

## 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.

## Passages & Key Concepts

### **1. God's People taken into Exile**

2 Chronicles 36:15-21, Daniel 6

### **2. Esther's Story**

Esther (whole book)

### **3. Nehemiah Rebuilds the Wall**

Nehemiah 1:1-6:16

### **4. From Jesus' Birth to His Baptism and Ministry**

John 1:1-14, Mark 1

### **5. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount**

Matthew 5-7

### **6. Jesus' Signs and Miracles**

John 6

### **7. Jesus, Savior of the Lost**

Luke 15

### **8. Jesus's Word's of Judgment**

Matthew 23

### **9. Jesus Goes to the Cross**

Matthew 26:17-27:26

### **10. The Crucified Christ is Risen, the Church is Born!**

Luke 24, Acts 2

### **11. The Gospel is for All!**

Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 10, Galatians 3:26-29

## 1. God's People taken into Exile

*Open in prayer.*

### Ice Breaker

- When have you finally had enough and what did you do?

### Reading

2 Chronicles 36:15-21, Daniel 6

### Reflection

- Why did God send Judah into Exile?
- How did God show His patience?
- Where is Daniel and what does God do for Him?

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What do we learn about God in this week's readings?
- What do we learn about ourselves?

### Application

- What will you do, that demonstrates your faith in God, based on what we learn from this week's lesson?"
- Who else do you know that needs to hear this message, and how can you share it with them?

## 2. Esther's Story

*Open in prayer.*

### Ice Breaker

- When has God shown you that He has a purpose for you, and what is that purpose?

### Reading

- Esther 1-10

### Reflection

- Who are the major characters in this book?
- How is God working behind the scenes throughout Esther's life?
- What surprises turn up as the story unfolds?

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What do we learn about God's saving purposes in the story of Esther?
- What does Esther's story teach us about God's saving purposes for ourselves?

### Application

- What lesson from the book of Esther will you take and apply to your own life?
- Who else needs to know this and how can you share it with them?

### 3. Nehemiah Rebuilds the Wall

*Open in prayer.*

#### Ice Breaker

- What is the hardest challenge you've faced and accomplished?

#### Reading

- Nehemiah 1:1 – 6:16

#### Reflection

- Why did Nehemiah take on this huge responsibility?
- What obstacles did He face?
- How did God help Him overcome them and finish the work?

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What does Nehemiah show us about how God works in our lives for the good of others, and how God works through us to accomplish His purposes?
- What does the book of Nehemiah show us about humans, both faithful and not?

#### Application

- What will you do to be more like Nehemiah in His faith and service?
- Who else needs to know this and how can you share it with them?

#### 4. From Jesus' Birth to His Baptism and Ministry

*Open in prayer.*

##### Ice Breaker

- When and where were you baptized and who baptized you?

##### Reading

- John 1:1-14, Mark 1

##### Reflection

- What is surprising about Jesus' birth and baptism?
- What did John the Baptist say about Jesus and how is that important?
- Mark calls Jesus the Son of God, John 1:1-3 calls Jesus the Word who WAS God, how are both of these essential to our faith?

##### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What do we learn about Jesus in this week's reading (or this lesson's reading)?
- What does both John and Mark reveal about man's response to God and His Son?

##### Application

- What will you do with Jesus, based on what the Bible says here?
- Who else do you know that needs to know this and how can you share it with them?

## 5. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount

*Open in prayer.*

### Ice Breaker

- What's a good sermon you remember hearing, and what was it about?

### Reading

- Matthew 5-7

### Reflection

- Jesus talks about the kingdom of heaven several times, what are some things that stand out to you about the kingdom in this sermon?
- Of all the things Jesus teaches in this sermon, which 3 things are the most difficult for you?

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What does Jesus show us about God's kingdom standards in this Sermon?
- What human weaknesses or strengths does this Sermon bring up and address?

### Application

- Which command of Jesus will you seek to grow stronger in obeying this week?
- Who else needs to learn some of the lessons of Jesus that you will pray for and share His word with?

## 6. Jesus's Signs and Miracles

*Open in prayer.*

### Ice Breaker

- Think of a time you were very hungry, and tell what was it like?

### Reading

- John 6

### Reflection

- What motivated the crowds that came to Jesus in John 6?
- When Jesus fed the 5000 with the miracle of the five loaves and two fish, what was the response of the multitude?
- How did Jesus distinguish between their need for bread and their need for Him, how did they respond to His explanations?

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What do we learn about Jesus from this passage?
- What does God's word here reveal about our human nature and our priorities?

### Application

- What will you do with what you learn in John 6 and how will you do it?
- Who else needs to hear this and how will you share it with them?



## 7. Jesus, Savior of the Lost

*Open in prayer.*

### Ice Breaker

- What's the most valuable thing you've ever lost and later found?

### Reading

- Luke 15

### Reflection

- How did Jesus use these three stories to impress us with God's care for us?
- What does this say gives God the most joy, and why?
- What kind of attitude does the older brother have and how did the father respond?

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What do these stories of Jesus reveal about God's love for lost people?
- What do they tell us about how we need to respond to those who are lost?

### Application

- What do these words of Jesus teach you that you will put into practice more this week?
- Who else will you share this with and how will you share it?

## 8. Jesus' Words of Judgment

*Open in prayer.*

### Ice Breaker

- What harsh words have you said that you needed to say and how did you say them?

### Reading

- Matthew 23

### Reflection

- Jesus is the King. How are these words supposed to be heard by those He addresses here?
- What are Jesus' chief concerns as He speaks?
- How does He ultimately reveal His love for those He is speaking against?

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What do Jesus' harsh words show us about God's judgment against sin and false righteousness? What else do you learn about God through this chapter?
- What do Jesus' words here show us about human nature and our own hearts?

### Application

- What lesson will you take to heart from this and what will you do to follow Jesus more closely?
- Who else can you share this with and how will you share it?

## 9. Jesus Goes to the Cross

*Open in prayer.*

### Ice Breaker

- Why did Jesus have to die?

### Reading

- Matthew 26:17 – 27:26

### Reflection

- How did Jesus prepare Himself for His own death?
- How did He prepare His disciples for His death?
- What are some things about Jesus that make this event so impressive and important?

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How great is God's love for us, and what does this reveal to us about God?
- How needy is man for God's gift of Jesus, and how do people respond to it?

### Application

- What does this motivate you to do for God and how will you do it this week?
- Who else needs to know what you've learned about God's gift of His Son and when will you share it with them?

## 10. The Crucified Christ is Risen, the Church is Born

*Open in prayer.*

### Ice Breaker

- What do you believe happens after you die?

### Reading

- Luke 24, Acts 2

### Reflection

- Why were the disciples so surprised that Jesus was raised from the dead?
- How did Jesus prove that He was alive again?
- What did the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus start in this world?

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What does teach us about God, life and death?
- What does this teach us about Jesus' humility, obedience and submission?
- What does this teach us about humanity and how we respond to God's Son?

### Application

- How has Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection made a difference in your life? What will you do to demonstrate your faith, hope and love?
- Who needs to know this that you will share it with this week?

## 11. The Gospel is for ALL!

*Open in prayer.*

### Ice Breaker

- What's so special about being a human?

### Reading

- Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 10, Galatians 3:26-29

### Reflection

- What makes people so important to God? What does God want from us?
- How many people does God want to save, and how does He use saved people to carry this out?

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What do we learn about God's saving mission and our part in it?
- What do we learn about the church's saving work of obeying God's command to spread His gospel to others?

### Application

- What will you do to obey God's will for you to have a saving impact on others?
- Who will you start praying for and reaching out to this week?