection of Jesus bring us hope? What kind of hope is this?

Application

- How did Jesus encourage us who believe in His resurrection even though we have not seen Him? (See also 1 Peter 1:8)
- How are faith in Jesus resurrection and hope in our own salvation connected? (See Romans 10:9-10)
- How is baptism connected with faith and hope in Jesus's death, burial and resurrection? (See 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 and Romans 6:1-4)

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

11. Jesus Gives the Great Commission - John 21:15-17, Matthew 28:16-20

How does sharing our faith prove our love to Christ and bring others to do the same?
What is the role that we must play in God's plan for His people?

Open in prayer.

Ice Breaker

- What do you like to talk about?

Reading

- **John 21:15-17, Matthew 28:16-20**
- **(This week's Bible reading: John 11 - Acts 7)**

Reflection

- What strikes you in the John 21 and Matthew 28 texts?
- How did Jesus tell Peter to show His love?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What did Jesus tell His disciples to do?
- How and when were they to do it?

Application

- Does this command of Jesus apply to us today? How?
- In what ways are we fulfilling this commission?
- How can we do better at it?