

Let's Go Group Studies

Leader's Notes

1. We're providing this material to you to remove some of the stress and frustration of developing a plan to lead a specific group study. It isn't meant to replace your individual preparation to lead. Our hope is that you would use it as a guide to your engagement with the text and the Holy Spirit and allow Him to lead you as you help your study's participants to have their own relevant encounter with scripture and the Holy Spirit.
2. This plan isn't meant to constrain you to lead in any specific way. **Please do modify it to better meet the needs of your group and to honor your gifting and authentic style.** For example, when and how you pray and share prayer needs should be in a rhythm that is good for your group as long as you are praying as a group. For another, who and how scripture is read should fit your group and its needs as long as it is read somehow.
3. **Be authentic.** If you find yourself saying "They are asking" as in, 'I didn't write this question and I don't really understand why it is being asked.' Don't ask it. Ask something else. It is okay not to understand everything. No one understands everything. If you don't believe in what you're saying, why should anyone else believe it? One way to turn this into a positive is to admit to the group that you are struggling with figuring out a particular bit and allow someone else to contribute their God-given wisdom.
4. Some questions, especially earlier in the study, aren't meant to be a mile deep or transformative. These questions are intended to prompt the participants to notice what is there. They give the participants a way to begin to care about the specific words on the page.
5. Portions of the plan in quotes are meant to be spoken out loud to the group as in, "Who's buried in Grant's Tomb?" You don't have to repeat the question or statement exactly as it appears. Restate it in a way that feels comfortable and natural for you.
6. Portions of the plan in *italics* are meant to be notes to you that you can use as prompts in aiding group discussion and aren't intended to be read verbatim to the group. They may not be the definitive answer but should be a good possible answer. As part of your preparation, please add to and edit the notes to fit where you intend to lead the discussion.
7. A **Follow up question** helps participants open up a little more and look a little deeper and is meant to be asked after there has been some discussion of the prior question.
8. The last two pages are the participant handout.
9. Please remember that our focus, purpose and practice is to **Love God, Love Others and Make Disciples.**

Let's Go- Get in Trouble

- 1) Scripture: Mark 6:14-29; Mark 1:1-8; Mt 21:32
 - A. Parallel accounts- Mark 6:30-44, Mt 14:1-12; Lk 9:7-9
 - B. An account of John the Baptist's arrest- Lk 3:19-20
- 2) Objective: After studying the listed scripture and participating in the discussion, each person should be able to identify one thing they think God has called them to do for his kingdom that they think might bring trouble or opposition.
- 3) Resources: Book of Mark, Grassmick. The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Walvoord & Zuck, Copyright 1983, 2003, 2004 by Cook Communications Ministries; Easton's Bible Dictionary, Easton, M.G., Copyright 1983, 2003, 2004 by Cook Communications Ministries; Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers
- 4) Preparation:
 - A. Pray for guidance
 - B. Review Leader's Notes and read entire lesson plan
- 5) Prayer requests & Open in prayer
- 6) Intro:
 - A. "Last week I asked you 'What can you start this week to begin or deepen your role in making disciples?' Would anyone be willing to share if they were able to do that and tell us how you feel about the results?" *If you closed last week's study with a different question or application, substitute your closing for this one.*
 - B. Tonight, we see the man whom God appointed to announce the coming of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist. He was a man who didn't shrink from calling for repentance of sin from any man, high or low. He lived simply and so powerfully that some people thought Jesus was John the Baptist resurrected. He was murdered because he spoke the truth to those in power who didn't appreciate the truth being told. He is a great example of a man living out God's calling even though he was killed for it.
 - C. When we are done, each of us should have identified one thing we think God is calling us to do for his kingdom that we think might bring trouble or opposition."
- 7) The study
 - A. Ask for a volunteer to read Mark 6:14-16
 - B. Ask everyone to complete question 1 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.

- i) “In this passage we see several different guesses as to Jesus’ ‘true’ identity. Why do you think there were differences in what the public at large thought about Jesus’ real identity?”

(1) Differing values and concerns create different perspectives. We often see what we want to see. The scribes of Mark 3 accused Jesus of being from Satan so they didn’t have to deal with him as messiah. Those who were longing for Israel to be a powerful, sovereign nation once again may have wanted a powerful prophet to bring that about. If you thought John the Baptist was the messiah you might long to see him rise from the dead. Or, if you had recently murdered John the Baptist and regretted it, you might hope your sin could be forgiven because your murder wasn’t permanent.

- ii) **Follow-up question.** “Can you think of anything in your perspective that might keep you from seeing Jesus for who he really is? Is there anything in your perspective that keeps you from seeing yourself as you really are?”

(1) Teachings from your earlier faith traditions that might not be true or that over or under emphasize some aspect of Jesus’ character or mission.

(2) Things that you desperately long for (wealth, healing, happiness, relationship, justice) that might skew your understanding of who Jesus is and why he came to be born of a woman.

C. Ask for a volunteer to read Mark 6:17-29

- i) *This passage is essentially a flashback to how and why Herod Antipas had John the Baptist murdered.*

D. Ask everyone to complete question 2 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.

- i) “Read through Mark 1:1-8. By his actions and his words, who was John the Baptist?”

(1) A fulfillment of OT prophecy. A man who lived very simply. A prophet who preached repentance and righteous living. Not the messiah. See also Mt 21:32.

- ii) **Follow-up question.** “If someone who was specifically commissioned to prepare the way for the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ can be murdered for being faithful to his call, what does that mean for those of us who are called to make disciples?”

(1) We should also expect trouble.

E. Ask everyone to complete question 3 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.

i) “How do you react to trouble or opposition that comes from trying to do something that you believe God has called you to do?” *Ideally, these answers come from the participants. Whether they get them from the study, the Sunday sermon or elsewhere, the best thing that can happen here is they are verbalized by the participants. If they struggle to answer...*

(1) We should expect trouble, it's a part of life. Giving up, or refusing to, based only on trouble or opposition limits how much we can learn and grow in our faith.

(2) Analysis paralysis is spending so much time trying to find the perfect formula for avoiding trouble that we never do ministry.

(3) Fear. Sometimes we fear embarrassment or rejection. Sometimes we fear financial, relational or opportunity loss. Sometimes we fear legitimate physical danger. Your fear might be well-founded, make sure your faith is also.

(4) Prayer offered in faith. Give God the chance to show you how he wants to work things out.

F. Ask everyone to complete question 4 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.

i) “Identify one thing you think God has called or is calling you to do for his kingdom that you think might bring you trouble or opposition. Will you pray this week asking God to help you be faithful to your calling and to lead you through and not around that trouble?”

8) Summary:

A. Encourage your group members to apply the ideas or principles they developed from question 4. Plan on asking them next week about the results.

B. Close in prayer

Let's Go- Get in Trouble

Mark 6:14-29

1) In this passage we see several different guesses as to Jesus' 'true' identity. Why do you think there were differences in what the public at large thought about Jesus' real identity?

2) Read through Mark 1:1-8. By his actions and his words, who was John the Baptist?

3) How do you react to trouble or opposition that comes from trying to do something that you believe God has called you to do?

4) Identify one thing you think God has called or is calling you to do for his kingdom that you think might bring you trouble or opposition. Will you pray this week asking God to help you be faithful to your calling and to lead you through and not around that trouble?

For next time... Read Mark 6:30-44

Herod the Great (37 B.C. - 4 B.C.). The title Herod the Great refers not so much to Herod's greatness as to the fact that he was the eldest son of Antipater. Nevertheless, Herod did show some unusual abilities. He was a ruthless fighter, a cunning negotiator, and a subtle diplomat. The Romans appreciated the way he subdued opposition and maintained order among the Jewish people. These qualities, combined with an intense loyalty to the emperor, made him an important figure in the life of Rome and the Jews of Palestine.

Herod Antipas (4 B.C.- A.D. 39). Antipas, another of Herod the Great's sons, began as tetrarch over Galilee and Perea. He was the ruling Herod during Jesus' life and ministry. Herod Antipas was first married to the daughter of Aretas, an Arabian king of Petrae. But he became infatuated with Herodias, the wife of his half-brother, Philip I. The two eloped together, although both were married at the time. **This scandalous affair was condemned severely by John the Baptist (Mt 14:4; Mk 6:17-18; Lk 3:19).** (Nelson's)

John the Baptist. Forerunner of Jesus; a moral reformer and preacher of messianic hope. According to Lk 1:36, Elizabeth and Mary, the mothers of John and Jesus, were either blood relatives or close kinswomen. Luke adds that both John and Jesus were announced, set apart, and named by the angel Gabriel even before their birth. (Nelson's)