



Week One

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for meeting us here as a group. Help us to be open to what you have for us today and help us to connect as a group. May today's time be used to help us grow in faith and friendship. Amen.

Talk It Over

During this series will be looking at some key stories from the life of Jesus through the eyes of the apostle John who traveled with Jesus.

- What were the first or earliest stories you heard about Jesus?
- Based on the stories you were told about Jesus or your own constructs about Jesus, what were the earliest ideas you had about the heart, character, personality, and temperament of Jesus?

Read John 20:-30-31 (NIV)

It appears John wanted his stories to work as evidence in our understanding of who Jesus is. He wasn't simply asking us to put our hope in Jesus — he wanted to give us evidence. In other words, these stories were intended to serve as helpful pieces of information in our pursuit to put our confidence in him.

- For better or worse, John seems to know that stories can impact how we see people. Tell us about a time someone heard a good story about you and a time someone heard a less flattering story of you. How did the good story or less flattering story impact people's opinion of you?

An Important Note for Your Group: As we dive into this week's guide, let's remember that this story is intended to serve as a descriptive story about who Jesus is — not a perspective story that leads to guaranteed outcomes. Spiritual maturity and healthy spirituality are best experienced when we learn to understand God is bigger than a formula we can try to come up with and beyond our comprehension.

Read John 2:1-11 (NLT)

- What part of the story jumped out to you the most?
- This miracle takes place in an ordinary place, with ordinary people, and ordinary objects.
 - Is it natural for you to consider that God will move in the ordinary? Why or why not?
 - What does it stir up in you to remember or consider that God has no problem moving in the ordinary areas of life?
- While God's grace and love are present to all people, we can assume that in this specific story Jesus was present at the wedding because he was invited. In other words, this means the miracle of Jesus turning water into wine at this wedding celebration took place because Jesus was invited to be a part.
 - In what ways do you try to live life with a posture of inviting or including God?
 - Tell us about a time you invited God into a situation and you felt you saw him move.

(Content continued on the next page.)

- Tell us about a time you saw God move even though he wasn't invited. Knowing what you know now, how could you have been more intentional from the start to invite God into the situation?
- Have you ever invited God into a situation but struggled with seeing him move? If so, tell us about your experience with the understanding that the goal here is not to put bows on one another answers or to fix what feels undone. Let's be open to sitting in the tension of what it means to ask God for something and to feel like God didn't deliver as we hoped.
- Culturally speaking, Jesus' action saved the bride, groom, and family from embarrassment and shame. To run out of wine at a wedding in this culture would have shown a lack of honor, preparation, and money. In this sense, this story can help us believe that God cares about what matters to us.
 - Tell us about a time you felt God cared about something so small and trivial some people might think God is overqualified to care about.

Read John 2:5 (NLT)

Mary seemed to know Jesus would and could do something about the problem at hand. In turn, she told people to listen to whatever Jesus said to do. While God's power is much bigger than our involvement and not something we can box in, Jesus wants us to be active participants in the life he invites us to live.

- How have you felt God invite you to get more involved or engaged this season of your life?
- Have you ever felt God asked you to participate in something but you resisted? How'd that work out?
- Have you ever felt like God was actively asking you to *not* be involved in something? Tell us about how that was for you.

Read John 15:11 (NIV)

Jesus values joy. Jesus participating in a wedding helps us to see that Jesus valued celebration.

- Do you believe that Jesus came to bring joy? If so, tell us how and why this is true for you.
- In what ways do you struggle with this idea of God bringing joy?
- In what areas of life do you want more joy? Tell us about the current struggle and what it might look like to ask God for more joy into that situation. *Please note, the goal here is not to deny reality. The idea here is to envision and invite joy into the current reality.*

Read John 2:6-8

While wine requires a process and time to produce, this story makes it sound like Jesus defied the process.

- Tell us about a time you saw God move beyond your expectations.

Read Isaiah 43:19 (NIV)

A repeated idea in the Bible is that Jesus came to bring forth new things. As Christ followers, we are invited to live open to the idea that Jesus can do new things in us, through us, and around us. The invitation involves us saying 'yes' to God, us listening to God, us welcoming God, and us surrendering to God.

- Is there an area of life you want to get better at welcoming God into? Tell us what it might mean for you to be more open to God in that specific area of life.
- Is there an area of life you feel God is asking you to engage in more? Tell us about that.
- With the understanding that this story is descriptive and not perspective, how might your perspective about Jesus change if you consider the idea that Jesus can turn water into wine?

Closing Prayer

God, we want to live as people who believe in you. Help us to trust in your desire and capacity to do good things in us, through us, and around us. Help us to be open to you and to surrender to you. We want to see you move in and around our lives. Amen.

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.