

simply

JOHN

where His Word is as good as His touch

simplifying life
re-prioritizing life
cultivating a deeper walk with God

All Bible verses are taken from the New Living Translation unless otherwise indicated.

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You may copy this resource or any part of it to build up God's Kingdom.
Please include the following reference information:

More studies available at
www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com

Simply JOHN

Updated August 6, 2020

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The WORD Among Us

The [Simply Series](#) is a different kind of Bible study. It is not doctrine or life application. It is relational, which means there are no right or wrong answers to the questions in this facilitator's guide.

Relational Bible studies focus on building relationships with God and each other. They create a space for the WORD among us to wash over us, plant seeds in our lives, and change us by the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit.

Relational Bible studies give everyone, no matter what their perspective or depth of Bible knowledge, space to share and contribute to the dialogue as we journey together. They help us discover how our personal story intersects with the Bible story.

These guides are designed to facilitate real and authentic dialogue in such a way that secular and unchurched Truth seekers come away saying, "This is different! This is real."

People need the Everlasting Gospel. Simple Church is about creating a space for Truth seekers to journey together.

May God bless you as you simplify and re-prioritize your life, creating time to "spend" with Truth seekers from all walks of life.

How to Use This Leader's Guide

This leader's guide assumes you have:

1. Read through the www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com web page.
2. Completed the online Simple Church training.

Title

outline

Bible story reference will be listed here.

Message of Hope: Have this idea crystal clear in your mind. This is what you want people to remember for the rest of the week.

Helpful Tip: These tips show up here and there.

The Basic 8: These are covered in the [free online training](#).

1. Collection Box (explained in PhaseONE training videos)
2. Connection Card Envelopes
3. Business Cards
4. Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet
5. A variety of extra Bible translations.
6. Child Safety Poster
7. Blessing Board
8. Email link to online Simple Church Weekly Summary Form (When officially launched this is emailed to your Details Coordinator every Sunday.)

Welcome: We are glad everyone is here. We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us.

Before we introduce ourselves, let's remember:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of Truth seekers. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Please be sensitive so everyone has an opportunity to share and contribute.
- Cell phones should be put on "vibrate," or turned off.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What is a high-light or a low-light (a headline) from your week?
3. [*Insert rotation question for the week.*]

Rotation Questions: Rotate through the following three questions:

Week 1: How would you like to simplify your life?

Week 2: How would you like to re-prioritize your life?

Week 3: How would you like to cultivate a deeper relationship with God.

Week 4: How would you like to simplify your life?

Week 5: etc.

At the end of check-in ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate check-in next week. Anyone can facilitate check-in. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

The Quiz: A child asks three questions. They randomly choose from the check-in questions people just answered. Ask everyone to raise their hands and the child picks someone to answer the questions.

For example:

1. What was his (pointing to the person) high-light for the week?
2. What was her name (pointing to the person)?
3. How did she want to simplify her life?

At the end of the quiz ask the child who facilitated to choose another child to facilitate the quiz next week.

This is what page 2 of a typical leader's guide for a given week actually looks like.

Facilitator's Directions:

1. Talk as little as possible, encourage others to share, and avoid a monologue.
2. Cut on the dotted lines. Distribute questions around the circle. (✂ -----)
3. Keep the top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first)

Bridge: This transitions the group from the Kick-off Question into the Bible story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Bible story reference will be listed here. (Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible during our discussion.)

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

Some helpful pointers for digging questions:

- Remember: there are no "right answers" to relational Bible study questions. Help people contribute their perspective to the dialogue.

- You DO NOT have to "accomplish" all the questions listed. Use them as a resource from which to select during your discussion.
- Spend a maximum of 50% of your Bible study time on these questions.
- Affirm each answer, no matter what is said, by saying something like, "Excellent, someone else"; "Thanks for sharing, someone else"; "Good, someone else"; "How about the rest of you, what do you think".
- Did you catch the common denominator, "someone else"? You are always affirming and always inviting others to give input.
- If someone gets off-focus, simply say (after they have stopped talking), "What was the question? Let's read it again."

Sharing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

Some helpful pointers:

- Spend a minimum of 50% of your time on these questions.
- These questions are designed to invite people to share portions of their life story as it interacts with the Bible study.
- At appropriate times affirm confidentiality and offer reassurance that this is a safe place to share and grow spiritually.

Group Prayer:

1. We are blessed by being a part of this group, yet it exists for those who are not yet here.
2. Put an [Empty Chair](#) in the middle of your prayer circle. Pray for the people who are not yet here.
3. Close by saying the [Blessing Board](#) blessing together.

At the end of prayer, ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate the questions for next week. Anyone can facilitate the questions. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Lunch:

1. Keep it simple. Keep it easily reproducible.
2. Hostess (one of the CORE4) provides the beans.
3. During lunch have the [Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet](#) available.

Given to ALL

outline

John 1:1-18

Message of Hope: All who believe and receive have the right to become children of God.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

Welcome: We are so glad that you are here today.

Setting the Context:

- We come from a variety of backgrounds and seek to create a safe place for Truth seekers to grow spiritually.
- You will notice that we try to avoid fancy religious language. We are common people.
- Let's encourage those who like to talk to give opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Growing up, what nicknames or other names were you known by?

Bridge: Today's story begins a new book, the book of John. In a world where God's truth and Satan's lies both exist, John makes one thing very clear, and it is the best news that anyone could ever hope for. Let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 1:1-18

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Who do you think the “Word” is? And what characteristics of the “Word” do you see listed in this story?
✂ -----
- 2) In verse 9, how do you think a person can know the difference between true light and false light?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's pause and read verse 12 from the different translations we have. How would you summarize the core message of this promise?
✂ -----
- 4) Why do you think John, the author of this book, begins his book with this story?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Growing up, what picture of God did you have?
✂ -----
- B) Recognizing that everyone is at a different point in their journey, what do you see as a next step in receiving Christ in your life?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **ALL who believe and receive have the right to be children of God.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Identity

outline

John 1:19-34

Message of Hope: First and foremost, you are a child of Jesus Christ.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you meet someone, what is one of the first questions you like to ask them?

Bridge: Today's story begins with a first-time introduction. But more importantly, it is about identity and one's reasons for existence. This story will help us explore, at a deeper core level, who we are and why we exist in this world. Today's story is called *Identity* and is found in John 1:19-34.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 1:19-34

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think the first question church leaders ask John the Baptist is “who are you”?
✂ -----
- 2) Why do you think John the Baptist says who he is NOT, before answering their question of who he is?
✂ -----
- 3) What do you think made the difference between John the Baptist not recognizing Jesus in verse 31, and then in verses 32-33 recognizing him as Jesus Christ?
✂ -----
- 4) How do you think John the Baptist would answer the question “how can I recognize Jesus in my life today?”
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What are some different ways you might answer the question “who are you?”?
✂ -----
- B) If you were to try to recognize some patterns in your life, how has Jesus been revealing himself to you?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **First and foremost, you are a child of Jesus Christ.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.**

Circles of Influence

outline

John 1:35-51

Message of Hope: Jesus uses people to influence and reach people.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Who are some influential people in your life?

Bridge: Today's story is about influence. Influence can be dangerous, risky, and abused. But influence can also be an eternal life-saver when used for good and for service. Today's story explores the results of God honoring influence, both in our Bible story and in our personal lives.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 1:35-51

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Andrew and Phillip were so confident that they had found the Messiah?
✂ -----
- 2) How do you think John felt when some of his disciples left him to follow Jesus?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verses 46-51 again. Why do you think Jesus dialogues with Nathanael, especially after his negative comment in verse 46?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verse 51 from the different Bibles we have in our circle. How would you summarize what Jesus is saying in this verse 51?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Who is one of the more instrumental people in your life who influenced you towards Jesus?
✂ -----
- B) If Jesus were to walk up to you right now and invite you to follow him, how would your life change?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus uses people to influence and reach people.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Better Than the Best

outline

John 2:1-12

Message of Hope: Jesus offers us the best; not good or better, but best.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is your most favorite fresh-squeezed juice?

Bridge: Today's story takes a 180-degree turn, so be prepared to be surprised. Imagine living without your refrigerator. How long would fresh-squeezed juice last without refrigeration? In Jesus's day, fresh-squeezed juice was considered the best of the best. Why? It was the freshest and had the lowest alcohol content. But that also meant it was harder to get and more expensive. This is why people in our story are so surprised at Jesus's miracle. He provided something that was even better than what they started with.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 2:1-12

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jesus responds to his mother like this and then goes ahead and does a miracle?
✂ -----
- 2) What do you think the purpose might have been in handing the first cup to the master of ceremonies?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's pause and read verse 10 in several Bible translations. Why do you think the master of ceremonies is so surprised?
✂ -----
- 4) Verse 12 seems anticlimactic. What questions do you think Jesus's mother, brothers, and disciples asked him?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) If you had been present at Jesus's first miracle, what kinds of questions would you like to have asked him?
✂ -----
- B) When you need to recharge, where do you go to get away from everything?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus offers us the best; not good, or better, but best.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer & Lunch: Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle.

His Word, Period.

outline

John 2:13-22

Message of Hope: His Word is as good as His touch.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Of your five senses (taste, smell, touch, sight, and hearing) which one do you trust the most?

Bridge: In today's story the stage is set for the entire book of John. This book is often considered the bridge between those who lived with Christ and those, like us, who would never see Jesus. John knows that our faith would have to be built upon something that people down through time could trust. What would this be? **His Word is as good as His touch.** Don't expect a big flash in the pan announcement. This theme will be a growing, constant awareness over the coming weeks. Our story is found in John 2:13-22.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 2:13-22

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What do you think is at the root of Jesus's anger?
✂ -----
- 2) Why do you think people are so quick to look to miracles and signs as proof?
✂ -----
- 3) In today's world, how do you think Satan can use miracles and signs to confuse people?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verse 22 again. How does this verse provide a safeguard for people like us who have His written word?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) How has God's written word helped you during good and hard times?
✂ -----
- B) If Jesus were to do some house cleaning in your life, what might He start with?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **His Word is as good as His touch.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Nighttime Seekers

outline

John 3:1-9

Message of Hope: Spiritual birth can begin today.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

In a one-minute summary, how do you typically conclude your day?

Bridge: Today's story takes place after the sun has gone down, and it is dark. But instead of concluding his day, this nighttime seeker is out and about, searching for some answers. And there is only one person who can help him find answers to his questions. Let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 3:1-9

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 2, why do you think Nicodemus comes after dark?
✂ -----
- 2) In a world where there are true and counterfeit signs and miracles, why do you think Nicodemus uses miracles as evidence that God is with Jesus?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verse 5 again. What do you think Jesus actually means by being born of the water and the Spirit?
✂ -----
- 4) What do you think are some of the evidences of being born again?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) If you were to visit privately with Jesus, what questions would you like to ask Him?
✂ -----
- B) What are some fruits of the Spirit you have seen in the person sitting next to you. (Then go on around the circle with each person affirming the person next to them.)
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Spiritual birth can begin today.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Extreme Sports

outline

John 3:5-21

Message of Hope: It is not a question of are you good or bad. The question is, are you His?

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is one of the most risky or extreme sports you have tried or would like to try?

Bridge: We live in a world of extreme sports where people risk life for the thrill. Today's story is about extreme promises. These are such extreme promises they seem too good to be true. In fact, people risk their life by ignoring them. Our story is called *Extreme Promises* and is found in John 3:5-21.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 3:5-21

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Extreme promise #1 is found two times in verses 15-16. What do you see as this extreme promise, and what do you think makes it so extreme?

Hint: "Everyone"

✂ -----

- 2) If *everyone* can believe, how would you explain "believing in Jesus" to a 5-year-old boy?

✂ -----

- 3) Extreme promise #2 is found in verse 16. Let's pause and read this verse from the different Bibles translations. What extreme promise do you see this verse telling us about God and about our two options for eternity?

Hint: "Eternal life" or "perishing" which is eternal death

✂ -----

- 4) Extreme promise #3 is found in verse 18. How do you see this promise being such good news?

Hint: "No judgment"

✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Growing up, what traditions were you taught about these three extreme promises?

✂ -----

- B) Which of these three extreme promises gives you the most hope and comfort? Why?

✂ -----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂ -----

- D) Remember: **It is not a question of are you good or bad. The question is, are you His?** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer & Lunch:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

Radical Selflessness

outline

John 3:22-36

Message of Hope: Radical belief in God means radical obedience to God.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Ranging from the audience to the bride and groom, how did you participate in the last wedding you attended?

Bridge: Today's story uses a wedding example as a springboard to help us understand and explore what radical selflessness looks and feels like. John will take us from belief in God to a radical selfless obedience to God, which is where the rubber meets the road.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 3:22-36

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What do you think was at the heart of the debate between John and Jesus's disciples?
✂ -----
- 2) Verse 27 is a bold and radical statement. How do you see this actually working in everyday life?
✂ -----
- 3) What do you think gave John the Baptist the ability to respond so selflessly?
✂ -----
- 4) Verse 36 is translated in two ways, so let's read this verse in the Bibles around our circle. How would you explain the relationship between believing in God and obeying God?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) How do you strive to turn belief in God into radical obedience to God?
✂ -----
- B) Where do you see the Holy Spirit nudging you in the coming weeks?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Radical belief in God means radical obedience to God.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Searching for You

outline
John 4:1-15

Message of Hope: Jesus is searching for you.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

How much water would you guess the average person uses in a day?

Bridge: Water is a life essential. Without it we die. Today's story is about another kind of water. And, without it we also die. But here is one major difference between these two kinds of water. We have to go find our water. But this new kind of water is trying to find us. Today's story is found in John 4:1-15.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 4:1-15

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jesus would leave the area just because they were baptizing more people than John the Baptist?
✂ -----
- 2) What history do our Bible footnotes or side notes include about the relationship between Jews and Samaritans?
✂ -----
- 3) In which verse do you think Samaritan woman begins to realize that she is talking with Jesus?
✂ -----
- 4) How do you think you would have tried to describe living water to this lady?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) How has God unexpectedly shown up in your life lately?
✂ -----
- B) What is a recent turn of circumstance that God may have used to get your attention?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus is searching for you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

True Worshipers

outline

John 4:13-24

Message of Hope: God is looking for people who will sell out to Him.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

On a scale of one to ten, with ten being the most important, how much does God's opinion count in people's thinking today?

Bridge: Today's story raises a topic which has been controversial since Adam and Eve's son, Cain, killed his brother Abel. Maybe the reason it has been so controversial is because this is very, very, very important to God. One thing Jesus clarifies in today's story is how God is looking for a people who will worship Him—*His way*. So, let's dive into this insightful story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 4:13-24

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) If you had been this woman, how do you think you would have responded?
✂ -----
- 2) Why do you think Jesus mentions her previous husbands and that she is living with someone who is not her husband?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verse 23 from the different translations in our circle. Why do you think the Father is specifically looking for those who will worship Him—His way—both in spirit and in truth?
✂ -----
- 4) If God were to describe for us what worshiping in spirit and truth looks like, what do you think He would say?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) As you reflect on your life, which one has been more emphasized in your life, the spirit side or the truth side? Why?
✂ -----
- B) How do you think you could strengthen the weaker side in your life?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **God is looking for people who will sell out to Him.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer & Lunch:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Payday

outline

John 4:24-38

Message of Hope: God is inviting you to do for others what someone did for you.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is something you enjoy doing so much that you forget to eat?

Bridge: Today's story is payday. But it is a very different kind of payday than what typically comes to our minds. We often think about receiving money so that we can pay our bills. Today payday takes on a very different meaning and because of payday, someone forgets to eat lunch. Our story is found in John 4:24-38.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 4:24-38

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 25, how do you think this woman knows that the Messiah is coming?
✂ -----
- 2) Where do you think the conversation between Jesus and this woman would have gone, if the disciples had not come back in verse 26?
✂ -----
- 3) Since this lady is likely shunned by her local community, what do you think gives her credibility and influence in verse 30?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verse 38 again. If Jesus had sent them to harvest, how could going to the town to get food be part of the harvesting plan?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Who was a key person in your life that stopped by your well?
✂ -----
- B) When was a time you stopped by a modern-day well to talk with someone? What happened?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **God is inviting you to do for others what someone did for you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Risky Business

outline

John 4:39-42

Message of Hope: Jesus is the Savior of the world.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was the last time that someone visited you and stayed for at least two days?

Bridge: In today's story a two-day visitor turns the local town upside down. The curtain will be pulled back as we see this town come to a collective conclusion that just two days prior they would not have anticipated could ever happen. As we read this story, ponder what it would be like if this story were to happen in our town. Today's story is called *Risky Business*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 4:39-42

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think the town's people begged Jesus to stay with them, risking that He may expose their own life secrets?
✂ -----
- 2) Since Jesus spent only two days, what do you think he shared with these people?
✂ -----
- 3) What parts of Jesus's message do you see people being most hungry for in today's world?
✂ -----
- 4) In today's world, what do you think would help people see Jesus as the Savior of the world?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Who has been instrumental in introducing you to this kind of Jesus we have been talking about?
✂ -----
- B) What is one part of Jesus's message that you hold onto and that gives you hope?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus is the Savior of the world.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Spoken Words

outline

John 4:43-54

Message of Hope: Jesus's spoken word is as good as his physical touch.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is one of the more serious illnesses or medical interventions you had as a child?

Bridge: John, one of the twelve disciples, is the last one to die. He realizes that throughout the rest of history you and I will not be able to see Jesus face to face like he did. So, John's Gospel builds a bridge for us. In today's story notice how Jesus's miracle is spoken. John wants us to realize that Jesus's spoken word is as good as His physical touch.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 4:43-54

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Looking at the maps in our Bibles, how far would you say this father traveled by foot to find Jesus?
✂ -----
- 2) How do you make sense of Jesus's comment in verse 44, and the Galileans' response to Jesus in verse 45?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verse 48 again in our various Bible translations. Why do you think Jesus would say this to a desperate father who is concerned about his son's life?
✂ -----
- 4) Why do you think Jesus speaks healing instead of going with this father to heal the boy?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) How has Jesus brought mental, emotional, physical, or spiritual healing to you?
✂ -----
- B) If someone was to ask Jesus for healing on your behalf, what would you like them to ask for?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus's word is as good as His touch.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- o Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- o Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Counter-Traditions

outline

John 5:1-15

Message of Hope: Sabbath is a day for healing.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Growing up, when someone was getting sick, what did you family typically do?

Bridge: It happens again this week like it did last week—Jesus heals someone without laying His hands on the person. Jesus’s spoken word is as good as His physical touch. But today's story adds an additional complication. Jesus is trying to teach us something that may be counterculture? Our story is called *Counter-Traditions*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 5:1-15

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jesus takes it upon himself to initiate healing this man?
✂ -----
- 2) After the man explains why he cannot be healed, why do you think Jesus heals him anyway?
✂ -----
- 3) Knowing the religious stir this would cause, why do you think Jesus initiates healing a man without faith on the Sabbath?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's pause and reread verses 11-15 again. In verse 14, what do you think Jesus's message is?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When was a time when you saw Jesus heal someone who was not seeking to be healed?
✂ -----
- B) If Jesus initiated healing in your life today, what do you think He would choose for you?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Sabbath is a day for healing**. How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Accepting God's Invitations

outline

John 5:16-23

Message of Hope: God is inviting you to join Him in His work.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

How many hours of sleep do you usually need? And how many hours a day are you usually awake?

Bridge: Today's story could change your life. It will help you know how to spend your time. There are only 24 hours in a day. The challenge is in deciding how to prioritize our time. Today, Jesus pulls back the curtain and shows us how He prioritizes His time.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 5:16-23

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 16, what was the rule Jesus broke and who do you think made this rule?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's pause and reread verse 17-18 again. Verse 17 is the turning point in this story. What do you think Jesus is trying to say in verse 17?
✂ -----
- 3) How do you think the leaders interpreted working with God as being equal with God?
✂ -----
- 4) In verses 19-23 Jesus further explains His relationship with His Father. How would you summarize this relationship?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Where do you see God inviting you to join Him in His work?
✂ -----
- B) If you were to accept God's invitations to join Him in His work, how might people misunderstand how you prioritize your time?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **God is inviting you to join Him in His work.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

God's Best Promise

outline

John 5:24-30

Message of Hope: Whoever believes Jesus has eternal life and will not be condemned.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

As you were growing up, was God's judgment presented as a scary and terrifying event or as a safe event?

Bridge: If you have a red-letter Bible edition you will notice that everything in today's story is red. Why? These are Jesus's words and teachings. Today's story is some of the best news about God's judgment and resurrection you will ever hear. In this amazing story Jesus teaches us why believers are safe in God's final judgment, and He explains that there will be two resurrections from the dead. Especially notice that there are two different resurrections, one for the believers to eternal life and one for the wicked to judgment. Our story is found in John 5:24-30.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 5:24-30

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Two times in this story Jesus emphasizes "A time is coming when all the dead will hear his voice." What do you think Jesus is specifically referring to in the last half of verse 25?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's read verses 28-29 again. Why do you think there are two separate resurrections mentioned in this verse?

Extra: Although this story does not say *when* these two resurrections take place, we are not left to guess. Revelation 20:4-10 tells us.

Movie Extra: *What Happens When You Die? Heaven, Hell, or nothing?*

✂ -----

- 3) Let's read verse 28 in different Bible translations. If Jesus says, "for the hour is coming in which *all* who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth," why do you think popular Christianity says the opposite—people immediately go to heaven or hell when they die?

Extra: God had told Adam and Even that they would die if they ate from the forbidden tree. Satan started this lie when he told Eve that she would not die. Genesis 3:3-4.

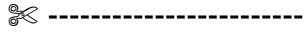
✂ -----

- 4) Jesus began this teaching with His classic saying, "I tell you the truth." What do you think is the truth that Jesus wanted to clarify in this story?

✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) How would you explain the promise of verse 24 to a five-year-old child?
✂ -----
- B) In your own spiritual journey, when did you begin to understand this truth?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?



D) Remember: **Whoever believes Jesus has eternal life and will not be condemned.**

Disbelief

outline

John 5:31-47

Message of Hope: Jesus's words and works are His best proof.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is one of the more meaningful gifts you have received?

Bridge: Today's story is a bit of a heartache; a gift is rejected. After giving it His best—His best miracles and His best teachings, people still reject Him. He has one goal—to lead us into all truth. But when push comes to shove, He will not force people. He respects their choice, even if they reject Him.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 5:31-47

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) If you had been Jesus, what else do you think you might have tried in order to convince people that you were the Messiah, the one sent from God?
✂ -----
- 2) In verse 34, what truth-sayings do you think Jesus is referring to?
✂ -----
- 3) In verse 36, what works do you think Jesus is referring to, and how do they give proof of who He is?
✂ -----
- 4) How would you summarize the warnings Jesus gives in this story?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What words or works of Jesus do you personally find most convincing?
✂ -----
- B) If you were honest with yourself, what warning from this story most applies to you personally?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus's words and works are His best proof.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Testing and Stretching

outline

John 6:1-15

Message of Hope: To grow us, Jesus continually tests and stretches us.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Growing up, what was your family's view on wasting food?

Bridge: Today's story gives us a glimpse of the importance of not wasting food, but it goes much further. Fifteen thousand people are fed lunch, the people become a mob, and Jesus slips away. What is the purpose of all this? Today's story is found in John 6:1-15.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 6:1-15

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) With 15,000 people coming to see miracles, how do you think Jesus quietly slips away without being noticed?
✂ -----
- 2) In verses 5-8 Jesus is testing Philip and the other disciples. What kind of response do you think Jesus wanted to see?
✂ -----
- 3) There is no record of Jesus sharing the gospel as part of this miracle. What do you think Jesus is trying to accomplish in this story?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verse 12 again. What happened with the scraps and why do you think John would include this verse?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) In the past, where have you seen God stretch your limited abilities or resources?
✂ -----
- B) Where do you see Jesus testing and stretching you now?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **To grow us, Jesus continually tests and stretches us.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Overcoming Fear

outline

John 6:16-21

Message of Hope: There is a way to live without be controlled by fear.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What were some of your childhood fears?

Bridge: Today's story is about fear. We all have fears in our life and we probably deal with them in different ways. Today we will explore the ingredients of fear, the side effects of living with fear, and how to overcome fear in our lives.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 6:16-21

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) If the disciples were waiting for Jesus on the seashore, why do you think they went ahead without him?
✂ -----
- 2) When you boil down fear to the core ingredients it is made of, what do you think creates and drives fear?
✂ -----
- 3) What do you think are some of the emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical side effects living in fear?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's first pause and read verse 20 again. Jesus does not give this as a suggestion. Why do you think Jesus gives this as a command?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What has been helpful for you in dealing with fear in your life?
✂ -----
- B) Where in your life, do you need to hear Jesus say, "Do not be afraid, I am here?"
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **There is a way to live without being controlled by fear.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Needs and Wants

outline

John 6:22-34

Message of Hope: Jesus will give you what you need, more than what you want.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When is a time when someone gave you what you needed instead of what you wanted?

Bridge: In today's story you can almost hear Jesus's disappointment. Jesus longs to give people what they need, but they are more interested in their wants. Yet Jesus does not give up. He continues to encourage people to accept what they really need.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 6:22-34

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What clues do you think the crowd had to determine that Jesus had not gone with the disciples?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's read verses 26, 27, and 30 again. Why do you think the miraculous signs did not serve their real purpose of leading people to the Father?
✂ -----
- 3) Someone first read verse 32 again. Why do you think they were more inclined to give credit to Moses instead of giving credit to the Father?
✂ -----
- 4) Two times in our story Jesus said, "I tell you the truth." How would you summarize the truths Jesus is emphasizing in this story?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) How do you guard against getting caught up in your wants?
✂ -----
- B) What "need" do you think Jesus most wants to give you?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus will give you what you need, more than what you want.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- o Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- o Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

God's Will

outline

John 6:34-52

Message of Hope: God's will is that you have eternal life.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was the last time you enjoyed homemade bread?

Bridge: Today's story is about bread, but not the kind you and I might be thinking of. Jesus talks about bread in a way that can be a bit hard to understand. So, let's dive into this story and discover some of the best news ever, what God's will is for you and me.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 6:34-52

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What similarities and differences do you see between the "bread of life" and manna?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's first read verse 40 in the Bible translations we have in our circle. How would you describe God's will?
✂ -----
- 3) There is a lot of murmuring and complaining in this story. Why do you think this was so controversial?
✂ -----
- 4) Verse 47 begins with Jesus's classic saying, "I tell you the truth." How would you summarize the truth Jesus is teaching us?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) How would you describe your spiritual diet?
✂ -----
- B) How would you respond if a child asked you "how do you hunger and thirst after God?"
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **God's will for your life is that you have eternal life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- o Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- o Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

A Hard Saying

outline

John 6:52-71

Message of Hope: God alone gives us eternal life. Our human effort accomplishes nothing.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

How do you feel when you have been rejected by a friend?

Bridge: If today's story was the first story a person heard about Jesus, it might be hard to understand. It was even hard for those who had been with Jesus for a long time. And, as we will see, some reject Jesus and walk away. As we dig into this story, we may not discover all the answers, but let's try to understand what is going on and why John included this story. Our story is called *A Hard Saying*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 6:52-71

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) This story begins with a hard saying in verse 53. What do you think Jesus is saying in this verse?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's read verse 63 in our different Bibles. Why do you think John includes this verse in this story?
✂ -----
- 3) Verse 66 records a turning point. Why do you think many of Jesus's disciples turned away at this point?
✂ -----
- 4) Somehow the twelve disciples saw beyond this hard saying. What do you think kept the twelve disciples from leaving Jesus at this point?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) In today's world, why do you think people leave Jesus?
✂ -----
- B) If you have become a follow of Jesus, what has kept you from leaving?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **It is God who gives eternal life. Our human effort accomplishes nothing.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Siblings

outline

John 7:1-9

Message of Hope: Jesus's Father is your Father, and He will not abandon you.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

How many brothers and sisters did you grow up with, and where are you in the lineup?

Bridge: Today's story is about siblings. And as many of us know, growing up with siblings brings a mix of good times and hard times. Today's story records some of the hard times Jesus experienced with His siblings. But in spite of these hard times, Jesus stays on course.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 7:1-9

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) How do you think Jesus knew that the Jewish leaders were planning His death?
✂ -----
- 2) What do your footnotes or side notes tells us about the festival?
✂ -----
- 3) If Jesus's brothers do not believe in Him, why do you think they encourage Him to show Himself to the world?
✂ -----
- 4) What thoughts and feelings do you think Jesus experienced when He realized that His own brothers did not believe in Him?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Where do you see our world showing its hatred towards people today?
✂ -----
- B) What gives you courage to stand for the right even when people are against you?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus's Father is your Father, and He will not abandon you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Blind Spots

outline

John 7:10-24

Message of Hope: Jesus wants to set you free from your blind spots.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the words *blind spot*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story is about blindspots. Jesus unveils blindspots of those who thought they had spirituality all figured out. And this story may help us see some of our own blindspots in our spiritual journey.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 7:10-24

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jesus stays undercover until verse 14, and then goes high profile by teaching in the Temple?
✂ -----
- 2) In verse 19 Jesus seems to make some rather strong statements. What do you think Jesus is doing?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's reread verses 20-24. What blind spots do you think Jesus is trying to help these people see?
✂ -----
- 4) Drawing from the principles found in this story, how do you think Jesus would complete this sentence, "Sabbath is a day for . . .?"
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What has become one of the unexpected blessings of Sabbath?
✂ -----
- B) What blind spots do you think Jesus is trying to help you see in your life?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus wants to set you free from your blind spots.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

The Big Question

outline

John 7:25-36

Message of Hope: Jesus is either the Messiah or the greatest liar.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you have a question, in general, where do you go to find answers?

Bridge: Today's story is full of questions. Depending upon your translation, there are about six questions. Questions can indicate that someone is truly searching, or they can be a smoke screen to avoid the real issue. As we explore these questions, there may be a big question, or an underlying and foundational question being asked.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 7:25-36

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think John records all these questions?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's pause and read verses 28-29 again. What was it about Jesus's words that drove the leaders to try to arrest Him in verse 30?
✂ -----
- 3) Verse 31 seems to mark a turning point both for the people and the Jewish leaders. What do you think brings about the turning point for both of them?
✂ -----
- 4) What do you think is the big question, or the underlying question, in this story?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When was a time you experienced some kind of turning point in your life?
✂ -----
- B) What do you think is one of the best evidences that Jesus is the Messiah?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus is either the Messiah or the greatest liar.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- o Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- o Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Anyone

outline

John 7:37-53

Message of Hope: Jesus's invitation is for anyone, which includes you.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Who is someone in your life that has defended you?

Bridge: Today's story begins with an amazing, all-inclusive invitation from Jesus and ends with an influential leader defending Jesus. How do these two fit together in the same story? Let's dig in and read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 7:37-53

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jesus says verses 37 and 38 in a loud voice?
✂ -----
- 2) What do you think Jesus meant when He said “any man” in verse 37?
✂ -----
- 3) There seems to be confusion over where Jesus was from—Galilee or Bethlehem. What helpful information do the footnotes or side notes in our Bibles provide?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's pause and read verse 50 and 51 again. Why do you think Nicodemus waited until this point to speak up?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) If you had been Nicodemus, what do you think you would have said?
✂ -----
- B) What thirst would you like Jesus to quench in your life?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus's invitation is for anyone, which includes you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Set Free

outline

John 8:1-11

Message of Hope: Neither do I condemn you, go and leave your life of sin.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Who is someone who has encouraged you?

Bridge: Today's story begins with someone being caught and accused. But then everything changes when Jesus shows up. He does not say much, just writes in the sand. What does He write? We are not told, but the accusers disappear and Jesus says something that applies to all of us today.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 8:1-11

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jesus begins to write in the dust?
✂ -----
- 2) Why do you think the oldest accusers slipped away first?
✂ -----
- 3) What was Jesus saying when He said, "If anyone of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone?"
✂ -----
- 4) Let's reread verses 10-11. What was Jesus's message when He said, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more?"
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What do you do when you blow it?
✂ -----
- B) When did you come to realize that Jesus values you as a person?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Neither do I condemn you, go and leave your life of sin.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Flashlights

outline

John 8:12-20

Message of Hope: Jesus is the true light of our world.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is one of the brightest flashlights you have seen or used?

Bridge: Today's story is about the brightest light that has ever existed, and we will soon discover that this light goes way beyond any man-made light. But we will also discover we have made substitutes and counterfeit lesser lights. You may begin to notice that some people are using some of these lesser lights in their spiritual journey.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 8:12-20

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) With Jesus being the light of the world, why do you think people stumble around?
✂ -----
- 2) How do you think a person could identify “lesser lights” they are following?
✂ -----
- 3) What are the different identifiable claims Jesus makes about Himself in this story?
✂ -----
- 4) Why do you think Jesus takes the time to enter this seeming endless dialogue with the Pharisees?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What are some of the lesser light sources you have tried in life?
✂ -----
- B) How did you discover that they were not the true light, but lesser lights?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus is the true light of our world.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

180 Degrees

outline

John 8:21-30

Message of Hope: It is never too late to turn around.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is something you have changed in your life?

Bridge: Today's story is about change, but it begins with a long list of discouragements and misunderstandings. People do not understand what is being said. Then in the last verse of the story things change, and there is a 180-degree turnaround for many of the people who have been listening. It is in this last verse that we find hope, for it is never too late to turn around.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 8:21-30

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jesus would continue to say these things over and over even though the people did not understand what He was saying?
✂ -----
- 2) If Jesus said in verse 21 that the people would die in their sins, how do you think it is possible in verse 30 for many to believe?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verse 28 in the different translations in our circle. What do you think it is about the cross that would make it possible for them to later understand who Jesus is?
✂ -----
- 4) In verse 30 what might have been the tipping points that caused many to believe?

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When was a time that you were going one way in life and had a turnaround?
✂ -----
- B) For you, what is one of the more convincing evidences that Jesus is indeed the Messiah?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **It is never too late to turn around.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

If

outline

John 8:31-59

Message of Hope: The Truth of Jesus will set you free.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the word *if*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story begins with the word *if*, but then goes on to explore a reoccurring theme of truth woven throughout the story. Today we are going to focus on this theme of "truth" and the role it plays in setting us free.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 8:31-59

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 31, why do you think Jesus includes the word *if*?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's read verse 32 in our different translations. Why do you think Jesus says that truth is directly linked to being set free?
✂ -----
- 3) Verse 34 begins with "I tell you the truth." In the following verses what truth do you think Jesus is bringing to light?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verse 51 in all the different translations we have. What Kingdom truth do you see Jesus talking about?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) How do you strive to hold on to and remain faithful to Jesus's teaching?
✂ -----
- B) How has a Bible truth set you free?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **The truths of Jesus will set you free.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

I Was Blind

outline

John 9:1-7

Message of Hope: Jesus is the light of this world.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What was a time when the lights came on, and you understood something that had previously been difficult to understand?

Bridge: Today's story is a healing story. The lights literally come on for a blind man who has been blind since birth. As we read this story, try to imagine what it would have been like to grow up blind and then to be healed by Jesus.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 9:1-7

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jesus's disciples automatically linked this man's blindness to his own sins or the sins of his parents?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's read verse 3 in the different Bible translations in our circle. How do you make sense of the last part of this verse where Jesus explains why this man was born blind?
✂ -----
- 3) In verse 4, what do you think Jesus is referring to when He talks about quickly carrying out the work assigned?
✂ -----
- 4) Why do you think Jesus includes verse 7 as part of this healing?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When was a time you experienced healing, be it physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual?
✂ -----
- B) What is an area of your life that you sense God is trying to open your eyes?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus is the light of this world.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Now I See

outline

John 9:6-34

Message of Hope: I was blind, but now I see.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the term *blind-spot*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story contrasts two groups of people—the blind and those who can see. But this story also pulls back the curtain and shows how anyone can be so blindsighted that they miss what God is doing right in front of them.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 9:6-34

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jesus is absent during this part of the story?
✂ -----
- 2) Digging below the surface, what do you think are the deeper issues in this story that John would want us to explore?
✂ -----
- 3) Why do you think Jesus felt it was worth the price to heal this man on Sabbath when it could have happened on another day and avoided some of the quarreling?
✂ -----
- 4) Why do you think the Pharisees believed that God did not listen to sinners?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When was a time when you felt that God was not hearing you?
✂ -----
- B) When was a time when you knew that God heard and answered you?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **I was blind, but now I see.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Spiritually Blind

outline

John 9:35-9:41

Message of Hope: God is also trying to heal our spiritual blindness.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

If you could take a school course, what would you like to learn about?

Bridge: Today's story is about blindness. This ongoing story has highlighted a person who was born blind and healed by Jesus. But today, Jesus shifts gears by widening the scope of blindness to spiritual and mental blindness.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 9:35-9:41

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jesus waited (possibly a day or two) until after this man had been healed to ask him if he believed in the Son of Man?
✂ -----
- 2) In verse 38 why do you think John adds the sentence, "And he worshiped Jesus"?
✂ -----
- 3) In verse 39 it would have been easy for Jesus to leave the word *judgment* out of this verse, so why do you think He included it?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verse 41 in our different Bible translations. What do you think Jesus is saying in this verse about guilt?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When was a time when you discovered that Jesus had taken care of you before you realized you were facing a problem?
✂ -----
- B) If you were to suspect spiritual blindness in your own life, what would you suspect?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **God is also trying to heal my spiritual blindness.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Robbed

outline

John 10:1-6

Message of Hope: God cannot be outsmarted

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time someone stole something from you, or you suspected something was stolen?

Bridge: Today's story is about robbers. But in today's world robbers have gotten way more advanced and sophisticated in their deception. Next week we will look at part two of the story. But for today, let's explore the extent to which modern-day robbers will go to disguise themselves as "true."

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 10:1-6

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What do you think would keep a modern-day robber from disguising himself and walking through the gate instead of going over the wall?
✂ -----
- 2) In verse 3, who do you think would be the modern-day gatekeepers?
✂ -----
- 3) How do you think a modern-day robber would try to disguise his voice?
✂ -----
- 4) How do you think a person today can practically know the difference between the true Shepherd and a disguised robber?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When was a time you realized that you had been deceived by a modern-day robber?
✂ -----
- B) How do you guard yourself from being spiritually robbed?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **God cannot be outsmarted.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Sheepfolds

outline

John 10:6-21

Message of Hope: Even sheep recognize His voice; there is hope for me.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

In sixty seconds or less, what experience have you had with sheep?

Bridge: Today's story is about sheep, and as we will soon learn the sheep represent us. It has been said that sheep are not the most intelligent animals, but don't take it personally. It is interesting how sheep have one ability that keeps them out of trouble and even saves their lives. What is this ability? Let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 10:6-21

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 7 and verse 11, Jesus claims to be both the gate and the good Shepherd. Why do you think Jesus says He is both?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's read verse 16 in the different translations around our circle. What do you think Jesus is referring to in this verse?
✂ -----
- 3) Someone read verses 17-18 again. How do you think it is possible that Jesus has the authority to lay down His life and die and the ability take it back up again and live?
✂ -----
- 4) How would you respond to the last question in this story, can a demon open the eyes of the blind? Why or why not?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Who or what has helped you learn how to recognize the good Shepherd's voice?
✂ -----
- B) What does the presence of Jesus sound like, look like, feel like, and taste like to you?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Even sheep recognize His voice.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Un-Snatchable

outline

John 10:22-33

Message of Hope: No one can snatch us from the Father's hands.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the word *suspense*, what comes to you mind?

Bridge: In today's world, suspense is used in movies and books to keep people engaged. But today's story is about hope and security. These might seem like rare commodities, but in God's Kingdom, hope and security is the goal that God longs for us to feel and know in our hearts.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 10:22-33

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What do the footnotes or cross-references in your Bible say about the Festival of Dedication?
✂ -----
- 2) Why do you think these people were still confused and asking if Jesus is the Messiah?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verses 25-30 in the different Bible translations we have in our circle. Why do you think Jesus uses the works He did in His Father's name as evidence or proof?
✂ -----
- 4) How would you summarize Jesus's message to us in verses 28-29?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What has helped you comprehend the extents to which God goes to make you un-snatchable?
✂ -----
- B) What works of Jesus do you find the most convincing?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **No one can snatch us from the Father's hands.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Play on Words

outline

John 10:33-42

Message of Hope: Your words and your actions influence people for good or for bad.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What do you think carries more weight, a person's words or their actions? Why?

Bridge: Today's story is a play on words that concludes with an interesting twist regarding whether a person's words or actions carry more weight. As we explore this story, we will jump into the Old Testament and read the verse Jesus references.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 10:33-42

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) How would you summarize what Jesus is saying in this story?
✂ -----
- 2) What do you think is signified by the difference between the word *god* with a small *g* and *God* with a capital *G*?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's find the Old Testament reference Jesus refers to and read it from our different translations. Why do you think Jesus references this verse?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verse 41-42 in our different translations. Why do you think this story concludes with this interesting observation about John?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What do you hope people will say about you as they reflect on your life?
✂ -----
- B) How are you trying to live your life towards that end?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Your words and actions influence people for good or bad.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- o Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- o Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Waking the Dead, part 1

outline

John 11:1-16

Message of Hope: God offers us life after death.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When and where was the last funeral you attended?

Bridge: There are very few stories in the Bible where people are resurrected from the dead, but today's story is one of them. Unlike *near-death* experiences, today's story is about a man who had been dead for *four* days before being resurrected by Jesus. Since this is a long story, it will be a continued story. Today we will only read and explore the first part.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 11:1-16

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 3, why do you think the message Mary and Martha sent to Jesus is only a statement, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick," and not a request?
✂ -----
- 2) If Jesus loved Lazarus so much, why do you think Jesus waited two days?
✂ -----
- 3) If you had been Mary or Martha, what would Jesus's reply "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death" have meant to you?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verses 11-15 in our different translations. Why do you think Jesus used "sleep" to refer to "death"?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Who is someone in your life, a friend or family member, who has died and what did you appreciate about them?
✂ -----
- B) As a small child, what were the different ways death was explained to you?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **God offers us life after death.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Waking the Dead, part 2

outline

John 11:17-29

Message of Hope: Death was never meant to be, and it is not the end.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time you arrived late to something?

Bridge: Jesus arrives late in today's story. In contemporary Jewish belief, reviving someone from unconsciousness or apparent death was possible for three days after death. So, Jesus's delay sets the stage for an indisputable miracle.¹ Today's story is about a man who had been dead for *four* days before being resurrected by Jesus. Let's read and explore part 2 of our story called *Waking the Dead*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 11:17-29

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 20, why do you think Mary stays in the house?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's read verses 21-26 in the different translations we have in our circle. In verse 22, why do you think Martha has so much confidence that Jesus can raise Lazarus from the dead?
✂ -----
- 3) In verse 24, Martha's belief about death and resurrection is actually a quote from Jesus. Where do your Bible's footnotes cross-reference this quote? (If no Bible has the following cross-references, ask people to look up John 6: 39, 40, 44, and 54).
✂ -----
- 4) It seems that Jesus has one question. Why do you think He wants to know if Martha believes He is the Messiah, the Son of God?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) If it had been your brother who had died, do you think you would have responded more like Mary or Martha? Why?
✂ -----
- B) When has Jesus delayed answering your prayer, and then later, you discovered He had something better in mind?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Death was never meant to be, and it is not the end.** How can this group pray for

¹ Dybdahl, J. L. (Ed.). (2010). *Andrews Study Bible Notes* (p. 1399). Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press.

you this week?

Waking the Dead, part 3

outline

John 11:30-44

Message of Hope: Emotions are a normal and healthy part of life.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Growing up, how was the expression of emotions viewed in your family?

Bridge: In today's story there will be a lot of emotion. And it may be surprising to discover that much of the emotion comes from Jesus. As we explore this story, *Waking the Dead, part 3*, we will also explore what healthy emotion is like.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 11:30-44

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jesus waits outside the village and does not go to Mary and Martha?
✂ -----
- 2) What are the different emotions you see Jesus expressing in this story?
✂ -----
- 3) In verses 33 and 38 some translations use the word *anger* to describe Jesus's emotion. What do you see as the difference between Jesus's anger and most people's anger in today's world?
✂ -----
- 4) In the last few verses of this miracle story, what strikes you as exciting, confusing, unique, different, unexpected, or normal?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Growing up, how was crying viewed in your home?
✂ -----
- B) Describe a time when you had a good cry.
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Emotions are a normal and healthy part of life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Wanted

outline

John 11:45-57

Message of Hope: God's master plan happens no matter what.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Have you ever known someone who was wanted for a crime?

Bridge: Withdrawal is often considered cowardly. But in today's story we learn that there is a time to boldly press forward and a time to withdraw for a time. Our story is called “*Wanted.*”

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 11:45-57

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think the Jewish leaders believed that the Roman army would come and destroy the temple and nation if everyone believed in Jesus?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's read verses 51-52 again. If the leaders were so against Jesus, how do you make sense of the fact that they could still be led to prophecy according to God's plans?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verse 54 again. How do you think Jesus decides whether to boldly press forward or to withdraw for a time?
✂ -----
- 4) In verse 56, why do you think the common people questioned if Jesus would be coming?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Describe a time when you misunderstood what Jesus was doing in your life?
✂ -----
- B) Where have you seen Jesus override some plans?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **God's master plan happens no matter what.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Sinners Welcome

outline

John 12:1-11

Message of Hope: Jesus invites the worst of sinners to become His followers.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time someone came to your defense?

Bridge: Today's story unmasks a thief in the inner circle of Jesus's close friends. But the interesting thing is that Jesus is likely well aware of this thief's activity. Worse yet, this thief begins to criticize another person's good intentions. But then Jesus steps in. Today's story is called *Sinners Welcome*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 12:1-11

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jesus invited Judas Iscariot to be part of the twelve disciples?
✂ -----
- 2) What do you think might have motivated Mary to spend a year's income so she could anoint Jesus's feet with perfume?
✂ -----
- 3) How do you think Mary's actions were preparation for Jesus's burial?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verse 8 from the different translations we have in our circle. What do you see Jesus trying to say in this verse?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When is a time you have taken a "hit" because of your commitment to follow Jesus?
✂ -----
- B) When was a time you defended someone who was being put down or belittled?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus invites the worst of sinners to become His followers.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- o Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- o Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

A Prophetic Parade

outline

John 12:12-19

Message of Hope: Bible prophecies give us an insider view.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What was one of the last parades you watched?

Bridge: Today's story is a parade. But it has a very different purpose and goal than other parades. And believe it or not, this parade is the fulfillment of a Bible prophecy—it is a prophetic parade. Have you ever wondered why God uses prophecy in the Bible? Have you ever noticed how some things in the Bible are clear and other things require deeper study? Our story is called *A Prophetic Parade*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 12:12-19

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think the people took palm branches?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's read verse 16 in the different translations in our circle. Why do you think God obscures some things in Bible prophecy?
✂ -----
- 3) How do you think Jesus's disciples would have responded differently if they had studied the prophecies and recognized them as they unfolded right in front of them?
✂ -----
- 4) What role do you think Bible prophecy will play in preparing God's people for Jesus's second coming?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What Bible prophecies would you or do you find most interesting?
✂ -----
- B) What part of this prophetic parade gives you hope?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Bible prophecy gives us an insider view of what is and will happen.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.**

A Prophetic Announcement

outline

John 12:20-36

Message of Hope: Giving up self is how we gain eternal life.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What was a unique or interesting wedding announcement you remember, maybe yours or somebody else's announcement?

Bridge: Today's story is a very interesting announcement, but it is not a wedding announcement. It is a rather sober announcement which is both sad and, in some ways, good news. It is a death announcement. How can a death announcement be both sad and good? Let's dig into this story, which is called *A Prophetic Announcement*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 12:20-36

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jesus chose this way to announce or introduce His death?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's read verse 25 in the different translations we have in our circle. In real, practical terms, how do people love their lives in today's world such that they actually end up losing their lives.
✂ -----
- 3) Why do you think God speaks at this time from Heaven, and why do you think people interpret it differently?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verse 31 again. What do you think Jesus is referring to when He talks about judgment?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) If you were to give up seeking your own glory, what would you give up?
✂ -----
- B) How has your life been blessed by others who have "died" to self?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Giving up self is how we gain eternal life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Praised

outline

John 12:37-43

Message of Hope: Praise, confirmation, and validation from God is most important!

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a meaningful time someone told you how much they appreciated something you did?

Bridge: Today's story is about appreciation, which can come in a variety of forms. As good as it feels to be appreciated, validated, or praised by others, it can also be a trap that leads us in the wrong direction. Today's story is called *Praised*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 12:37-43

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think that the majority of people did not believe in Jesus even though they had seen so many miracles?
✂ -----
- 2) How do you think verse 38 is considered a prediction when Isaiah seems to be asking questions?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verses 39-40 in the translations we have in our circle. How do you make sense of this?
✂ -----
- 4) Someone read verses 42-43 again. How do you think it is possible to be both undercover and believing at the same time?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) In today's world how are people tempted to put the praise of humans above the praise of God?
✂ -----
- B) How do you guard yourself from allowing human praise to lead you in the wrong direction?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Praise, validation, and confirmation from God is most important!** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

The Big Three

outline

John 12:44-50

Message of Hope: Trust and obedience lead to eternal life.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

If you were to summarize an important value in life, what is one you would highlight?

Bridge: In today's story Jesus is going to give a final public statement. He is going to link together three important life values—trust, obedience, and judgment. At first these may seem to have nothing to do with each other, but they are interconnected. Today's story is called *The Big Three*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 12:44-50

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think this story starts out with Jesus “crying out”?
✂ -----
- 2) How do you think a person knows if they are staying in darkness or walking towards the light?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verse 47 in the different translations we have in our circle. Why do you think Jesus links “keeping” Jesus words (which is obedience) with “judgment”?
✂ -----
- 4) If we could ask Jesus why He clarifies that judgment happens on “the last day” what do you think He would say?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) How do you use external obedience to give you clues as to your internal level of trust?
✂ -----
- B) How have you found Jesus’s commands indeed leading you to eternal life.
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Trust and obedience lead to eternal life**. How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Clean Feet; Clean Hearts

outline

John 13:1-11

Message of Hope: Clean feet lead to clean hearts

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Growing up, how often were you required to take a bath?

Bridge: Today's story is about bathing, but not for the purpose of getting dirt washed off our feet and faces. Today's story is about getting dirt washed off our hearts. How does this happen? Jesus will explain it, but in a way that we may have not thought about.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 13:1-11

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What do you think would motivate a person to conclude that the Devil is real or is not real?
✂ -----
- 2) Why do you think Peter was so adamant against Jesus washing his feet?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verses 8-10 again. What do you think Jesus is referring to in verse 8?
✂ -----
- 4) If we could ask Jesus what the difference is between foot washing and baptism, what do you think He would say?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What do you think you would have done if Jesus had asked to wash your feet?
✂ -----
- B) Is it harder for you to serve others or be served by others? Why?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Clean feet lead to clean hearts.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Do This!

outline

John 13:12-20

Message of Hope: Foot washing brings special blessings from God.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is a blessing you have experienced recently?

Bridge: Today's story explores a special blessing that God gives to those who follow His example. You will also notice that this example is something new that Jesus adds to the Last Supper, but most followers of Christ have ignored it. Today's story is called *Do This!*

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 13:12-20

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jesus gave them this example and then invited them to continue this foot washing practice?
✂ -----
- 2) What do you think are some of the hidden blessings Jesus is talking about in verse 18?
✂ -----
- 3) Verse 18 seems to suggest there is someone among them that is a traitor. Why do you think Jesus has permitted this person to be with them all this time without publicly identifying them?
✂ -----
- 4) Someone please read verse 20 again. What do you think Jesus would have said if one of the disciples would have asked, "How do we know if a messenger is from you?"
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Who are people you sense God has sent as messengers to you at different times of your life?
✂ -----
- B) What Biblical truths have they shared that have blessed you?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Foot washing brings special blessings from God.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Final Decision

outline

John 13:21-30

Message of Hope: Jesus honors our final decision.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Who is someone that has shown you patience, compassion, and love when you did not deserve it?

Bridge: Today's story showcases Jesus's love, compassion, and patience with a man named Judas. For three years he had been part of Jesus's inner circle. Even though Judas had been dishonest and deceitful, Jesus did not expose him. But in this story, the time has come for Judas to make his final decision.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 13:21-30

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jesus waited until verse 26 to expose Judas to the other disciples?
✂ -----
- 2) At what point in this story do you think it became too late for Judas to repent and turn from his evil ways?
✂ -----
- 3) Verse 27 says that Satan entered Judas at this time. How do you think Satan had been working in Judas's life prior to or leading up to this verse?
✂ -----
- 4) If someone wants to repent and turn from old ways, what do you think are the first steps?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) If you know someone is treating you unkindly behind your back, how are you inclined to treat that person?
✂ -----
- B) When was a time you turned away from an old habit and started a new one?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus will honor our final choice.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- o Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- o Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Old or New?

outline

John 13:31-35

Message of Hope: Love and kindness will win.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the word *love* what comes to your mind?

Bridge: In today's story Jesus introduces a new commandment, a commandment to love one another. In a world of relativity where love means all kinds of things, this new command to love builds upon Christ's previous commandments. Today's story is called *An Old or New Commandment?*

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 13:31-38

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What do you think might have been different if Judas had stayed and was able to listen?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's read verse 34-35 in the different translations we have in our circle. What do you think is so "new" about this new commandment?
✂ -----
- 3) Love is a relative term that can be interpreted in a variety of ways. How do you see this new commandment building upon the other commandments?
✂ -----
- 4) In verse 38, why do you think Jesus told Peter what He was going to do in the future?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When was a time you made a conscious choice to be loving even though you did not feel like it?
✂ -----
- B) When was a time someone else was loving to you when you did not deserve it?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Love and kindness will win.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- o Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- o Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Troubled Hearts?

outline
John 14:1-7

Message of Hope: Jesus longs to give you a worry-free heart.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What are some of the things people tend to worry about in today's world?

Bridge: Today's story begins with a command and ends with a wonderful promise. What happens in between the command and promise depends upon our choices, so let's dig in. Our short story is found in John 14:1-7.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 14:1-7

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) This story starts out with this command, "Don't let your heart be troubled." What advice do you think Jesus would give for this to become a reality in our lives?
✂ -----
- 2) What do you think Jesus is "preparing" for His children?
✂ -----
- 3) Someone please read verse 3 again. Why do you think Jesus gives us this promise?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verse 6 in the different Bible translations we have. What do you think Jesus is saying in this verse?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a real, practical level, when you find your heart is troubled, what do you typically do?
✂ -----
- B) What is a worry that you would like to give to Jesus today?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus longs to give you a worry-free heart.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Greater Works

outline

John 14:8-14

Message of Hope: A promise from Jesus is a dependable promise.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the word *promise*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story is a promise. And it may be hard to reconcile and make sense of, as it does not seem to match what we see in today's world. We may not get it all figured out today, but let's dig deep into this story and try to make sense of this promise. This story is called *Greater Works*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 14:8-14

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Having been with Jesus for three years, why do you think Philip, in verse 8, was asking Jesus to show them the Father?
✂ -----
- 2) In verse 11, why do you think Jesus says, "at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves"?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verses 12-14 in the different translations we have. What do you see as the "greater thing" or "greater works" in verse 12?
✂ -----
- 4) From our limited perspective, how can we know if what we ask for will truly bring glory to God?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When looking for the Father, where do you typically find Him?
✂ -----
- B) Where have you seen the Father working in your life recently?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **A promise from Jesus is a dependable promise.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.**

My Promise

outline

John 14:15-26

Message of Hope: You will not be abandoned or left alone.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time you were abandoned, orphaned, or alone in life?

Bridge: Today's story is an incredible promise that we will never be abandoned, orphaned, or left alone in life. Jesus introduces us to the Holy Spirit and gives us a promise that we can hold on to. Our story is found in John 14:15-26.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 14:15-26

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verses 16 and 26, why do you think Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as an Advocate, Comforter, or Helper?
✂ -----
- 2) Verse 16 talks about the Holy Spirit as in the future, but verse 17 talks about the Holy Spirit as already present. How do you make sense of this?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's find and reread the verses in this story that help us understand what the role and job of the Holy Spirit is. How do you think the Holy Spirit practically goes about this work in our lives?
✂ -----
- 4) Why do you think Jesus makes a direct connection between obeying truth and loving Him?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) How do you think the Holy Spirit might be working in your life?
✂ -----
- B) What is something you would like the Holy Spirit to help you with?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **You are not abandoned, orphaned, or left alone.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Fearless

outline

John 14:27-31

Message of Hope: You do not have to live in fear.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Growing up, what was one thing you were afraid of?

Bridge: Today's story will give us the key to living a life without fear. This does not mean that we will not face difficult situations, but we do not have to be prisoners of fear. The opposite of fear, peace of mind, is offered to each of us, and as with all gifts, we have to accept it and claim this gift. Our story is found in John 14:27-31

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 14:27-31

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Of all the gifts Jesus leaves, why do you think He leaves the gift of peace of mind?
✂ -----
- 2) Even though peace of mind cannot come from the world, how do you see the world offering a counterfeit?
✂ -----
- 3) Verse 27 ends with a command to stop being afraid or troubled. Why do you think Jesus gives a command to not be afraid, instead of commanding us to be at peace?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verse 30 again. How do you think the ruler of this world does not have any power from Jesus, if he is truly the ruler of this world?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When afraid, what do you typically do, and what would you like to start doing?
✂ -----
- B) On a very practical level, how do you live in the peace that this story is talking about?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **You do not have to live in fear.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Pruning Time

outline

John 15:1-8

Message of Hope: God will prune you because He loves you.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the word *pruning*, what comes to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story is about pruning. Pruning a tree or a vine can appear drastic. But the pruner knows it will help the tree be stronger if the dead and diseased wood is cut off. This story explains how God prunes us, so pay special attention to the pruning tool that God uses to prune the dead and diseased wood out of our life.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 15:1-8

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) How many times in this story is the word *fruit* used, and what do you think it is referring to?

Hint: After some discussion, if nobody mentions Galatians 5:22-23, ask someone to read it.

✂ -----

- 2) Let's read verse 3 in our different Bible translations. How do you think God's words prune our lives?

✂ -----

- 3) Someone please read verse 7 again. Why do you think Jesus emphasizes the importance of His "words" abiding in us?

✂ -----

- 4) How do you make sense of the last part of verse 7?

✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) In your personal life, where do you see God pruning you?

✂ -----

- B) What spiritual fruit would you like more of in your life?

✂ -----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂ -----

- D) Remember: **God will prune you because He loves you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.**

Chosen First

outline

John 15:9-17

Message of Hope: Jesus has chosen you to be His friend.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you think of the word *friend*, which names come to mind? Why?

Bridge: Today's story is about a best friend who chose you as their friend before you had a chance to choose them as your best friend. And it just so happens that this friend knew all about you—the good; the bad; the all—and He still chose you as His best friend. That is incredible, so let's read this story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 15:9-17

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What are all the different directions loving relationships are pointing in this story?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's read verse 11 again. What do you think Jesus would include in “these things” that fill us with overflowing joy in life?
✂ -----
- 3) In verse 15, what do you think “I have told you everything” includes?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verse 16 in the different translations in our circle. Why do you think Jesus emphasizes the point that He has chosen and appointed us?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What feelings does it bring up in you to know that Jesus chose you first?
✂ -----
- B) What “lasting fruit” do you sense Jesus is developing in you?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus has chosen you to be His friend.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Help for The Hated

outline

John 15:18-27

Message of Hope: Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to help us in life.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you think of the word *hatred*, what comes to mind?

Bridge: Today's story is about hatred, of both those who do the hating and those who are being hated. But this story is different. Notice why people are hated; notice what they have done (or not done) that causes people to hate them. It all seems a bit mixed up. Our story is called *Help for the Hated*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 15:18-27

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think this world has to be this way—where the world hates those who are friends of Jesus?
✂ -----
- 2) Why do you think the world is not content to let Christ-followers go their way; “you do your thing and we’ll do our thing” or “live and let live”?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verse 24 in the different translations we have. What do you think are the “works” and “miracles” that “no one else did” or “could do”?
✂ -----
- 4) How do you see the Holy Spirit being an Advocate and a Comforter during difficult times in life?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When you feel rejected and beaten down, how do you process this rejection and keep going?
✂ -----
- B) Where have you seen or experienced the Holy Spirit care for you in hard times?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to help us in life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.**

Never Alone

outline

John 16:1-15

Message of Hope: You are never alone.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Which do you like the least, leaving someone or being left by someone? Why?

Bridge: Today's story is about both leaving and being left. But this story also comes with a promise that the one leaving would come back, and while He was gone, those being left would not be alone. How does this work? Let's read our story which is called *Never Alone*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 16:1-15

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 1, what do you think “these things” could include?
✂ -----
- 2) In verse 5, why do you think Jesus slightly reprimands His disciples for grieving?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verse 7 from our different translations. Why do you think it was impossible for Jesus and the Holy Spirit to be present at the same time?
✂ -----
- 4) In verses 12-13, what do you think are some of the additional truths Jesus was referring to?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Of the different roles of the Holy Spirit, which ones have you come to appreciate lately?
✂ -----
- B) What truths do you see the Holy Spirit revealing to you lately?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **You are never alone**. How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Over the Top

outline

John 16:16-33

Message of Hope: Jesus promises joy among the trials.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time your heart swelled with joy?

Bridge: Today's story is about a promise that we can experience joy that is so fulfilling and satisfying that it is hard to believe it is even possible. Yet this promise also tells us that we will have trials in life. So how do joy and trials coexist together? Let's read our story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 16:16-33

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What do you think Jesus is referring to in verse 16?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's read verse 22 again. How would you explain or describe the joy Jesus is talking about?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verse 23-24 in our different translations. How do you make sense of this promise of asking for anything with what you see in life around you?
✂ -----
- 4) In verse 33, why do you think Jesus talked about peace and trials in the same sentence?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Since trials are going to be part of this world, how do you pull through them?
✂ -----
- B) How does this world try to rob you of joy and peace?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus promises joy among the trials.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Unity, part 1

outline

John 17:1-12

Message of Hope: You are protected by God's name.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What do you think most people pray about?

Bridge: Have you ever wondered, if Jesus were to pray, what would He pray about? Today you will find out. Our story covers the first half of the longest prayer Jesus prayed in the Bible. And you may be a bit surprised to learn what Jesus prays about.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 17:1-12

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Let's begin by reading verse 3 from the different translations we have in our circle. How would you explain this "knowing" to a seven year-old boy?

✂ -----

- 2) Let's read verses 7 and 8 again. How would you summarize Jesus's message that the people accepted?

✂ -----

- 3) In verses 2, 6, 9, and 10 Jesus refers to "the ones you gave me". What additional evidence in this story or the book of John can help us understand who Jesus is talking about?

Hint: Verse 8. Also, if nobody mentions John 3:16 you might ask someone to read it.

✂ -----

- 4) In verses 11 and 12, why do you think Jesus uses the power of His name as protection for His people?

✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When was a time you were protected?

✂ -----

- B) What do you sense might be a personal next step towards accepting and following God's plan for your life?

✂ -----

- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?

✂ -----

- D) Remember: **You are protected by God's name.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.**

Unity, part 2

outline

John 17:13-26

Message of Hope: Jesus wants you to live forever with Him in Heaven.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

If you could choose a dream place to live in this world, where might that be?

Bridge: Today's story makes it clear that Jesus wants each of us to live in Heaven forever with Him. As we read this story, notice the role that truth, unity, and oneness play in getting us ready to live with Jesus.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 17:13-26

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What do you think this kind of oneness and unity would look like in today's complex world?
✂ -----
- 2) What do you think keeps people from experiencing this kind of oneness and unity?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's reread verses 17-22 in our different translations. How do you see the truth in God's Word helping people towards unity and oneness instead of becoming the basis for division?
✂ -----
- 4) In verse 13 our story began with joy. How do you think truth, God's Word, and unity are related to joy?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What brings you deep and lasting joy in life?
✂ -----
- B) How do you see God challenging you in truth and unity?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus wants you to live with Him in Heaven forever.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Overzealous

outline

John 18:1-14

Message of Hope: Jesus is doing all He can do to draw you and save you.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you need to get away to think and reflect, where do you like to go?

Bridge: Today's story begins with Jesus getting away to think, reflect, and pray. But the story takes an unexpected turn of events. Someone's ear gets cut off, and Jesus is arrested. Today's story is called *Overzealous*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 18:1-14

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 3, Judas had been with Jesus for three years. Why do you think Judas thought they would need weapons?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's read verse 6 in our different translations. What do you think caused everyone to draw back and fall to the ground?
✂ -----
- 3) In verses 4-7, Why do you think Jesus has to ask two times "Who are you looking for?"
✂ -----
- 4) In verse 9 Jesus says, "I did not lose a single one of those you have given me." Two other times in the book of John He says the same thing. Where are these other references and who do you think Jesus was referring to?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When did it begin to dawn on you that Jesus does all He can to draw you to Him and save you?
✂ -----
- B) Like Peter, how are you tempted to be overzealous?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus is doing all He can to draw you and save you.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

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Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Lying

outline

John 18:19-27

Message of Hope: When we lie, asking for forgiveness makes our wrong right.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is something you remember lying about as a child?

Bridge: Today's story is about lying, but instead of a child lying, it is an adult who is one of Jesus's closest friends. As we read this story, try to imagine what it would be like to have one of your closest and most trustworthy friends lie about you.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 18:19-27

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 15-16, who do you think this unidentified disciple is, and why do you think this disciple is singled out, but not named?
✂ -----
- 2) In verse 19, what do you think made it so easy for Peter to lie about his friendship with Jesus?
✂ -----
- 3) Of all the possible questions the High Priest could have asked Jesus, why do you think he started with a question about what Jesus was teaching?
✂ -----
- 4) In verses 25-27, Peter lies two more times. What do you think could contribute to a habit of lying?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) How do you tend to justify a lie?
✂ -----
- B) How do you tend to go about making something right with someone?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **When we lie, asking for forgiveness makes our wrong right.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

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- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Truth Seekers

outline

John 18:28-40

Message of Hope: Jesus promised that Truth seekers will find the real thing.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

If a 7-year-old boy asked you, "What is truth?" how would you answer his question?

Bridge: Today's story goes deep. There is a lot to think about, ponder, and talk about. Today may be the day you discover something new. Today may be the day that your life takes a significant turn in your quest for truth. Our story is called *Truth Seekers*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 18:28-40

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think this trial goes all night and into the early morning hours?
✂ -----
- 2) In verse 33, Pilot asks Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Why do you think Jesus responds with this unique question in the next verse?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verse 36 again. What do you see as unusual about Jesus's answer to Pilot's question?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's reread verse 37 in our different Bible translations. What are the different ways you think people could respond to Jesus's claims in this verse?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What do you find intriguing about Jesus's truth claims?
✂ -----
- B) As you go about everyday life, how do you recognize truth?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus promised that Truth seekers will find the real thing.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Beyond Politics

outline

John 19:1-16

Message of Hope: Jesus gives you every opportunity to say yes to Him.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the word *politics*, what comes to mind?

Bridge: Today's story is steeped in politics. Unfortunately, politics invade almost every aspect of life. And it could be tempting to focus on politics today, but instead, we are going to dig deeper and explore the important question being asked in this story. Our story is called *Beyond Politics*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 19:1-16

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) If Pilate did not find Jesus guilty, why do you think He was flogged, crowned with thorns, and dressed in a purple robe?
✂ -----
- 2) Someone read verses 7 and 8 again. What do you think it was that really frightened Pilate?
✂ -----
- 3) In verse 11, what do you think Jesus was trying to tell Pilate?
✂ -----
- 4) Digging below the politics, what hints do you see in this story that give us clues as to what Pilate really believed about Jesus?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) If someone were to ask you what you really believe about Jesus, how would you respond?
✂ -----
- B) Where do you see politics, of any kind, interfering with your relationship with Jesus?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus gives you every opportunity to say yes to Him.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Alone in a Crowd

outline

John 19:17-27

Message of Hope: Jesus understands your loneliness—He’s been there.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time you were surrounded by people, but felt alone?

Bridge: Today's story features a person who is very alone, and yet, surrounded by lots of people. Not only is He alone, He has been abandoned by most of His close friends. In today's hectic world, people often do life alone or are lonely. Today's story offers hope from One who experienced what it is like. Our story is called *Alone in a Crowd*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 19:17-27

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think John emphasizes in verse 17 that Jesus carries His own cross?
✂ -----
- 2) Let's read verses 21-22 again. Why do you think Pilate become very focused and unwilling to change what he had written?
✂ -----
- 3) In verse 24, what do you think John is trying to tell us by emphasizing how this ancient prediction came true right on time?
✂ -----
- 4) Although Jesus was surrounded by a mob, in what ways do you see that He was alone?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What part of this story do you find helpful when feeling alone or lonely?
✂ -----
- B) When you find yourself feeling alone or lonely, how do you tend to respond and cope?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Jesus understands your loneliness—He's been there.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- o Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- o Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Mission Accomplished

outline

John 19:28-37

Message of Hope: God has a life mission for your life.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

On a scale of one to ten, with one being you don't know and ten being you are very clear, how clearly would you say you understand your life mission?

Bridge: In today's story Jesus is killed. His death, as horrible as it is, is why He came. His death is what makes it possible for us to be made right with God and for us to choose to accept His gift of eternal life. Today's story is called *Mission Accomplished*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 19:28-37

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) What do you think it was that made it possible for Jesus to know in verse 28 that His life mission was finished?
✂ -----
- 2) When Jesus said He was thirsty, do you think that He was thinking about fulfilling the Scriptures, or do you think He was thirsty, and the Bible predicted ahead of time what He would do?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verse 30 again. How much control over the specific time do you think people have regarding when they die?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verse 31 in the different translations we have in our circle. The footnotes in your Bible may have some tips, but what do you think made this Sabbath (or Saturday) an extra special Sabbath.
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) On a scale of one to ten, with one being you don't know and ten being you are very clear, would you say you're are living out the mission God has for your life?
✂ -----
- B) What is one thing you could adjust in your life that would better align you with God's mission for your life?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **God has a life mission for your life.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer & Lunch: Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle.

Secret Followers

outline

John 19:38–42

Message of Hope: There comes a day when secret followers become bold followers.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the words *secret follower*, what comes to mind?

Bridge: Today's story is about two secret followers. As we read this story, see if you can understand why they were secret followers, and what motivated them to spring into action, no longer being secret.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 19:38–42

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Who is Joseph and what do you think is now motivating him into action?
✂ -----
- 2) What clues do you find to suggest that Joseph and Nicodemus already know about each other's interest in Jesus, or do you think they are learning about this for the first time?
✂ -----
- 3) Joseph and Nicodemus bury Jesus in a garden tomb. How do you think they know about this location?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verse 42 in all our Bible translations. The word "Preparation" is capitalized in some translations. Why do you think this is capitalized and what are the different options you think this word is referring to?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Who do you relate to more, Joseph or Nicodemus? Why?
✂ -----
- B) If you had been living at this time, what would have motivated you into action?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **There comes a day when secret followers become bold followers.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Appearing, part 1

outline

John 20:1-18

Message of Hope: When we don't recognize Jesus, He is still by our side.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time you were looking for something, even looked right at it, but did not see it?

Bridge: Today's story is filled with so much sorrow, hurt, and discouragement that people are looking right at what they are looking for, but do not see it. But even in the midst of this, Jesus does not leave or abandon them. In fact, He does the opposite; He reveals Himself to them and gives them hope and a reason to live.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 20:1-18

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) In verse 7, why do you think the head cloth is neatly folded, but the rest of the burial linens are not folded?
✂ -----
- 2) Read verse 12-13 again. What do you think kept Mary from recognizing the two angels in white as angels?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verse 17 in all our Bible translations. Why do you think Jesus waits until *after* his resurrection and *after* seeing Mary before ascending to God?

Tip: Someone may reference a contradiction in Luke 23:43 which says, "Jesus answered him, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.'" Commas were not part of the Greek language and have been added in by translators. How is the meaning of Jesus's promise changed if the comma is placed *after* the word *today*. "Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in paradise."

✂ -----

- 4) Why do you think it is so important that Mary not touch or cling to Jesus?

✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) Which person in this story do you resonate with? Why?
✂ -----
- B) When was a time you, upon reflection, thought you might have been in the presence of angels, but did not recognize them as angels?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **When we don't recognize Jesus, He is still by our side.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer & Lunch: Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your prayer circle.

Appearing, part 2

outline

John 20:19-23

Message of Hope: Peace is a gift we receive from God.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

Briefly describe a peaceful place you have been.

Bridge: Today's story begins with people who are crippled with fear. But they are not left to live in fear. And neither are we left to live in our fears. But how do we deal with fear, move beyond it, or get rid of our fears? Today's story answers this question.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 20:19-23

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Jesus opted to make a miraculous appearance instead of a “normal” one?
✂ -----
- 2) In these five verses Jesus says two times, “peace be with you.” What do you think Jesus is trying to say at a deeper level?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verses 21-23 in our different translations. What do you think is the significance of Jesus giving these three instructions: sending, receiving, and forgiving?
✂ -----
- 4) Some would say that these three instructions are only for professional clergy and priests. Others would say they are for all believers. And still others would say some of the instructions were for professional clergy and other parts were for all the believers. How do you think John, the author of this book, would respond to this?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When do you find yourself hiding behind locked doors?
✂ -----
- B) What is one thing that is hindering your life from being a life of peace?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Peace is a gift we receive from God.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Appearing, part 3

outline

John 20:24-29

Message of Hope: When you doubt, Jesus takes the responsibility to build your faith.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is something you used to doubt or had a hard time believing?

Bridge: Today's story may become one of your favorite stories. It is a story about a person who was a master doubter. And even so, Jesus did not condemn or criticize him, instead He meets him in his doubt and helps him overcome and believe. The best part is that Jesus will do this for you.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 20:24-29

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Why do you think Thomas was so hesitant to believe his friends?
✂ -----
- 2) In verse 26, what fears do you think kept the disciples hiding behind locked doors eight days later?
✂ -----
- 3) In verse 28 what do you think are the differences and similarities in these two titles?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verse 29 in all our Bible translations. What is harder—to believe while seeing or to believe without seeing? Why do you think so?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) When was a time you said “I'll believe it when I see it!” or something similar to this?
✂ -----
- B) If Jesus were to say to you, “Don't be faithless anymore. Believe.” What do you think He would be referring to in your life?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **When you doubt, Jesus takes the responsibility to build your faith.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

My Choice

outline

John 20:30-31

Message of Hope: Choosing to follow this radical man Jesus is our only hope.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the words *miracle worker*, what images and thoughts come to your mind?

Bridge: Today's story is very short, only two verses. But it is packed with some of the most important ancient wisdom you and I need for modern life. In these two verses you will find hope when facing difficult times, freedom from slavery and addictions, and the secret for living forever. Our story is called *My Choice*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 20:30-31

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) If all the other miraculous signs referred to in this story had been written down, how do you think it would have helped or encouraged more people to believe in Jesus in today's world?
✂ -----
- 2) As we reread verse 31 in our different translations. What do you think it is about miraculous signs that help people to come to believe and continue to believe in Jesus?
✂ -----
- 3) What do you think John is trying to teach us in this story about freedom of choice?
✂ -----
- 4) In verse 31 John talks about the "name." Why do you think he includes this part of the verse?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What God-honoring miracle have you experienced in life?
✂ -----
- B) When did you begin to discover that Jesus was also God's Son, the Messiah?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Choosing to follow this radical man Jesus is our only hope.** How can this group pray for you this week?
✂ -----

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Going Fishing

outline

John 21:1-14

Message of Hope: God could do it all, but He is more interested in working together with us.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

Welcome: We are so glad that you are here today.

Setting the Context:

- We come from a variety of backgrounds and seek to create a safe place for Truth seekers to grow spiritually.
- You will notice that we try to avoid fancy religious language. We are common people.
- Let's encourage those who like to talk to give opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What is a high-light or a low-light (a headline) from your week?
3. [*Insert rotation question for the week.*]

At the end of check-in ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate check-in next week. Anyone can facilitate check-in. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

The Quiz: A child asks three questions. They randomly choose from the check-in questions people just answered. Ask everyone to raise their hands and the child picks someone to answer the questions.

At the end of the quiz ask the child who facilitated to choose another child to facilitate the quiz next week.

Facilitator's Directions:

1. Talk as little as possible, encourage others to share, and avoid a monologue.
2. Cut on the dotted lines. Distribute questions around the circle. (✂ -----)
3. Keep the top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was the last time you went fishing or were with people who were fishing?

Bridge: Today's story is a fishing story. But unlike some fishing stories that grow out of proportion, in this fishing story there are some very accurate details about what happens. But more than the fishing details, there is some practical life wisdom, even if we are not big on fishing.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 21:1-14

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) To summarize the previous few stories, when were the first two times Jesus appeared to His disciples after rising from the dead?
✂ -----
- 2) Why do you think they so quickly obeyed the stranger without additional questioning?
✂ -----
- 3) Why do you think Jesus uses the setting of an early morning breakfast for this third appearing?
✂ -----
- 4) Let's read verse 10 again. What do you think is the reason Jesus asks them to bring some of their own fish for breakfast, especially since He has already miraculously provided some of the fish?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) What do you think would be your default response to a stranger asking you to try again with a few modifications?
✂ -----
- B) Where in your life do you see Jesus asking you to contribute what you can do to what He has already done for you?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **God could do it all, but He is more interested in working together with us.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.**

Do You Really?

outline

John 21:15-25

Message of Hope: Love is the one gift Jesus wants from us.

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

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4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When you hear the word *love*, what different meanings come to mind?

Bridge: Today's story is about love, but not the kind of love that people typically think of in our world. It is also about death. How do love and death fit in the same story? Let's explore this story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: John 21:15-25

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

- 1) Do you think Jesus asks these three questions all in a row, or do you think they were spread out over some time.
✂ -----
- 2) What do you think Jesus is really getting at when He repeats His question three times?
✂ -----
- 3) Let's read verse 18-19 again. What do you see in Jesus's comments that reveals to Peter how he would die?
✂ -----
- 4) In verses 20-21, why do you think Peter asked how another disciple would die?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A) If you could ask Jesus anything about your future, what would you like to ask Him?
✂ -----
- B) If Jesus were to ask you the same question three times, what do you think He would ask you?
✂ -----
- C) What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D) Remember: **Love is the one gift Jesus wants from us.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.