



Week Two

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for being here with us. Help us to use today as a time to grow more aware of you and more connected to one another as a group. Amen.

Talk It Over

During this series, we'll be looking at some key stories from the life of Jesus through the eyes of the Apostle John who traveled with Jesus.

- This week's talk started off by looking at the cultural sayings, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is". When do you find yourself the most cynical?
- In your opinion, what good and what bad can come from cynicism?
- What do you personally think healthy cynicism looks like?
- What does unhealthy cynicism look like?

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 require us to know that we may do all the right things, including pray the right prayers, and not get what we desire.

Read John 20:-30-31 (NIV)

We revisited this verse again this week because this verse serves as the mission statement for the book of John. In this verse, John is advocating for us to adopt our own faith after hearing what he saw Jesus do and heard Jesus say. John isn't asking us to settle for blind faith.

- Have you ever been asked to put your trust in something even though you lacked evidence? Tell us about a time you trusted anyway and it worked out or a time you trusted and things went poorly.

Read John 4:43-54 (NLT)

The signs and miracles Jesus performed and the signs and wonders Biblical writers wrote about all help us understand the identity of Jesus. This story is no different. A quick look at this story tells us, Jesus, as depicted in the Bible, can heal from a distance. He is not bound by proximity. His words alone have power. In addition, we see that Jesus used this miracle to deepen the man's faith. This makes sense when we remember Jesus was looking to develop followers — not spectators.

- In your own words, tell us what it means to follow Jesus?

The Journey of Deepening Our Faith

We'll be looking at a deepening faith demonstrated by the official in this story. As we look through these stages of faith, let's be mindful that our journeys of faith are often not so simple, linear, or perfectly plotted up and to the right. In addition, we know God is interested in meeting us no matter where we are on our faith journeys.

(Content continued on the next page.)

A signs and wonders faith. / Reread John 4:43-45 (NLT)

This is a posture marked by curiosity towards Jesus.

- Our curiosity in Jesus can be sparked in all sorts of ways. How would you say your curiosity in Jesus was first sparked?
- Looking at people you love and care about, how have you seen their curiosity in Jesus get sparked?
- We know Jesus meets us where we are on our faith journey. How have you seen God show himself or meet people in this faith step?

A Crisis Faith and a Needing Faith / Reread John 4:46-49 (NLT)

This is a posture often marked by desperation. We need Jesus to do something. Whereas the signs and wonders faith had us curious, here we are looking for results in our life somehow, somehow. On some level, in the Needing Faith phase, we start to consider and believe in Jesus's power to some extent.

- Tell us about a time you found yourself praying prayers of desperation.
- The official in this story showed humility in his plea for help. How do you see humility play out in your own faith journey?
- Even if our prayers aren't always answered just like we asked, how have you seen God show his kindness in times of crisis faith?
- In a unique way, this story captures how often times we don't live thinking we need God until we are desperate for God. Have you ever returned to God or opened yourself to God because of a need?
- Learning to believe in God even when the signs and wonders aren't present can be hard. How have you navigated growing past this phase of faith in your own life?

An Acting Faith / Reread John 4:50 (NLT) and 2 Corinthians 5:7

Eventually, this man had to make the choice to trust Jesus and start heading home to see if Jesus delivered on his word. In a maturing faith journey, we can assume we will experience times Jesus responds to our need by asking us to do something. We are called to engage, participate, and respond. In these moments, we must act on our faith and trust Jesus will show up as we trust him.

- Tell us about a recent time you had to act on your faith?
- Why do you think this phase, An Acting Faith, is so important?
- In your own words, describe what it means to act knowing your trust is in who Jesus is and not in the outcome?
- In your own words, what does it mean to put your faith in Jesus?

A Knowing Faith and A Believing Jesus Faith / Reread John 4:51-53 (NLT)

Beyond this man having his son healed, he walked away from this experience with a deeper sense of confidence of how Jesus works and who Jesus is. On the other side of this experience, believing in Jesus was a personal thing for him.

- Tell us about a time your faith in Jesus grew because of what you experienced?

Phase Seven — A Sharing Faith / Reread John 4:53 (NLT)

- In your own life, how have you seen people share about their faith well?
- In your own life, how have you seen value in people sharing about their faith?
- How are you doing at sharing your faith with others this season?

Read Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV)

This verse reminds us that while we have a part to play in our faith journeys, we need to depend on Jesus. We each must keep our eyes on him and see him as our ultimate source.

- In this season, how are you doing at depending on God?

- Are you praying to invite anyone to church with you this Easter? If so, tell us about that person and why you decided to invite them specifically.

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for welcoming us into our own faith journeys. Help us to say 'yes' to deeper stages of faith — for the sake of us growing closer to you, for the sake of our own development, and for the sake of us helping others believe in you. Help us to live lives rooted in a personal, meaningful belief in you. 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.