

Small Group Discussion Ideas

Life-on-Life Discipleship Series

May & June 2024

Week 1: Destination – The Kingdom of God

- 1. Have any of the “earthy kingdoms” captured your attention in life? The English royal family, sports teams, the history & wars of nations, movie & artist celebrities?**
- 2. Is it ok to be a big fan of people, teams or causes?**

Read Mark 1:1-5

The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God,² as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

*“I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way”—
³“a voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.’”*

⁴And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

- 3. According to the text, what is the purpose of the messenger in the wilderness? Literally, how did John “prepare the way for the Lord”?**
- 4. Was repentance and confessing of your sins, part of your coming to faith experience? Should repentance and confession be a one-time or on-going part of faith?**

Read Mark 1:6-11

⁶ John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

⁹ At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

5. How do we explain that we have been baptized with the Holy Spirit?

Read Mark 1:12-15

¹² At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, ¹³ and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

6. Our Sunday message focused on Jesus' first words recorded in Mark. Repeat them verbatim. What do they declare? What do they demand?

7. How would you explain the 'kingdom of God' to another 'non-believer'?

8. During the next eight weeks, Deerbrook is asking us to prepare, pray about and consider who we might disciple. Do you have anyone in mind already? How would you plan on hearing from God, who you might disciple?

Closing: Please join us in praying for our congregation to engage in the new local mission opportunities as we pursue impact together. (see next page)

Local Mission Opportunities (April 2024)

Pursuing Impact Together

ASPIRE    

MEADOW LANE ELEMENTARY

- 1) **Individual:** Volunteer as reading or lunchroom buddy to support students and teachers.
- 2) **Church:** Join with others as we renew our *Partner in Education* status & involvement with MLE.
- 3) **Dream big:** Join our exploration plan of connection “*Caring for Kids KC Network*” with LS R-7 schools.

LANGSFORD BOYS HOME

- 4) **Individual:** Connect with Terri Wear concerning the boy’s on-going needs. Help Deerbrook host our annual Christmas dinner for the boys.
- 5) **Church:** Help Deerbrook form a team to develop a relationship with Langsford Boys home leadership and the expressed interest in hands-on projects, mentoring, cooking & sports.
- 6) **Dream big:** Apply to become an official volunteer to gain visitation privileges.

IF NOT FOR GRACE MINISTRIES

- 7) **Individual:** Donate food & assistance for INFG Reconciliation Weekends.
- 8) **Church:** Help Deerbrook form an INFG partnership, that develops a relationship with the ministry and helps expand their national impact.
- 9) **Dream big:** Engage the work of this ministry for post-abortion families by becoming a volunteer, prayer partner & financial supporter of this ministry.

REFUGE KC

- 10) **Individual:** Begin with prayer and understanding the RefugeKC.org local ministry. Help Deerbrook host a new refugee dinner on Saturday May 18 in KC .
- 11) **Church:** Help Deerbrook continue to engage in refugee assistance by creating/attending a *Welcoming The Stranger (2018)* book club and discussion.
- 12) **Dream big:** Form a group (5+ people) to help relocate a refugee family to KC area.

Life-on-Life Discipleship

Week 2: **An Invitation to Follow**

- 1. Where did you fall in the birth order of your siblings? How did the older & younger sibling dynamic affect you then and even who you are today?**

Read Mark 1:14-20 (ESV)

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

¹⁶ Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰ And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

- 2. According to Mark, what was the timing of the start of Jesus’ public ministry? What else had happened to Jesus earlier in Mark 1, to prepare him for his role as Rabbi?**
- 3. What impresses you about the calling and fishermen’s response to Jesus’ words?**
- 4. What does Jesus imply he will change in verse 17? What is the “cost” of following Jesus in verse 18 & 20?**

5. What has following Jesus cost you (what did you have to leave), and what benefit has following Jesus giving you? *The sermon mentioned livelihood, identity, family and/or experiences.*

6. *The deepest question:* When did you begin following Jesus? Did you have a ‘calling experience to come to faith’ or have you experienced struggles to continuing following Jesus?

In closing, following Jesus gives us new responsibilities. Read the highlights of 2 Corinthians 5 and consider the ramifications of being called by God to disciple others.

7. What stands out to you in this passage?

⁵He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

⁹So whether we are at home or away (in the body), we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

¹¹Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience...¹⁴For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Close in prayer for the needs of your small group.

Week 3: **New Wine for Fresh Wineskins**

Recently, Scott Scheffler the #1 golfer in the World, was arrested for reckless driving and 2nd degree assault of a police officer when trying to drive around an early morning fatal accident on his way to his tee time a golf championship. He was released shortly afterwards and went onto to win the tournament.

- 1. Should celebrities be given special consideration about following the law? Should you?**
- 2. Did you have any “confrontations with authorities” in your life?**

Read Mark 1:21-22, 2:3- (ESV)

²¹ And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. ²² And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴ “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”

²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷ And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” ²⁸ And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

- 3. Why were people so astonished by Jesus’ teaching?**
- 4. What significance do the miracle stories of Jesus have on your faith even today?**

Read Mark 2:3-12 (ESV)

³ And they came, bringing to Jesus a paralytic carried by four men. ⁴ And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. ⁵ And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." ⁶ Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ⁷ "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

⁸ And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question these things in your hearts? ⁹ Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk?' ¹⁰ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— ¹¹ "I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home." ¹² And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

5. How does Jesus justify giving the forgiveness of sins?

6. Does it matter that Jesus claimed to have come straight from Heaven? (see John 4:34, 5:30, 6:29, 7:16, 7:28)

7. Jesus received considerable criticism for not obeying the Jewish laws & customs. How did his teaching explain his behavior? Read Mark 2:24-28

²⁴ And the Pharisees were saying to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" ²⁵ And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: ²⁶ how he entered the house of God, in the time of [Ⓜ] Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?" ²⁷ And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸ So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."

8. Where do you tend to land concerning obeying religious customs and radical faith in Jesus?

We all called to be "fresh wineskins for his new wine". Close in praying for one another's faith.