

QUESTIONS TO GOD

Small Group

Resources

Week 1 Small Group:

Who is God?

OPENING PRAYER:

Compassionate God, we come here thirsty for your Word to learn and relearn what really matters in this world. As we share essential questions about God today, please fill us with a desire to be your people. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Quote: "Love is a decision, it is a judgment, it is a promise. If love were only a feeling, there would be no basis for the promise to love each other forever. A feeling comes and it may go. How can I judge that it will stay forever, when my act does not involve judgment and decision." Erich Fromm

BREAKING THE ICE:

Do you have a mental image of who God is? If so, describe it.

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read: 1 John 4:7-19

1. What does it mean to you when the Bible says, "God first loved you?"
2. How do both Christ's birth and his death help us to understand God's love for us? See verses 9 and 10 to start the conversation.
3. Since we can't see love, how does this Scripture help us to see the *effect* of God's love?
4. How is God's love demonstrated in the whole life of Christ (teaching, miracles, etc.)?
5. How does the experience of God's love for us and others cast out fear in our lives?

NEXT STEPS:

1. How does God's love for us motivate us to love others?
2. Since we know that love is not based on feelings, what are some practical ways that we can show love to others?
3. Looking at verse 13, what evidence is there in our lives that God loves us?
4. How does knowing that God loves us give us space to ask questions and wrestle with Jesus?
5. How would/do you answer the question, "Who is God?"

CLOSING PRAYER:

Father God, you are love. You are unconditional love. You are incomprehensible love. You are agape. We have the



ultimate example in the sacrifice of your son that we may live. Your love shows us how to have compassion and patience for others. Your love helps us to be our true selves. Your love helps us connect to others to build a community. Your love teaches us to forgive. May we leave this place full of wonder and full of questions of how we can know you better. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Messiah, our Redeemer, we pray. Amen.



Week 2 Small Group:

Is the Bible Reliable?

OPENING PRAYER:

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*Quote: "The Holy Scriptures are our letters from home."
Augustine of Hippo*

BREAKING THE ICE:

Do you have a favorite Bible verse? If so, what is it and why is it your favorite?

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Hebrews 4:12-14

1. What does it mean that the Word of God is living? What use is it for us today?
2. What does it mean that the Word of God is "sharper than any two-edged sword"?
3. How does the Bible expose us to our true selves? What does Scripture teach about "being laid bare"?
4. How does it feel to read the verse 12: "it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart?" What does that stir up in you?

NEXT STEPS:

1. How do you use the Bible in your everyday life? What place does it have in our current lives?
2. How does reading the Bible from the perspective of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ transform our lives and our interactions with our neighbors?
3. Do we need the Bible?
4. How does confessing Jesus as the Son of God transform or affect the way we interact with the Bible?

CLOSING PRAYER:

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Week 3 Small Group:

Why Should I Go to Church?

OPENING PRAYER:

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Quote: "They reminded me that Christianity isn't meant to simply be believed; it's meant to be lived, shared, eaten, spoken, and enacted in the presence of other people. They reminded me that, try as I may, I can't be a Christian on my own. I need a community. I need the church." Rachel Held Evans

BREAKING THE ICE:

Tell a story about something funny you have witnessed or experienced during a church service.

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Psalm 100

1. How do we enter into God's presence (verse 2)?
2. Why do we need to praise and give thanks to God as a community of faith?
3. What does it mean to belong to God (verse 3)?
4. What are some examples of God's steadfastness?

NEXT STEPS:

1. What do you get out of being in community versus going through life alone?
2. How can we make "entering God's gates with thanksgiving in our hearts" a reality in our local churches?
3. How do we make church a way of life and not an obligation?
4. How can you make being in your community of faith a priority?

CLOSING PRAYER:

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Week 4 Small Group:

Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

OPENING PRAYER:

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Quote: "Suffering is unbearable if you aren't certain that God is for you and with you." Tim Keller

BREAKING THE ICE:

Where do you struggle in your wrestling with God?

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Psalm 137 and John 11:23-35

1. Do you feel comfortable questioning what God is doing in the world?
2. Using Psalm 137 and John 11:23-35, how does God respond to human suffering? How is God present in the midst of our suffering and pain?
3. What are other examples of God joining humanity in their grief and suffering?
4. What is it that only God can do in the midst of our tragedy and suffering?

NEXT STEPS:

1. How might you look for God the next time something bad happens in your life?
2. How might you help speak God's presence into someone else's life when they are struggling and don't know how God could show up in their midst?
3. How can we show up for others as God shows up for us- not with an answer but with our presence?

CLOSING PRAYER:

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Week 5 Small Group:

How and Why Do I Forgive?

OPENING PRAYER:

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Quote: "For me, forgiveness and compassion are always linked: how do we hold people accountable for wrongdoing and yet at the same time remain in touch with their humanity enough to believe in their capacity to be transformed?" bell hooks

BREAKING THE ICE:

Do you like the phrase, "Forgive and forget?" Why or why not?

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Matthew 6:9-15

1. Do you think of forgiveness as something that is done individually or collectively?
2. What is the importance of forgiving others?
3. What happens first- our forgiveness of others or God's forgiveness of us?
4. How does the Lord's Prayer help us to reshape our understanding of forgiveness?

NEXT STEPS:

1. How would forgiveness free the victim? How would forgiveness free the perpetrator?
2. What is added or subtracted in our lives when we are forgiven or when we forgive others? What is added or subtracted in our lives when we don't forgive others or when we don't receive forgiveness?
3. How can you pray the Lord's Prayer as a meaningful daily prayer? How might that practice help you to embrace forgiving yourself and forgiving others?
4. What happens when we begin to learn others' backstories and take them into account when we interact with the people in our lives?

CLOSING PRAYER:

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Week 6 Small Group:

Why is Jesus Special?

OPENING PRAYER:

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Quote: "The Gospel of liberation is bad news to all oppressors because they have defined their 'freedom' in terms of slavery of others." James Cone

BREAKING THE ICE:

What is your favorite Palm Sunday memory? If you're new to church, what questions do you have about Palm Sunday?

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD

Read Mark 11:1-11

1. How do you interpret the statement "Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord?"
2. Why do you think Jesus goes from this "welcoming parade" to a parade to his death in just a few short days?
3. How does Mark 11:1-11 depict who Jesus is?

NEXT STEPS:

1. How does Palm Sunday shape the rest of the week for Jesus?
2. Why do you think Jesus is special? Why was Jesus special for the people in his time? How is Jesus special to us today?
3. How can you make the remembrance of Holy Week meaningful in your life today?
4. How does the "specialness" of Jesus shape your daily life?

CLOSING PRAYER:

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