Week 1 Small Group: Things That Go Bump in the Night

**Opening Prayer:**

God of all nations, we invite you into this place.

Jesus we light this candle as a sign of your presence.

Spirit of wisdom and understanding, enlighten us.

We pray that we keep our hearts and minds open to new ideas and that we may grow in our understanding of your ways. Amen.

*“Nothing can dim the light that shines from within.” Maya Angelou*

**Breaking the Ice:**

* Share a time when you’ve found yourself in complete darkness, sharing how it felt and then how it felt when light finally came on?

**Wrestling with the Word:**

Read John 1:4-5

* What does “in him was life” mean to you?
* What is the link between light and life?
* How does Jesus bring light and life?
* How does the assurance that the darkness cannot overcome the light change things?

**Next Steps:**

* When light overcomes the darkness, things change. How has the light of Christ changed you?
* How are you offering the hope of Christ’s light to the world?

**Prayer for the Week:**

Life can be challenging, it is easy to be dragged down into dismay. What spiritual practices have you found that help keep you close to God, so that God’s light keeps shining in you?

Amazing God, we thank you for shining your light and your love into our lives. Show us the ways to be the light and new life for our families, church, community and world.

Week 2 Small Group: Ghost Sightings

**Opening Prayer:**

God of all nations, we invite you into this place.

Jesus we light this candle as a sign of your presence.

Spirit of wisdom and understanding, enlighten us.

We pray that we keep our hearts and minds open to new ideas and that we may grow in our understanding of your ways. Amen.

*“It’s easier to dismiss ghosts in the daylight.” Patricia Briggs*

**Breaking the Ice:**

* Are you a lover of scary places and movies?
* Has there ever been a time when your imagination got the best of you and you were frightened?

**Wrestling with the Word:**

Scripture: Mark 6: 45-52

* Earlier in Mark 6, John the Baptist is beheaded. How might that have heightened the disciple’s anxiety?
* This passage begins with Jesus going to the mountain to pray, how do you think this might tie into the miracle?
* Do you think that Jesus was going to walk right past them?

**Next Steps:**

* Have there been times when you had a hard time believing that God is in control?
* Do you ever find the idea of God actually “showing up” a bit scary?
* What helps you trust Jesus to be with you during life’s worst storms, in all his divine compassion and power?

**Prayer for the Week:**

Jesus was praying while the disciples were experiencing the trials and fear. How will you be in prayer for people who are fearful in your community?

Lord, thank you for your presence in the midst of our fears. Allow us to be courageous in our faith that your love will carry us through all things. Amen.

Week 3 Small Group: Creepy Happenings

**Opening Prayer:**

God of all nations, we invite you into this place.

Jesus we light this candle as a sign of your presence.

Spirit of wisdom and understanding, enlighten us.

We pray that we keep our hearts and minds open to new ideas and that we may grow in our understanding of your ways. Amen.

*“We do not see things as they are. We see them as we are.” The Talmud*

**Breaking the Ice:**

* Name one person who has had significant influence on you? Has that influence been positive or negative?

**Wrestling with the Word:**

Scripture: Daniel 5:17-30

* The story begins with a banquet, where all the guests see the handwriting on the wall. How do you think you would react?
* Daniel interpreted the writing on the wall by God’s power. How was God glorified in this incident?
* Why is Daniel needed to give an interpretation? How can you play a similar role today?

**Next Steps:**

* What are you doing each day to cultivate the influence you want to leave behind?
* How have those experiences motivated or discouraged you to keep sharing your faith?

**Prayer for The Week:**

God often uses just one person to change everything, how are you opening your life so God may use it? Ask God to give you a positive, God-honoring influence on people around you.

God of Hope and Promise, thank you for your great faithfulness. When we feel in the dark or in the light, you are present with us. Your Spirit sustains and nurtures us. We are also grateful for your cloud of witnesses, those saints and friends who are with us now or who have gone before us. Bless them. Help us be a life-giving presence for others. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.