

Out of the Ordinary

30 Week
Bible Storying Curriculum

Life **GROUPS**

blackhawkministries.org



Why God Uses ~~Extraordinary~~ Ordinary People



The Greek definition of ordinary is **common**, belonging to generality by the Jews, **unhallowed, profane, Levitically unclean**.

Common and unhallowed. No fan fare. Nothing to draw us to them. Simply faces in the crowd. In many ways we understand those terms but how is being ordinary profane? Or even worse, not ceremonially pure to be a priest or prophet. God can't use common, unhallowed or profane people like that to make a difference in this world can He?

When we read through Scripture we expect God to use clean, pure people. But consistently He looks past those who claimed to be religiously "right." He chose people like your neighbor, your boss, your parents. He chose people like *you* to do great things.

2 Corinthians 4:7-10 (NIV)

⁷But we have this treasure in **jars of clay** to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

Not the ornate jars you would expect but just average. Clay. And the reason why God is longing to do extraordinary things through you today is the same reason He did for our biblical heroes. Not because they were the best! Not because they were even worthy! He did it so that He could show His mighty power.

Shepherds, farmers, fishermen, tax collectors, bankers, teenagers, prostitutes, salesmen and women, tent makers, manufacturers. God used them all in the **past** and He is unchanging in His nature. He works through the same kind of people, ordinary ones, **today** as well.

The question is: ***if Scripture were being written today and we read your story, what would your life say about the power of God?***

This year our study is going to focus on God using you! I encourage you DO NOT focus on everyone else in your life or your group. *Make it personal!* Listen to the stories of these ordinary people and be honest enough to ask: *How do I see God moving in my life?*

God moved ordinary people to extraordinary things by working through them! Join us as we move **OUT OF THE ORDINARY.**

Curriculum Notes

At the top of the first page you will see the story's passage location, the story's main theme which we will be exploring, and the corresponding week number.

Here is the layout for the curriculum and therefore for your home group.



Leaders Guide: This area will have special notes for you as the leader. It will provide an overview of the story as a whole and offer practical preparation and execution suggestions as you lead.



Transition: This is the compass for determining where we are in God's Story. Briefly summarize last week's story and what has happened leading into this week's story.



Pre-Story Hook: Use the hook question or statement before telling the story. This is a tool to get your people thinking about the theme of the story before it is told. It is helpful to answer the hook question yourself in the group by telling a story to your group, then asking them to think about the question or statement themselves before telling them the story from the Bible.



Tell the Story: The story is the nuts and bolts, or the cogs, of our entire group. Tell the story as best as you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, JUST TELL THE STORY. Again, the objective is not to memorize it, but to learn it and be able to share it
Rebuild: Chronologically rebuild the story or passage by asking questions, have the group look for what was added or left out.



Thumbprint Questions: Thumbprints are used today to trace a person's identity. We use these "Thumbprint Questions" to help you clearly identify who God is and who we are in relationship with Him. These questions will help lock the story in your people's minds and hearts. Discuss them in your group after telling and rebuilding the story. They are designed to bring your people to a more clear belief of who God really is, who the really are as His people, how they should see the world, and ultimately how they should change in their lives as a result.

STORY

Samson – Judges 16:1-31

“Restored After Sin”

Week 1



LEADER’S Guide:

In this Storying Set, we will focus on stories of ordinary people that were used in extraordinary ways. Our first section will deal with people that God used extraordinarily despite of their sin. All of us deal with sin issues, and many suffer from guilt. This is an opportunity for your LIFE Group to go deep. But be sensitive and don’t push it. Lead by example, your group will go as deep as you are willing to.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Samson, a member of the tribe of Dan, was one of the Judges of Israel. He Judged Israel for 20 years. Samson's mother received a visit from an angel who told her she would give birth to an unusual son, a Nazirite. He told her not to cut his hair. Samson had great strength. He killed a lion with his bare hands and later killed 1,000 Philistines with a jawbone of a donkey. He had romantic encounters with three Philistine women.



HOOK:

Think about a time that you disobeyed a person in authority over you. What was their reaction? What was your reaction?

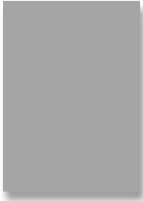


TELL THE STORY:

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Rebuild the Story:

Rebuild the story by going back through the story with Bibles open. Have the group look for what was added or left out. Ask questions to help the group rebuild the story.

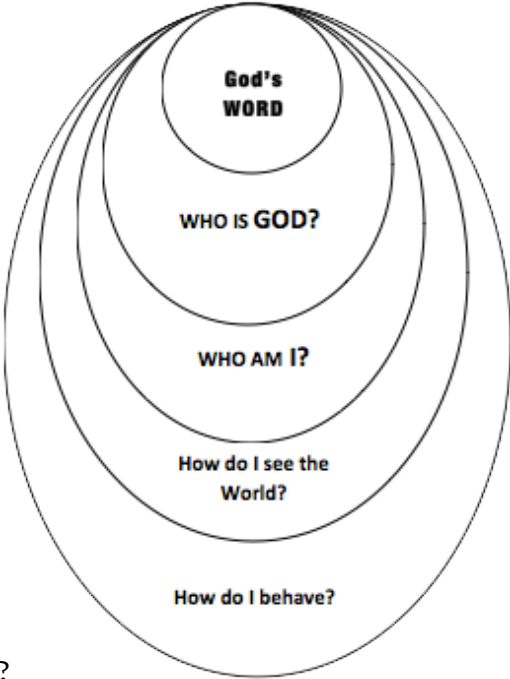


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THE “WHY” Behind the Questions:

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Romans 12:2 – Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. (NLT)



THUMBPRINT Questions:

Based on this story:

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2. What do you learn about yourself?
3. How do you fit into God’s plan?
4. How do you relate with other believers and nonbelievers?
5. What actions do you need to take to live as a disciple of Christ?

PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

The Forgiven Woman – Luke 7:36-50

“Restored After Sin”

Week 2



LEADER’S Guide:

This story deals with how God views us in spite of our sins. Take the time to focus on how the woman must have felt approaching Jesus, why she approached Him, and what was the response of others. Make sure to make this personal by asking good questions that make people think about how they approach Jesus and how they view others who are approaching Jesus.

Ice Breaker

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TRANSITION:

Jesus is invited for dinner by one of the Pharisees (we are not told where, though presumably it is in Galilee where other events in the context of this passage took place). The invitation to dinner certainly implied respect for this new teacher and healer. Was he also a prophet? Simon wanted to learn more about Jesus. It soon becomes obvious that we can't count Simon as a believer -- rather as a skeptic trying to be open-minded.



HOOK:

Are there people that you have been taught to stay away from because of their bad behavior or actions? Why are we to stay away from them? Can we have any type of relationship with them?



TELL THE STORY:

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Rebuild the Story

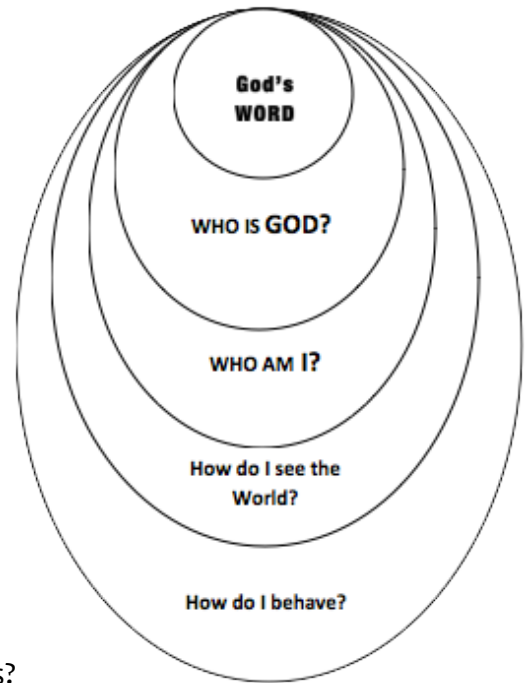
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STORY

“Restored After Sin”

Jonah – Jonah 2:1-3:10

Week 3



LEADER’S Guide:

This story shows what God will do to use ordinary people to accomplish His will. We have all encountered tough times as a result of not following God’s will. Use this time to show God’s love in the midst of our disobedience. This is a great opportunity to take your group past the surface level of punishment and dig deep into the love of God’s plan.

Ice Breaker

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TRANSITION:

Jonah, the son of Amittai, was born in Israel. He was called by God to preach repentance to Assyria whose capital was Nineveh; however, Jonah rebelled. Jonah didn't want to preach to the pagans of Assyria. Instead he tried to escape God's plan by fleeing on a ship. But Jonah was thrown overboard and swallowed by a great fish.



HOOK:

Tell of a time when God asked you specifically to do something.



TELL THE STORY:

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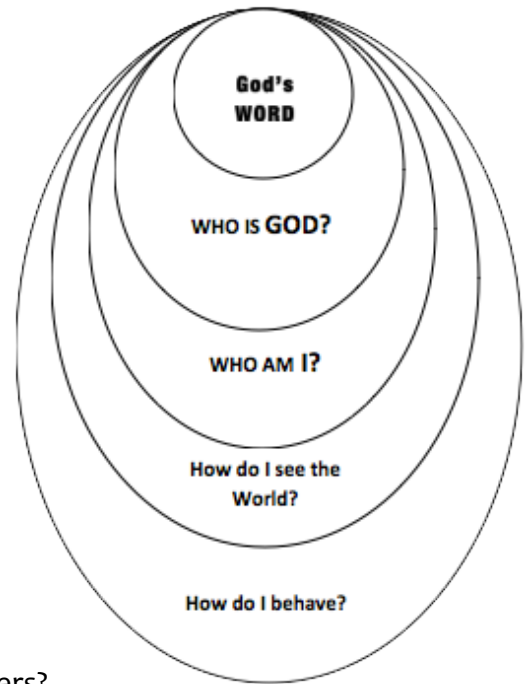
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STORY

“Restored After Sin”

David – 2 Samuel 12:1-15

Week 4



LEADER’S Guide:

This story deals with the forgiveness that God offers. The tendency of the group will be to focus on the sin of David and Bathsheba. Be diligent to keep the group focused on forgiveness and not the consequence of the sin itself. Tell the story as usual, but read Psalms 51.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

David was the youngest son of Jesse. He was born in Bethlehem in the tribe of Judah. David was handpicked by God, anointed by Samuel, and became Israel's greatest king.

David was a shepherd in his early years. After killing Goliath with a slingshot, he joined the entourage of King Saul, Israel's first king. Saul eventually became jealous of David's popularity with the Israelites and tried to kill him several times. David and his followers had to flee and hide out from Saul. After the defeat of the Israelites, and the death of Saul, David was anointed King over Judah.

David committed adultery with Bathsheba and sent her husband Uriah to his death. For this, God rebuked David through Nathan the prophet.



HOOK:

Tell about a time when you did something wrong and were caught.



TELL THE STORY:

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Rebuild the Story

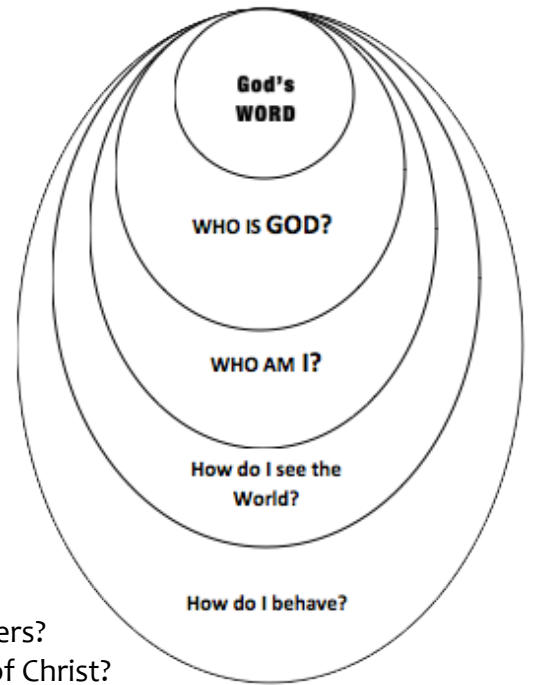
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STORY

“Restored After Sin”

Peter – John 21: 9-25

Week 5



LEADER’S Guide:

This story deals with the Jesus personally offering forgiveness to Peter. This is the last week of dealing with the topic of forgiveness. Be sensitive to others that you sense are struggling with this issue. You may want to take some time during the week to pray for them and to also meet with them to see how you can help them.

Ice Breaker

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TRANSITION:

Peter, an apostle, betrayed Jesus three times by denying that he knew him. Peter did not go to Jesus’ crucifixion. Three days later; however, he was one of the first apostles to view the empty tomb. In our story, we now find Jesus talking with Peter for the first time after all of these events. Peter’s denial was still weighing heavy on his heart.



HOOK:

Tell about a time when you forgave someone for the wrong they had done.



TELL THE STORY:

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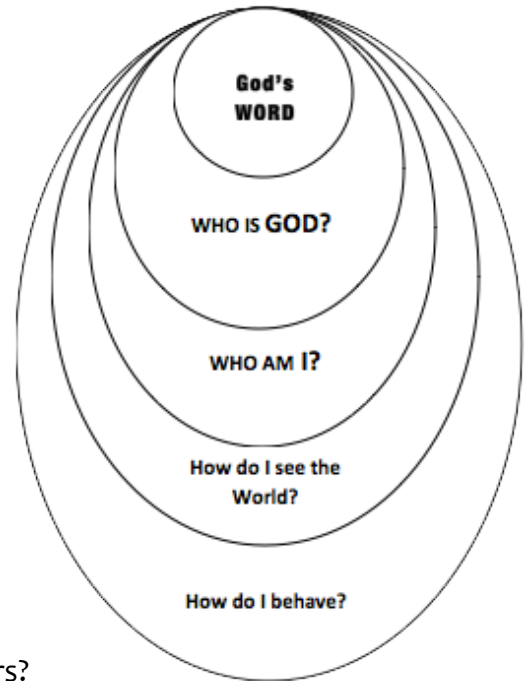
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STORY

“Old Testament Miracles”

Elijah – 1 Kings 18:17-40

Week 6



LEADER’S Guide:

Our topic for the next couple of weeks deals with individuals that God used in the Old Testament to produce miracles. As we focus on these ordinary people doing extraordinary things for God, look for ways to make these Old Testament miracles personal to each person. Remember to facilitate discussion and not simply teach about how God desires to use us in miraculous ways.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Elijah, a Tishbite from the region of Gilead, was a prophet in Israel during the reigns of Ahab, Ahaziah and Jehoram. All his life Elijah was active in the defense of God. His teachings brought him into constant conflict with the Kings of Israel and on one occasion he had to flee for his life. He fought against the cult of Baal and clashed frequently with Ahab's wife, Jezebel, who had introduced the pagan cult in Israel.

Elijah performed some extraordinary miracles as a prophet of God. He brought the dead son of a widow back to life (1 Kings 17:22-23). He caused a jar of meal and a jar of oil to constantly refill during a drought. He caused fire to come out of the sky and consume a burnt offering.



HOOK:

Begin by simply discussing the idea of miracles. Does God still do miracles?

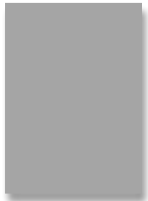


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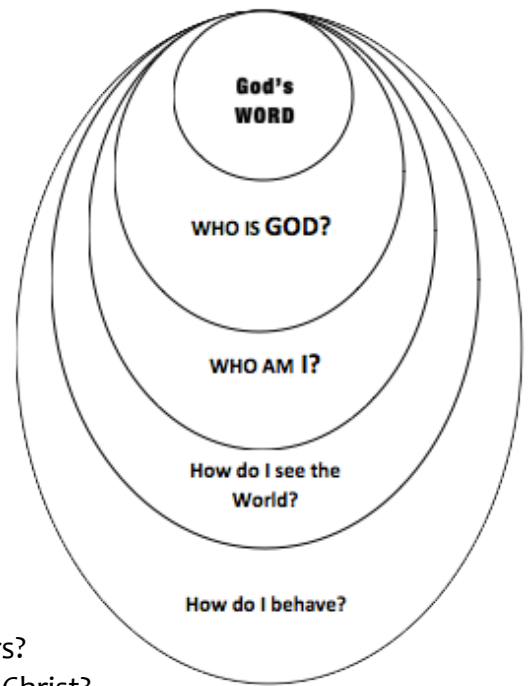


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STORY

“Old Testament Miracles”

Ezekiel – Ezekiel 37:1-14

Week 7



LEADER’S Guide:

In this story we find Ezekiel prophesying to a valley of dry bones. Let the conversation develop the story of the miracle of the dry bones, but make sure to spend some time with the meaning. Focus the group on the last of the story where God tells Ezekiel that life will come from the indwelling of the Spirit. Guide the group to go deeper into the meaning of living life with the Spirit.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Ezekiel lived about 2600 years ago, during the time that the Babylonian Empire had subdued the nation of Judah and had destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. He was the son of Buzi, a Zadokite priest. Ezekiel was among the Jews who were taken as captives to Babylon. He received his call as a prophet during the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin. Ezekiel's ministry lasted about 22 years.

Ezekiel's prophecies about the destruction of Jerusalem caused friction among the Jews who were with him in Babylon. But when his prophecies came true, people began to listen to him more intently. Ezekiel's wife died the day the Babylonians began their siege of Jerusalem. This siege began in 586 BC after Ezekiel and others had been taken captive to Babylon. The siege ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple also in 586 BC.

After the destruction, Ezekiel's prophecies changed from the theme of unbending judgment to the theme of hope and comfort for the future. Ezekiel was very much a shepherd and a watchman for the nation of Israel. As a shepherd he protected the people and as a watchman he warned of dangers ahead.



HOOK:

Tell of a time when God did a miracle in your life, or in the life of someone you know.

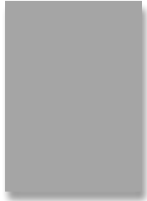


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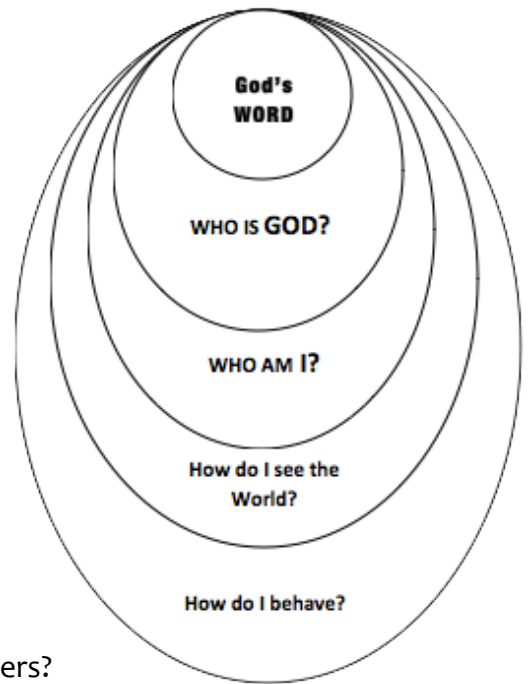


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PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

“Old Testament Miracles”

Elisha – 2 Kings 4:8-37

Week 8



LEADER’S Guide:

In this story, God uses Elisha to raise a boy from the dead. As you deal with the details of the story guide the group to deal with the Why’s of the story. Why did God allow the boy to die? Why raise him again? etc. While dealing with the “why’s” can be uncomfortable, it can be beneficial in allowing others to see how the “why’s” in the Old Testament are the same as what we deal with today.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Elisha, son of Shaphat, was a prophet from Abel Meholah in Gilead. He lived in the northern Kingdom of Israel during the reigns of Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz and Jehoash. Elisha was Elijah's student.

When Elijah was taken up into heaven in a fiery chariot, Elisha picked up Elijah's cloak and struck it on the waters of the Jordan Rive He said, "Where is the Lord the God of Elijah?" (2 Kings 2:14). The water then parted and Elisha crossed over and began his service as a prophet of God.

Elisha, like Elijah, performed some extraordinary miracles as a prophet of God. He brought back to life the dead son of a Shunammite woman. He cured Naaman, a general from Damascus, of leprosy. He multiplied loaves of barley and ears of grain to feed a crowd of people. He caused a metal ax head to float on water. He caused an attacking Aramean army to go blind and then returned their sight. And, among other miracles, he filled large empty vessels with oil.



HOOK:

Explain what you think is the purpose of a miracle.



TELL THE STORY:

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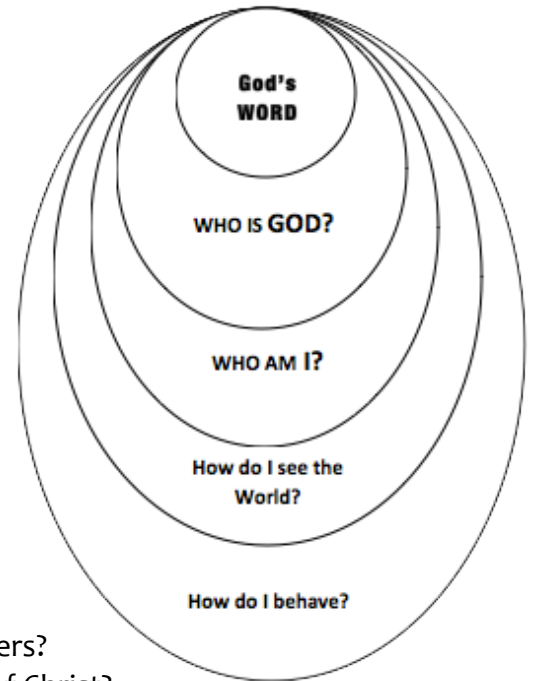
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STORY

“Rare Bond of Love”

Ruth/Naomi – Ruth 1

Week 9



LEADER’S Guide:

As we begin this section about a bond of love, focus on the relationship aspect of the story. Spend some time looking at how the relationship began, how it was sustained, what were the obstacles to the relationship, and what are the benefits of having such a relationship. Ruth and Naomi had different backgrounds but were brought together through marriage, grief, and eventually celebration.

Ice Breaker

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TRANSITION:

Naomi was the mother-in-law of Ruth. Due to a famine Naomi left Bethlehem with her husband Elimelech and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, and migrated to Moab.

In the following years her husband died and her two sons married Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah. When her sons died too, Naomi decided to return to Judah.

Naomi told her two daughters-in-law to stay in Moab to find new husbands. Orpah stayed; but Ruth accompanied Naomi back to Judah.

While gleaning fields in Bethlehem, Ruth met Boaz, a rich kinsman of Naomi. Naomi advised Ruth to charm Boaz into taking her as his wife so that Elimelech's property would remain in the family. Ruth married Boaz and later gave birth to Obed. Obed was the grandfather of King David.



HOOK:

Tell about your best friend growing up. Has the friendship continued? Why or Why not?

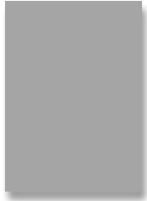


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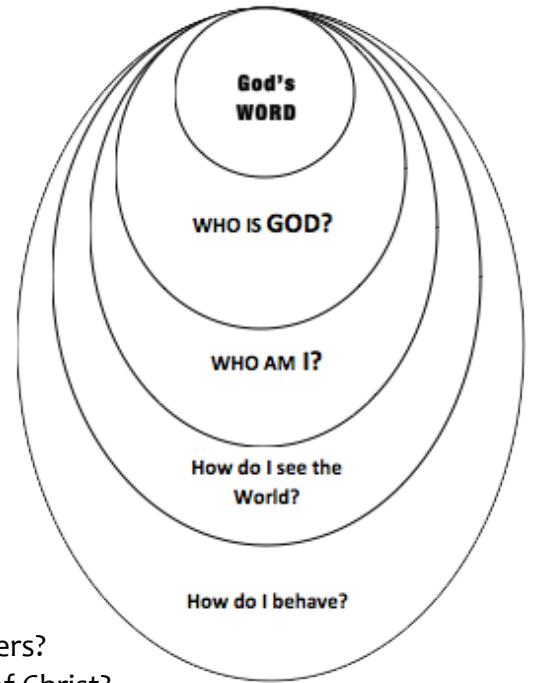


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PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

David/Jonathan – 1 Samuel 18:1-16; 19:1-7

“Rare Bond of Love”

Week 10



LEADER'S Guide:

In this story we see a bond of love between David and Jonathan despite the fact that Jonathan's father, Saul, wanted to kill David. Bring out the idea of God putting relationships together for a purpose. What was the purpose of David and Jonathan's friendship?

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Jonathan was a good friend to David and the oldest son of King Saul. He was a commander of 1,000 men in Saul's army (1 Samuel 13:2).

In the famous battle of Michmash, Jonathan and his armor bearer attacked the Philistine garrison and killed about twenty men. This caused panic in the Philistine army. When Saul and the Israelites saw this, they attacked and routed the Philistines. But Saul pronounced a curse on anyone in his army who ate anything before the battle was over. Jonathan, who did not know of the curse, ate some honey to refresh himself. Saul was ready to execute Jonathan but the army refused to allow the king to harm him due to his heroic fight and victory against the Philistines.

A few years later, Jonathan and David became good friend. As King Saul became more jealous of David, Jonathan tried to bring peace between the two but the relationship between Saul and David grew worse. Later Jonathan stayed with his father to fight the philistines at Mt. Gilboa where both he and his father were killed (1 Samuel 31:1-2).

When David learned of the death of his good friend he composed a eulogy for both Jonathan and Saul (2 Samuel 1:19-27). Because of David's great friendship with Jonathan, he later took in Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, and treated him kindly.



HOOK:

Tell about your best friend growing up. Has the friendship continued? Why or Why not?



TELL THE STORY:

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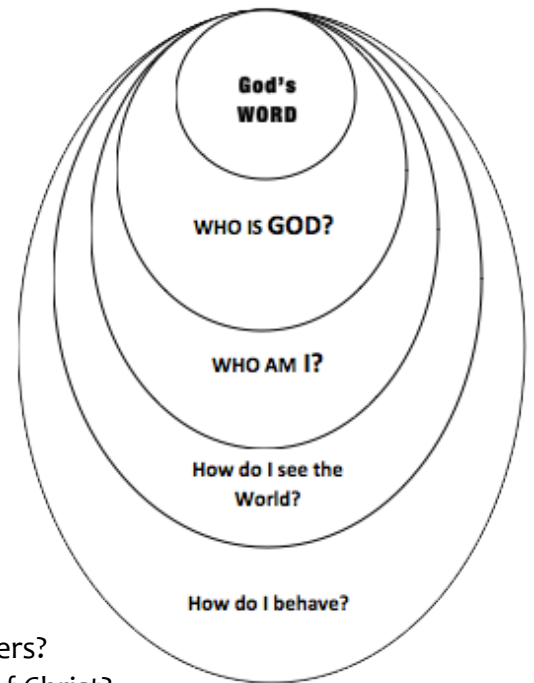
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PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

John the Baptist/Jesus – Matthew 3:1-17

“Rare Bond of Love”

Week 11



LEADER'S Guide:

In this story we see a special bond between Jesus and John the Baptist. For John, this was a relationship that he had been waiting for. When John baptized Jesus a spiritual bond formed. This would be a great time to go deeper in exploring spiritual relationships.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus Christ. He was born to the elderly Zechariah and his barren wife Elizabeth (similar to Abraham and Sarah). Elizabeth was a relative of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and both became pregnant a few months apart. (Luke 1:41-42). The angel Gabriel visited both.

John was much more than a prophet surpassing his predecessors in greatness. He was comparable to Elijah. But John's generation did not accept him alleging instead that he was demon possessed (Matthew 11:17-18).

John's role as forerunner to Jesus was alluded to in a prophecy from Isaiah 40:3, which spoke of *A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God."* There is another prophecy in Malachi 3:1 that also alludes to John the Baptist's role in preparing the way for Jesus Christ.



HOOK:

Describe a relationship that you have with another disciple of Christ. Is it different? How?



TELL THE STORY:

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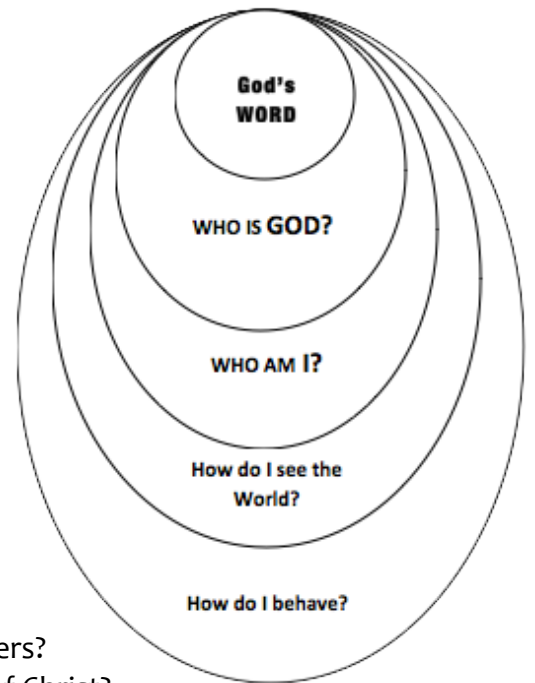
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PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

Esther – Esther 2:15-18; 5:1-8; 8:1-8

“Unlikely People Used by God”

Week 12



LEADER'S Guide:

We will take a look at how God used unlikely people for the next two weeks. We all feel that we are the last people that God would use. Use these stories to allow the group to go deeper by getting personal with the stories. Remember the group will only become as vulnerable as you are willing to be. The story of Esther is spread out over a couple of chapters. Get the main idea of the story, but focus on the reasons how she was the most unlikely to be used by God to deliver her people.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

The Persian king Ahasuerus was married to queen Vashti. At this time Persia was a mighty country and the king had great wealth. One day queen Vashti was summoned into the throne room but she refused to come. As a result, king Ahasuerus stripped her from the position of queen of Persia. A new queen had to be found. At the advice of his council, the king ordered a beauty pageant to take place.

Many Israelites at this time were captives in Persia. Esther was a beautiful young woman and the daughter of Abihail of the tribe of Benjamin. She was the cousin and adopted daughter of Mordecai. She was forced to enter the search for the new queen.



HOOK:

Tell of a time or situation when you saw God used someone in an extraordinary way.

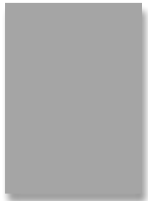


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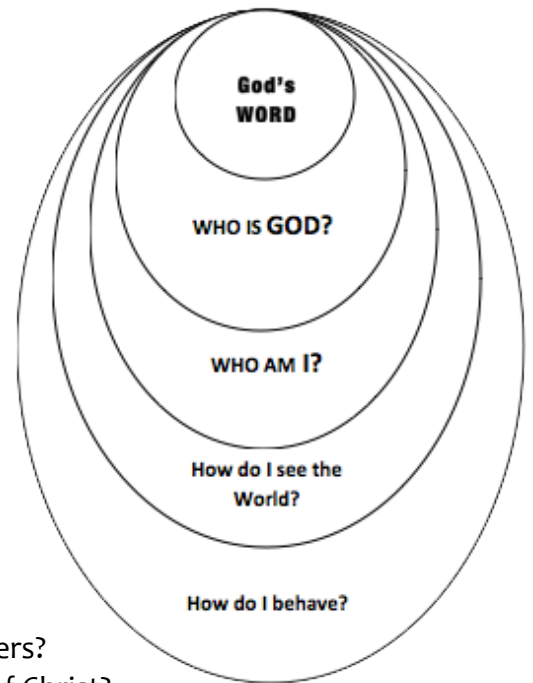


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PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

Balaam – Numbers 22:22-35

“Unlikely People Used by God”

Week 13



LEADER’S Guide:

This is a fun story about how God used a donkey. Allow the group to have fun with it but make sure to keep to the topic of how God uses ordinary people.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Balaam, son of Beor, was a prophet from Penthor on the Euphrates River. Balak was the son of Zippor, king of Moab.

When Balak realized how many Israelites were camped east of the Jordan River and how they had conquered the Amorites, he sent messengers to Balaam to put a curse on the Israelites. Balak sought drive them out of his land. Balaam saddled his donkey and started off together with the messengers of Balak.



HOOK:

Tell of a time or situation when God used you in an extraordinary way.

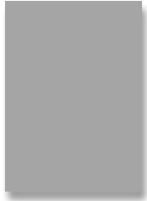


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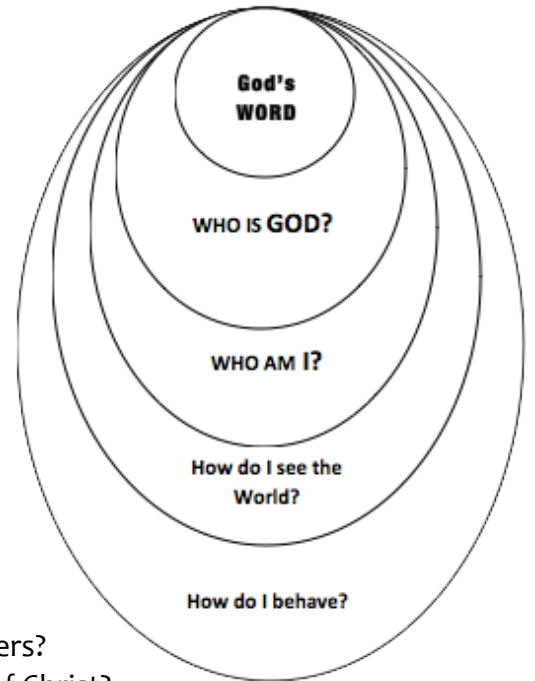


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PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

“Trusting God’s Plan”

Rahab – Joshua 2:1-22

Week 14



LEADER’S Guide:

We will be starting a new section about trusting God’s plan. As you spend several weeks journeying through these stories, help others to realize that God has certain plans and He will direct the disciples’ life to His plan.

In the Hook question this week you will ask everyone to come up with a description of the person that God will use. Obviously God can and will use anyone regardless of how they look. Use the question to reveal any stereotypes that we might have. This is also a great opportunity to talk about Midway’s spiritual growth process (SCMD; Dead, Infant, Child, Young Adult, Parent) that is used to help in the disciple making process.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Rahab was a prostitute who played a key role in the conquest of Jericho. Occupying a house upon the city wall, Rahab gave lodging to the two men sent into Jericho by Joshua on a reconnaissance mission. She hid them under stalks of flax on the roof and told the king’s soldiers that they had already left.

For helping the two men escape, Rahab was given the promise that she and her family would be spared when the Israelite army attacked Jericho.



HOOK:

Describe what you think is the perfect person that God uses. How do they look? How do they act?

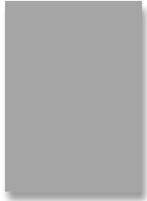


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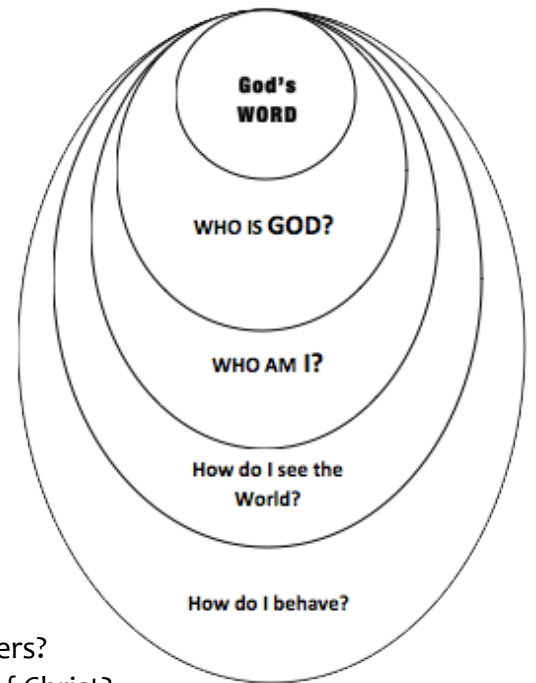


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PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

“Trusting God’s Plan”

Gideon – Judges 7:1-23

Week 15



LEADER’S Guide:

This week’s story deals with the struggle that happens when our plan and God’s plan are different. We all have mental movies of how things should work out. Many times we are disappointed when things don’t go according to our plan. This story will allow great discussion about what we do when things don’t go our way. Remember to be open with your own feelings, as your group will only go as deep as you are willing to lead them.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Gideon was the son of Joash the Abiezrite from Ophrah. He was Israel's fourth major Judge after the birth of Joshua. A large army of Midianites and other nations united against Israel. The Lord told Gideon that he would be made strong and that he was to save Israel from the Midianites.



HOOK:

Tell of a time when the plan you had for something and the plan God had for something were different.



TELL THE STORY:

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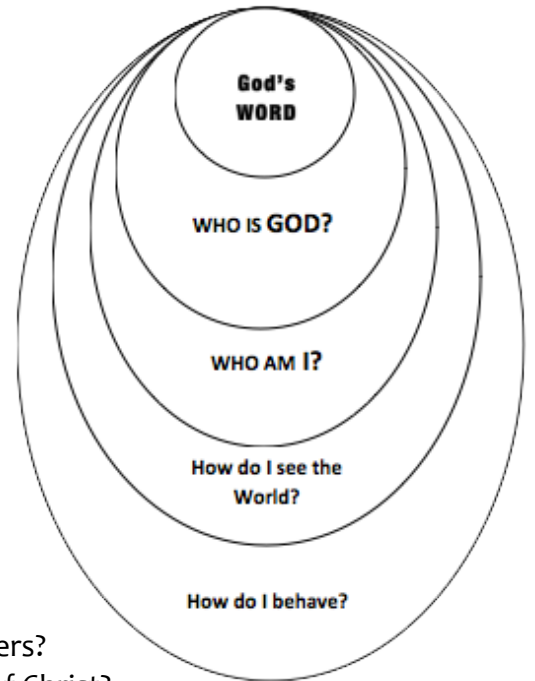
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STORY

“Trusting God’s Plan”

Mary – Luke 1:26-45

Week 16



LEADER’S Guide:

We all feel inadequate at times. In this week’s story, we will look at Mary the mother of Jesus. Many disciples are crippled because of the feeling of inadequacies. Use the story of Mary to help others see that God can and will use anyone to accomplish His will even if others think they are inadequate.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

It has been more than 400 years since the prophet Isaiah said that the Messiah would be born. All of this time the Jewish people anxiously awaited their savior. As the years passed, so did the hopes and dreams of the Jewish people. Now as servants of Rome, the only way they could see their independence was for God to fulfill His promise. Still they waited. Meanwhile, A young teenage virgin named Mary was engaged to be married to Joseph. The angel Gabriel appears to her with shocking news.



HOOK:

Tell of a time when you were afraid to do something because you thought you were not the right person to do it.



TELL THE STORY:

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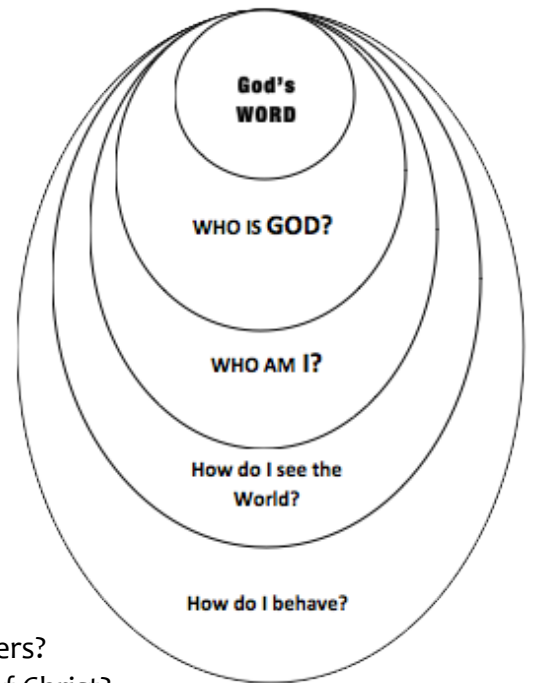
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STORY

“Trusting God’s Plan”

Daniel – Daniel 6:1-28

Week 17



LEADER’S Guide:

Sometimes God will ask us to do things that are different from what everyone else is doing. A question that could be raised based on this week’s story of Daniel is “What happens when government asks us to do things that are contrary to the Word of God?” Allow the discussion to grow but make sure to stay in control of the group. Sometimes people will get heated when discussing political views so make sure to focus on what God expects and not political opinions.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Daniel was among the Jews who were carried off into captivity in Babylon about 2600 years ago.

Even though he was a captive, he received an education and rose to a high position in the Babylonian government. He later rose to a high position in the Persian government after the Persians conquered Babylon. Because of his faith in God the Babylonians persecuted him.



HOOK:

Tell of a time when you did the opposite of what everyone else was doing.

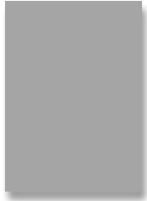


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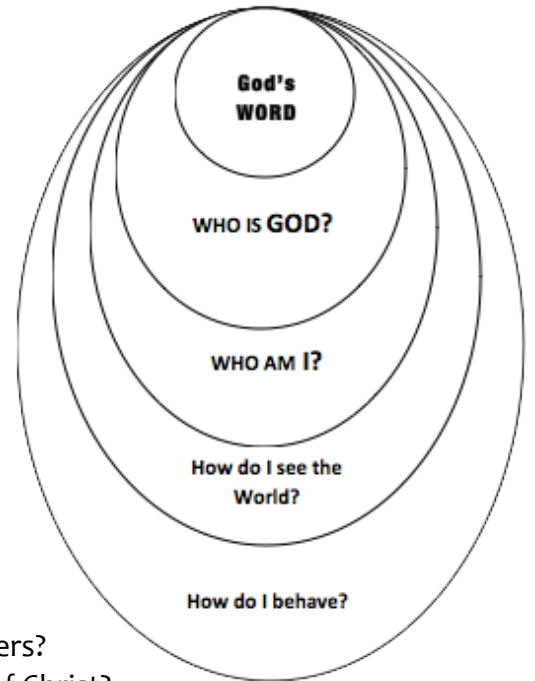


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PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

“Trusting God’s Plan”

Miriam – Exodus 1:15-2:10

Week 18



LEADER’S Guide:

In this week’s story, Miriam watches over Moses as he is put into the river. We all need people in our lives to look out for us. As the discussion grows, look for opportunities to point out how Miriam watched over Moses.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Many Israelites had fled to Egypt during years of famine to find food. One of them, a man named Joseph, rose to great power in Egypt and the Jewish people were well accepted. After Joseph and the pharaoh he served under died, the Israelites continued to grow in number. The new pharaoh did not know about Joseph and was fearful the Israelites would revolt and overthrow the Egyptians. In his fear he ordered all male Israelite boys to be put to death.



HOOK:

Tell of a time when you watched out for someone, or someone watched out for you.



TELL THE STORY:

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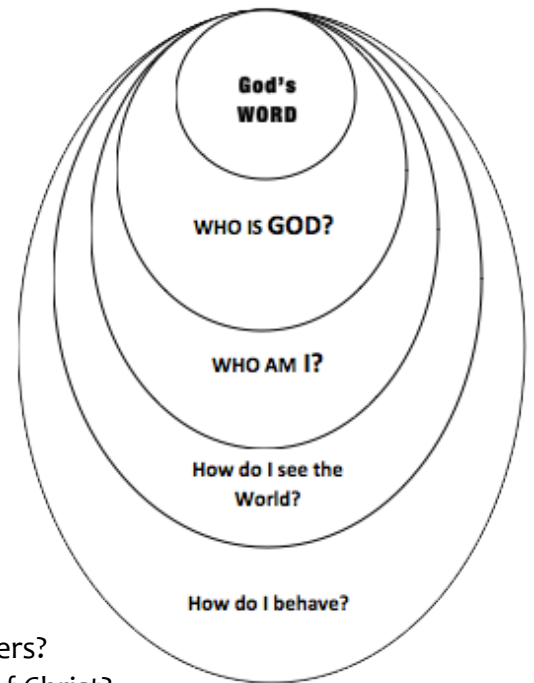
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PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

“Trusting God’s Plan”

Isaac – Genesis 22

Week 19



LEADER’S Guide:

As we finish up the section dealing with God’s plan and looking at the people God uses to accomplish His plan, you may want to spend some time making sure that everyone understands that God uses people like each of us. It is great to know the stories, but don’t miss the opportunity for personal application.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Isaac, son of Abraham and Sarah, was born to them in their old age. After Isaac was weaned, his half brother Ishmael was banished with his Egyptian mother Hagar (Gen 21:8-20). Isaac alone was designated Abraham’s heir.



HOOK:

Tell of a time when God asked you to do something that did not make any sense to you.



TELL THE STORY:

Tell the story as best as you can, don’t stop and teach, don’t make points, just tell the story. Again, the objective is not to memorize it but to learn it and be able to just share it.

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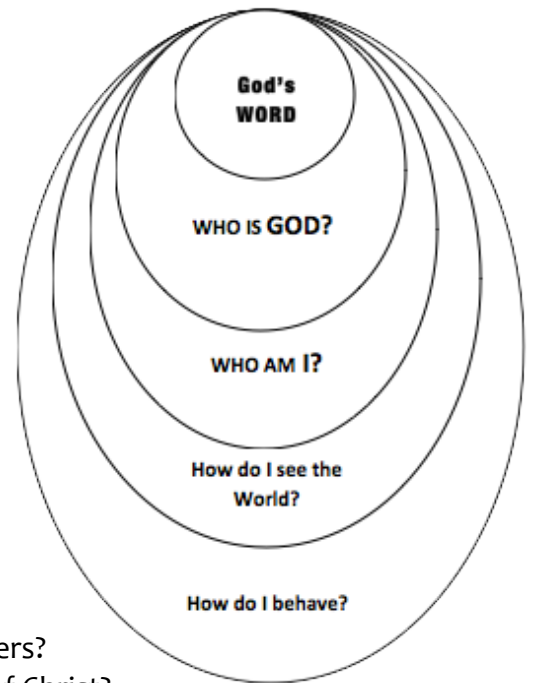
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PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

“The Call of God”

Abram/Sarai – Genesis 12:1-20

Week 20



LEADER’S Guide:

We will begin a new section of stories dealing with the call of God. As people grow as a disciple of Jesus, many become confused and even discouraged when they do not hear or understand the call of God. Use these stories to create discussion about what the call of God is and how we hear, understand, and follow it.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Abraham, whose original name was Abram, was the first patriarch of Israel. He was the son of Terah, and brother to Nahor and Haran. The name Abraham means "a father of many nations." He originally lived near the Mesopotamian city of Ur, but Terah took him to the city of Haran in northwest Mesopotamia (Gen 11:31).

After the death of his father, God told Abraham, who was 75 years old at that time, to leave his country and to go to the land of Canaan with his wife, Sarah, and his nephew, Lot.



HOOK:

Tell of a time when you or someone you knew did something because something inside was telling you or them to do it.



TELL THE STORY:

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Rebuild the Story

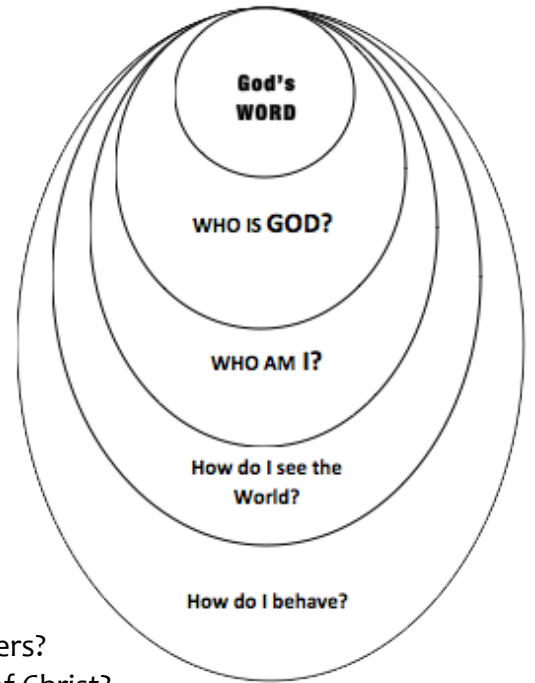
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PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

“The Call of God”

Paul – Acts 9:1-19

Week 21



LEADER’S Guide:

This week’s story is about the conversion of Saul (Paul). The hook question this week is to ask people to tell their testimony about when they received Christ into their heart. Be sensitive to those that you are not sure about their salvation. **Be the first to share your salvation experience.** Make sure that you keep it brief and to the point. Tell briefly about how you became aware of your need for Christ, your accepting of Christ, and what Christ has done in your life since that day. A testimony should not be longer than three minutes.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Paul, the evangelist, was known as *Saul* before he became a Christian. He was born in Tarsus of Cilicia in Asia Minor. His family was of the line of Benjamin. He grew up in Jerusalem and studied Jewish tradition under the elder Gamaliel becoming a zealous Pharisee. Paul was at first an active opponent of the Christian movement. He took care of the cloaks of those who threw stones at Stephen (Acts 7:58, 22:20).



HOOK:

Briefly tell your testimony of when you became a disciple of Christ.



TELL THE STORY:

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Rebuild the Story

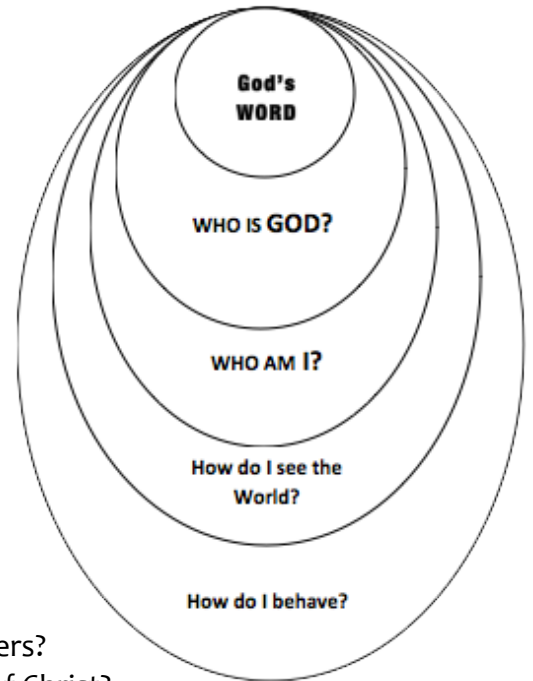
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PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

“The Call of God”

Samuel – 1 Samuel 3

Week 22



LEADER’S Guide:

The tendency when dealing with this week’s story about Samuel is to think that the call of God is only for those in full time vocational ministry (pastors, worship leaders, etc.). As the discussion grows, use the opportunity to show how God calls all of us to be involved in His ministry.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Samuel, the son of Elkanah and Hannah, was a prophet and the last of Israel's judges. Samuel grew up under Eli, the priest at Shiloh. He served a variety of roles in Israel. He was a prophet, a judge and a military leader. He was widely recognized throughout the country (1 Samuel 3:20). His home was in Ramah where he headed groups of prophets.



HOOK:

Tell what your Mom thought would be the perfect job for you.

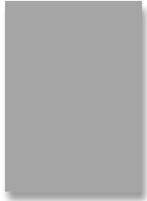


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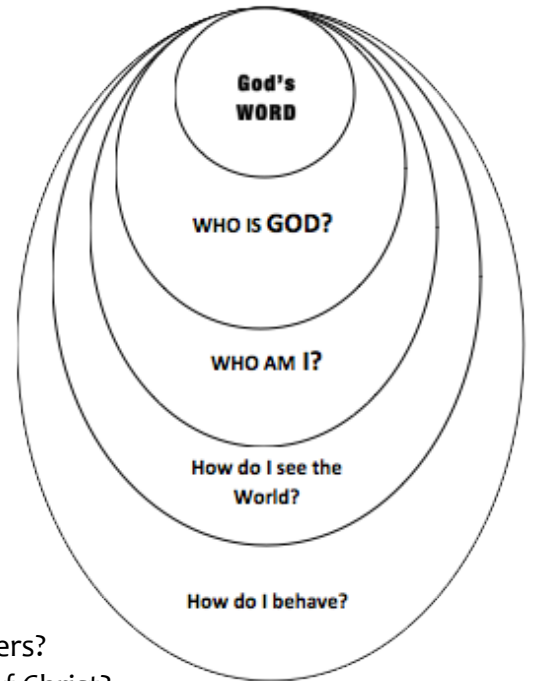


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STORY

“The Call of God”

Jeremiah – Jeremiah 1:4-19

Week 23



LEADER’S Guide:

As we end this section on following the call of God, do your best to make sure people have an opportunity to explore the call of God by being involved in the group. If you notice someone is ready to tell the story or even lead the group for a night, ask them. Remember small groups exist not for fellowship exclusively, but to intentionally make disciples. Who are you intentionally investing into?

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Jeremiah lived about 2600 years ago. His ministry began during the reign of Josiah and continued through the reigns of Jehoiakin, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah.

Jeremiah, according to the Bible book that bears his name, preached from about 628 BC to 586 BC in Jerusalem. During that time, the Babylonian Empire had taken control of Jerusalem. The Babylonians took Jews as captives to Babylon as early as 605 BC and 597 BC. Babylon destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Jeremiah lived through the invasions of the Babylonian armies, the deportations of the Jew, the slaughter of Jews living in Jerusalem, and the destruction of the Temple.

Jeremiah warned the people of Jerusalem that they would be punished harshly for their sins. He pleaded with the people to turn away from sin and to turn back to God but to little avail. In return, Jeremiah was targeted with scorn and persecution.



HOOK:

Have you ever had to correct someone? What were their reactions?

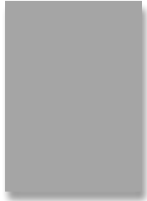


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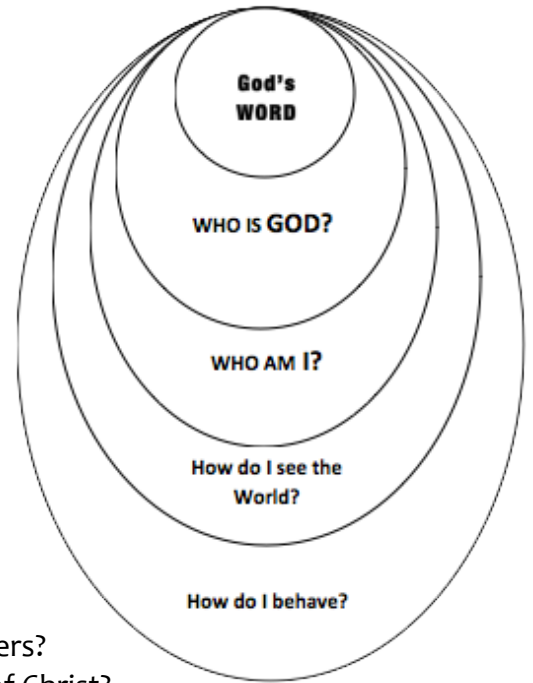


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PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

“Application to the Church”

Lydia – Acts 16:11-40

Week 24



LEADER’S Guide:

This new section deals with stories about individuals that helped the growth of the church. In each of these stories notice that we are talking about ordinary people advancing the church of Christ. Bring out practical application of how we can be involved in the promotion of the church.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Lydia might be the first person in Europe to convert to Christianity. Her story is told in the New Testament book of Acts, chapter 16. She meets Paul, the evangelist, who is traveling with Silas during Paul's second missionary journey. This journey covered roughly 2,000 miles throughout western Asia and southern Europe.

Lydia was from the city of Thyatira and lived in the town of Philippi, a Roman colony that had been founded four centuries earlier by Philip II, who was the father of Alexander the Great. .

Some Bible scholars speculate that Lydia was Jewish and that the town of Philippi did not have enough Jewish residents to have a synagogue so the Jewish people met near a riverbank to hold their worship services. Paul met Lydia there.



HOOK:

Do you think people have a positive or negative view of the church? Explain.



TELL THE STORY:

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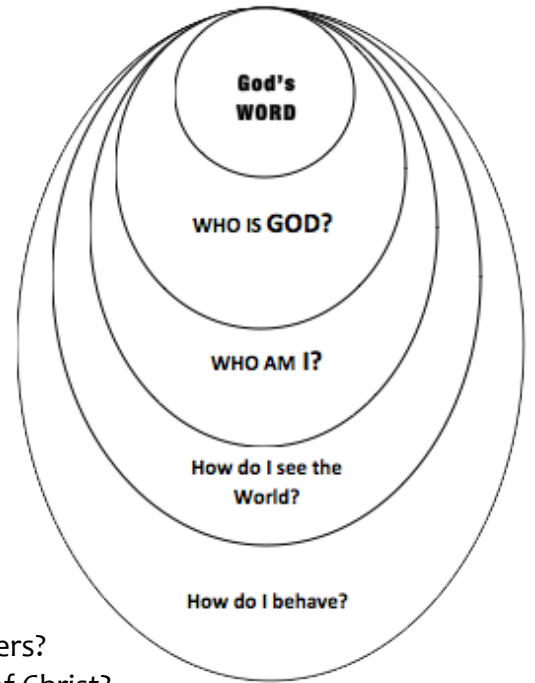
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PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

“Application to the Church”

Joshua – Joshua 7

Week 25



LEADER’S Guide:

So what does the story of Joshua in the Old Testament have to do with advancing the church of Christ? Well, notice the story deals with sin in the camp. Make sure to make the transition from the seriousness of sin in the story to the seriousness of sin in the modern day church. This is not a comfortable topic to talk about but it is necessary. Don’t let the discussion get gloom and doom over sin, instead bring what God must think of sin and celebrate that He has given us a way out of the sin problem.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Joshua was the son of Nun and Moses' successor as the leader of Israel. Of the twelve spies, Joshua and Caleb were the only two men who gave an encouraging report. They were rewarded with permission to enter Israel with the new generation of Israelites. Joshua and his army crossed the Jordan and the battle began.

After taking Jericho, there were three campaigns fought, one in the north, one in the central region, and one in the south. It took seven years of war to conquer the land and drive out most of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Joshua and his army destroyed thirty-one kings and their cities.



HOOK:

Tell of a time when you disappointed someone else or someone disappointed you. What did it do to the relationship?



TELL THE STORY:

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Rebuild the Story

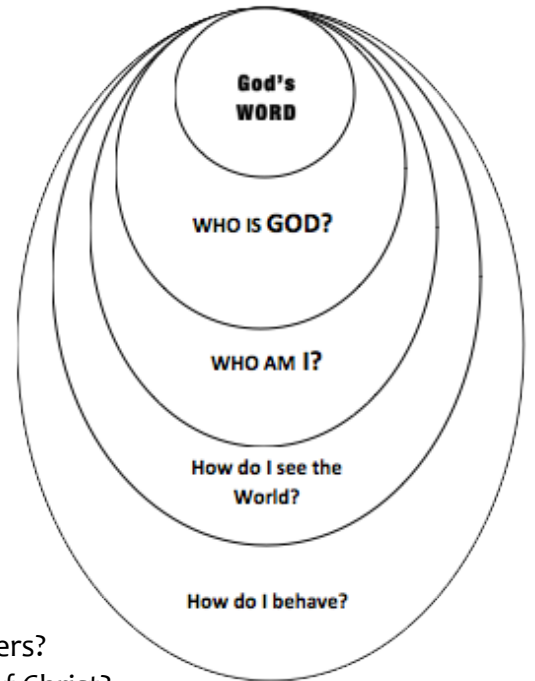
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PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

“Application to the Church”

Barnabas – Acts 9:20-31

Week 26



LEADER’S Guide:

Barnabas was a critical part of the promoting of the church. Last week we dealt with the seriousness of sin. Be just as serious in talking about encouragement. Look for opportunities in the discussion to bring out ideas of how we can be encouraging to one another in small group, in worship, and while we are ministering together.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Barnabas was an apostle but not one of the original twelve. He was a colleague of Paul on his first missionary journey. He was a Levite from Cyprus who, having sold his property, gave all his money to the apostles. Barnabas was his surname. His original name was Joseph (Acts 4:36-37).

Barnabas had the difficult task of proving Paul’s conversion to Christians who had feared his rule and persecution.



HOOK:

Tell of a time when someone encouraged you. How did it make you feel?

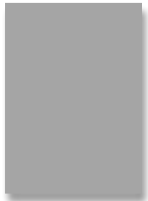


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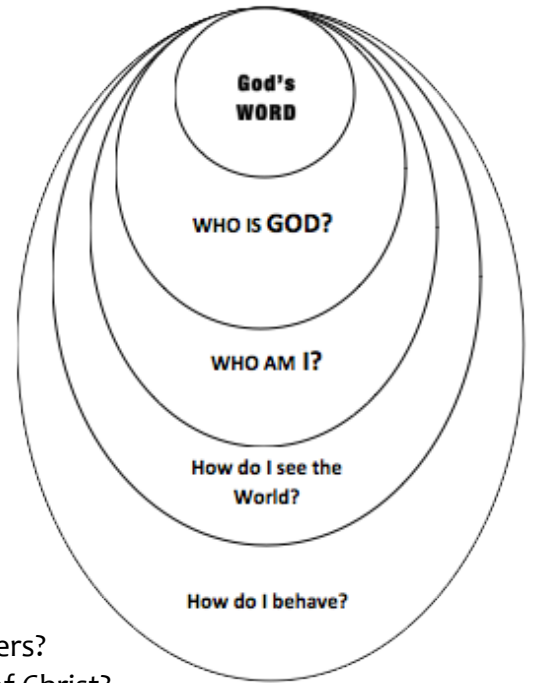


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PRAYER REQUEST: _____

STORY

Hannah – 1 Samuel 1:21-28; 2:11

“Keeping Commitments”

Week 27



LEADER'S Guide:

The final section before summer break deals with keeping out commitments. Many in your group have made decisions during the small group experience. While you do not want to come across as legalistic in this section of stories, understand that God is serious about our commitments with Him.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Hannah was the wife of Elkanah. She could not have children and was being mocked for this by Elkanah's other wife, Peninnah, who had several children. On a pilgrimage to the Temple in Shiloh, she made a vow to God that if He granted her a son she would dedicate him to the Lord for life. Eli, the priest at Shiloh, saw Hannah's lips moving in silent prayer and thought she was drunk. But Hannah convinced Eli she was praying to the Lord and Eli blessed her and asked God to grant her petition.



HOOK:

Tell of a time when you or someone you know made a promise and did not keep it.

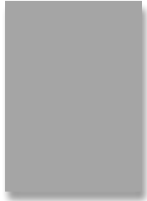


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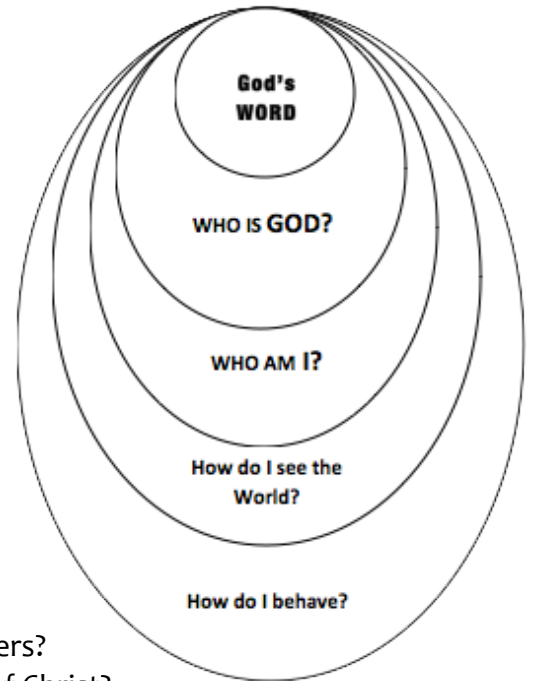


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STORY

“Keeping Commitments”

Jephthah – Judges 11:1-40

Week 28



LEADER’S Guide:

This week’s story tells of a man that made a rash vow to God. This is a great opportunity to look at the seriousness of our promises to God. We have all made promises to God that we have not kept. Encourage each person to think about making promises from God’s perspective. Remember, your group will only go as deep as you go. Be open, honest, and transparent.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Jephthah was the ninth Judge of Israel. Being an illegitimate child, he was kicked out of the family by his half brothers to prevent him from sharing in the inheritance. He fled to "the land of Tob" and gathered a group of "worthless men" and engaged in raids throughout the surrounding area. The elders of Gilead asked Jephthah to free them from the oppression of the Ammonites. He insisted on a position of leadership in Gilead if he succeeded in fighting the Ammonites. He was assured of this, and went to war. He launched an attack through Mizpah of Gilead and defeated the Ammonites "with a very great slaughter." After the war Jephthah made a vow to God.



HOOK:

Tell of a time when you or someone you know made a promise that you knew would not be kept.



TELL THE STORY:

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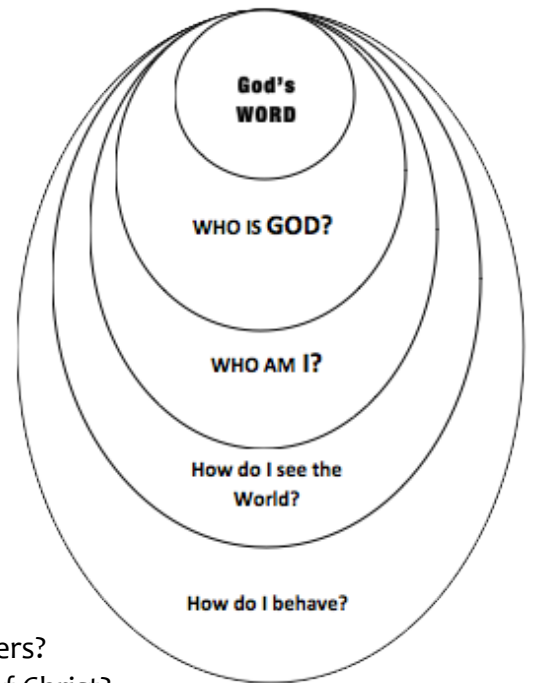
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STORY

“Keeping Commitments”

Elizabeth – Luke 1:5-25; 57-66

Week 29



LEADER’S Guide:

This is the last week of small group while studying this session. Through this story set we have focused on how God uses ordinary people to do extra ordinary things. Take some time to see how each person is seeing how God is using them in extra ordinary ways. Take some time this session to discuss events for the summer.

Ice Breaker

Consider using an icebreaker that helps your group mesh as you start things off. Remember this is an opportunity to get to know new people in the group as well as deepen the relationship between everyone.



TRANSITION:

Elizabeth was the mother of John the Baptist and the wife of Zechariah the priest. Elizabeth had been barren for many years but God performed a miracle and she conceived a child who would be the forerunner of the Messiah.



HOOK:

Tell of a time when you or someone you know kept a promise even though it was difficult.

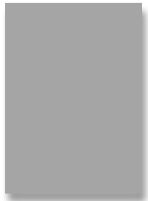


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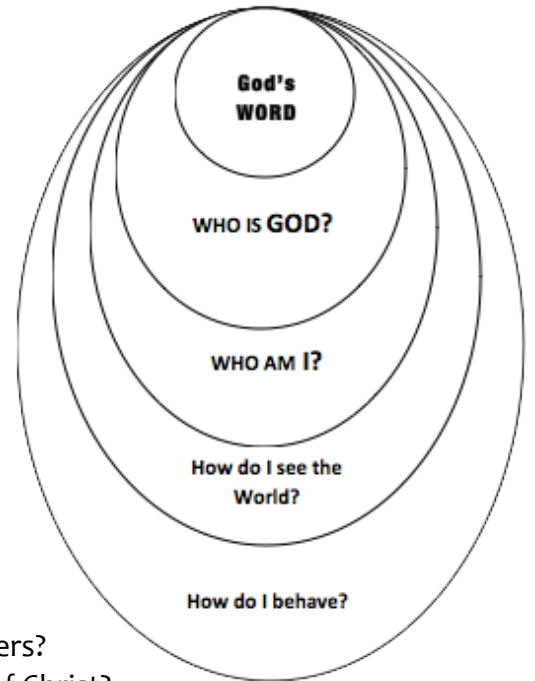


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1. What do you learn about God?
2. What do you learn about yourself?
3. How do you fit into God’s plan?
4. How do you relate with other believers and nonbelievers?
5. What actions do you need to take to live as a disciple of Christ?

PRAYER REQUEST: _____

As we close this study of “Out of Ordinary,” consider how God has plans to do extraordinary things through you.

Lead the group in a time of writing out their testimony, their own story, in a way that they would be able to share it in three minutes or less.

Use the example of Paul from Acts 26:9-29.

Paul’s example of How to Share Your Testimony:

1. My Life **BEFORE CHRIST** (9-11)
2. How I became a **CHRISTIAN** (12-18)
3. My Life Since **CHRIST** (19-23)
4. Inviting Others to **RECEIVE CHRIST** (24-29)

Have group members that are willing to share their story with the group.

How has God done extraordinary things through your life?

What extraordinary things do you think God desires to accomplish in you?

How do the previous stories from the Bible help you realize your potential?

