

Life Group Leader Guide

Our new mission statement is: *Building Bridges to Connect Everyone to the Dynamic Life in Christ*. What does being connected and living that life look like and feel like? This spring we will be going through the Book of Mark to discover what it means to live the Dynamic Life in Christ.

These discussion guides will follow along with the sermon series by either using the main passages from the weekend messages or using another passage on the same topic. These guides will be organized using the acronym HEAR as a way to teach people to read the Bible. HEAR stands for **H**ighlight the passage, **E**xplain the passage, **A**pply the passage, and **R**espond to the passage.

Each week, there will be a page to print off for each member of your group. The printed sheet will have the Bible passage you'll discuss and some questions in the margins to guide them in examining those verses.

Additionally, there will be a leader's guide that will give you helpful notes on the passage (i.e. background information and definitions) as well as discussion questions to lead your group. These don't need to be printed for each member of your group. These guides are designed to be discussed BEFORE the sermon, so the group can discuss the passage before the pastor shares his insights. However, they can just as easily be used after the weekend message.

Our hope is these tools will (a) help your group members learn to study/read their Bibles outside of the group and (b) give you a helpful outline for facilitating the group discussion. If you have comments or questions about the discussion guides, we'd love to hear your constructive feedback. Send feedback to groups@foresthill.org.

How to Use This Discussion Guide

- Print off the "Life Group Member Guide" for each member of your group – or email it to them in advance.
- Use the summary statement for each week to quickly understand the text's theme. You can use that as a reference point to help guide your discussion or bring it back if your group begins to get off topic.
- Use the prayer prompt at the end of each guide to help you close in prayer.

Additionally, here are some tips and guidelines to help you lead these discussions:

1. **Choose the questions that best fit your group and your time constraints.** There are a lot of questions in this guide and your group may not be able to discuss them all. That's okay! You don't have to ask all of them. Before your group begins, choose the questions that are most likely to help your group understand what God is saying in the text and how to apply it to their lives.
2. **Prepare for your group time by reading the passages and the notes in a study Bible.** A good study Bible can give you some insights into the passages and how they connect to the whole book or the whole story of the Bible.
3. **Begin every group meeting with prayer.** We can only understand and apply God's Word with the help of the Holy Spirit. So, invite the Spirit to open your hearts and minds to what He says to His people.
4. **Keep the conversation focused on Scripture as much as possible.** Some people may want to bring in their opinions or continually refer to what the teaching pastor said during his message. This is helpful in small doses, but the goal of this discussion guide is to help you determine what God is saying in His Word. Encourage the group to continue to return to the Scripture. One way to do that is by saying, "That's a great insight! Where do you see that in the Scripture we're studying?"
5. **Encourage participation, but don't let anyone dominate.** Encourage everyone to share insights, ask questions, and read aloud. But don't allow any one person – even yourself, the leader – to monopolize the time. Some people are just unaware of themselves and how much they speak, so gently encourage them to listen and make space for others to talk.
6. **Help your group members to be specific in the application of Scripture.** It is easy to generalize when we talk about the Bible and how to apply it. So ask your group members specific questions – for example, "What part of the world do you sense God wants you to pray for? How will you do that? How will you make that a habit?"

We pray that you will hear God speak through Scripture and that His Spirit will move you to obey Him. The Word of God – the Bible – lets us know the God who loves us and saves us. May this discussion guide help you and your Life Group to become more immersed in His Word.

Date of Sermon: May 17, 2020

Topic of Sermon: Humility: A Central Character Trait for Those Living the Dynamic Life in Christ

Main Passage: Mark 9:33-37

BEFORE your group meeting:

- Look up the main passage in a study Bible and read the study notes
- Print off or send the “Group Member Guide” for your group members
- Review the “Group Member Guide” for yourself
- Have enough pens for each group member.

Topic of Life Group Meeting: Children are a great illustration of what humility and dependence on God is like.

Icebreakers (optional)

Think of a time when you were completely dependent on someone else. What was the situation and what did it feel like to you? Look back at your childhood experiences and interactions with friends and family. What can your childhood teach you today?

Leader’s Note: Introduce the next part of the group meeting. You can read this introduction or put it in your own words:

“Today, we’re going to spend a few minutes studying the focal passage on our own before we discuss it as a group. I’ve printed out a copy of the Bible passage for you. There are some questions in the margins to help you. Spend most of your time on the Highlight and Explain questions. Feel free to mark up, underline or highlight the passage. I’m going to give us about 5 minutes to do this. Let me begin by praying that God will open our minds and hearts to His Word.”

When you come back together, use the questions below to guide the discussion.

HIGHLIGHT the Passage

- What key ideas, words or phrases stood out to you from the passage today? What is the significance of those?
- Who is Jesus addressing here? What is the significance of Jesus just addressing them?
- What were they arguing about before Jesus addressed them?
- What are some of the illustrations Jesus uses to teach them?
- How would you summarize this passage in your own words? Would anyone else add or emphasize something to that summary?

EXPLAIN the Passage

- What are some things this passage revealed about the disciples?
- Why do you think the disciples were “quiet”? What do you think they thought his reaction would be to them if they thought Jesus knew about their argument?
- How does Jesus respond to them?
- Why does Jesus use the illustration of the servant?
- How does Jesus treat the child? What is the significance of that?
- What are some things this passage revealed about Jesus? His nature, His work, or His character?

APPLY the Passage

- What truth from this passage do you need to cling to? What makes that truth significant to you?
- By God’s power, what is God calling you to change in how you think, speak, or act?
- How can your life following Christ reflect humility like that of being a child and servant as you live the dynamic life?

RESPOND to the Passage

- Finish your time in prayer, thanking God for drawing us together as a group and church. Pray that as a church we can live a life of servanthood to one another and have the faith of a child trusting God for complete dependence on Him.

COMMENTARY NOTES ON THE MAIN PASSAGE

Verse 33: The house probably refers to the one belonging to Peter and Andrew. (Archaeological Study Bible [ASB], p. 1644.) Jesus was going to give them teaching that will be foundational for following Him, which He is about to discuss. Asking questions is a way to help people realize the conviction in their hearts. Many times, through the Gospel accounts, Jesus uses questions as a form of teaching. The disciples had just been arguing about which one of them would be the greatest. Jesus knew what they were arguing about, but wanted them truly listen to Him from their hearts.

Verse 34: Rank and stature were important in the life of Jewish groups at this time. (ASB, p.1644) Being the greatest would be a natural conversation of title and prestige, but Jesus was going in a different direction with them about what it means to be great. This discussion they were having was foretelling a complete contrast by Jesus of what it means to follow Him. The disciples were boldly discussing who will be the greatest just after Jesus told them that He was going to be betrayed, killed, and rise again (v.31). Their quietness reflected the contrast between Jesus giving of Himself and the disciples serving themselves. (The Message of Mark, Don English, p. 169)

Verse 35: Note that sitting down was something that Jewish teachers did before people they taught. “Jesus stands worldly human values on their heads in saying that true primacy is the primacy which comes from putting everyone before oneself, and in being outstanding in the role of servant.” (Message of Mark, English, pp.169-170)

Verse 36-37: By using the illustration of a child and literally the child sitting on His lap, Jesus was demonstrating servanthood. “In the Roman world, the ‘little child’ was placed under the authority of slaves. They might be loved, but were of little account until they reached their maturity.” (The Teacher’s Commentary, p. 620) Jesus used another illustration contrary to their notion of greatness that welcoming Him was like welcoming this child. Jesus values everyone and serves even the least in society.

Life Group Member Guide

Focal Passage: Mark 9:33-27 (CSB)

Passage in Context: Mark 9:33-37 (CSB)



Bible-Reading Tip: Begin by asking God to open your eyes and hearts to His Word. In 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, Paul writes that the Spirit – who lives inside everyone who believes in Jesus – knows the depths of God and reveals Him to those who follow Jesus. So, always begin your time of reading the Bible with a prayer for Him to open your eyes and ears to what He will reveal. This doesn't mean that you will always have an emotional encounter or a special revelation, but you are acknowledging that He is that One through whom all wisdom is revealed.

33 They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” 34 But they were silent, because on the way they had been arguing with one another about who was the greatest. 35 Sitting down, he called the Twelve and said to them, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be last and servant of all.” 36 He took a child, had him stand among them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, 37 “Whoever welcomes one little child such as this in my name welcomes me. And whoever welcomes me does not welcome me, but him who sent me.” -- Mark 9:33-37 (CSB)

HEAR Bible Reading Method

HIGHLIGHT the passage

- Underline any repeated words or key ideas you see.
- Note any questions you have about what you read.
- In 2-3 sentences, summarize what was said or what happened.

EXPLAIN the passage

- What was revealed about God? His character, desires, and/or actions?
- What was revealed about people? What we are/do or what we should be/do?

APPLY the passage

- From this reading, what truth do you need to embrace?
- By God's power, how will you THINK, SPEAK, or ACT differently based on what you read?

RESPOND to the passage

- Talk to God about what you've seen and learned in this passage.
- Ask Him to help you apply the truth to your life.