

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 and to begin to discuss the relevance of the scripture to their needs.
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 page is the participant handout.
9. Please remember that our focus, purpose and practice is to **Love God, Love Others and Make Disciples.**

Let's Go- God Given Storms

- 1) Scripture: Mark 6:45-56; John 14:17
 - A. Parallel accounts- Matt 14:22-33; John 6:15-21
- 2) Objective: After studying the listed scripture and participating in the discussion, each person should be able to identify one thing about God with which they struggle to accept as true and commit to asking the Holy Spirit to help them understand what God would have them believe.
- 3) Resources: Book of Mark, Grassmick. The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Walvoord & Zuck
- 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 time I asked you to identify a specific need that you are aware of that you can also be a part of meeting that might begin to show someone who God really is? Would anyone be willing to share if you were able to do that and tell us how you feel about the results?" *If you closed last time's study with a different question or application, substitute your closing for this one.*
 - B. Tonight, we'll see what Mark has to say about when Jesus walked on water. We'll look at what happened immediately before and after Jesus did that. Even among all the other miracles he performed that day, this one stands out. If you want to rationalize or explain away Jesus' miracles it is easier with some of them than others. This one either happened miraculously or it didn't happen at all. We need to recognize that with God miraculous things happen because..., God.
 - C. We also need to understand that accepting the miraculous can be a struggle because our hearts sometimes keep us from accepting it. Arguing away doubts, our own or someone else's, can often be an exercise in frustration. It is not a sin to struggle with truth. It is how we grow deep in our confidence and knowledge of God and his word.
 - D. When we are done, each of us should be able to identify one thing about God with which we struggle to accept as true and commit to asking the Holy Spirit to help us understand what God would have us believe."
- 7) The study
 - A. Ask for volunteers to read Mark 6:45-46 and John 6:14-15

- B. Ask “Why do you think Jesus felt the need to be by himself and pray?”
- i) *He was probably exhausted from ministry and may have felt the need for reassurance from the Father regarding his path to becoming the long-promised Messiah.*
 - ii) *If the people had thoughts of compelling him to become king, he may have needed guidance in avoiding this messianic enthusiasm in favor of following the Father’s plan. His sense of urgency in this case is not out of place.*
- C. Ask for a volunteer to read Mark 6:47-52
- D. 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) “What details do you notice in this passage from...
 - (1) Jesus’ perspective?”
 - (a) *Dark of night, boat nowhere near shore, rowers in trouble and struggling to make headway*
 - (b) *‘Think I’ll walk out there and see if I can help’*
 - (2) The disciple’s perspective?”
 - (a) *Dark of night, boat nowhere near shore, terrified of Jesus (again)*
 - ii) *It may or may not be useful to acknowledge that this is the same incident where Peter walks on water. Matthew (Mt 14:28-31) is the only gospel writer who includes that event. We can only speculate as to why this difference exists but there is no textual reason to doubt it happened because Mark excludes it from his narrative.*
- E. 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) “Mark connects the disciple’s amazement to their still incomplete understanding of Jesus in verses 51-52. Has there been a time or event in your life where your understanding of Jesus was radically changed in a way that amazed you?”
 - (1) *This can be through someone’s teaching, an experience, a devotional time or some combination of these and other experiences.*
 - (2) *This is an open-ended question meant to allow your participants to share and encourage each other and to help them to formulate how they can be prepared to share their experience with others.*
- F. Ask for a volunteer to read Mark 6:53-56

G. Ask “Can you list the miraculous things Jesus did in just this one day, and night?”

- i) *Fed the five thousand, walked on water, calmed the storm, healed many*
- ii) *Seems like a lot for one day. Maybe that’s just me.*
- iii) Ask “It would be easy to look back on these events as they are written and wonder how someone who was right there seeing them wasn’t immediately convinced that Jesus was God. Unless we are profoundly smarter than the disciples, and from experience that seems unlikely, what does Mark say is the problem with their understanding?”

(1) *Hardness of the heart, v52*

- iv) “Do you think this same condition might be a problem for us and our understanding?”

(1) *Pretty much a sure thing but discuss with your participants to see how they are affected.*

H. 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) “What one miraculous thing about God seems most hard for you to believe?”
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) *Healings, virgin birth, creation, God loves me despite who I am or what I’ve done, Heaven, Jesus paid the price for my sin, the resurrection, could be almost anything.*

(2) *This could also be something about God they have been taught from a previous faith tradition that they find contradicted in scripture but is a struggle to give up.*

(3) *As the leader you’re not expected to have a convincing answer to any or all difficulties of belief that might be raised. The goal here is for each participant to identify their difficulty of belief. We have someone else in mind to address those questions.*

I. 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) “Would you commit right now to asking the Holy Spirit each day this week to work in your heart to show you what God would have you believe about this thing with which you have struggled to believe? Will you trust Him to answer you? (Please see John 14:17)”

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

God Given Storms

Mark 6:45-56

1) What details do you notice in this passage from...

-Jesus' perspective?

-The disciple's perspective?

2) Mark connects the disciple's amazement to their still incomplete understanding of Jesus in verses 51-52. Has there been a time or event in your life where your understanding of Jesus was radically changed in a way that amazed you?

3) What one miraculous thing about God seems most hard for you to believe?

4) Would you commit right now to asking the Holy Spirit each day this week to work in your heart to show you what God would have you believe about this thing with which you have struggled to believe? Will you trust Him to answer you? (Please see John 14:17)

For next time... Read Mark 7:1-23