

Lenten Small
Group Study Guide
North Indy

The Questions Jesus Asked

WHAT WILL IT PROFIT PEOPLE TO GAIN THE WHOLE
WORLD AND FORFEIT THEIR LIFE?



CONNECT (15 MIN)

WEEK 4: MAR 19 - MAR 25

WELCOME

- Spend the first few minutes visiting and catching up.
- Take attendance. Who's missing?

PRAY

Lectio Divina (Simple Lectio)

This spiritual practice invites you to listen to scripture in a way that draws you into the scripture. To participate with it and let it work within you.

I am going to read the scripture through twice. This first time I want you to just listen.

(Read slowly with little emphasis. Pause.)

This time I want you to listen for a word or phrase that catches you. It may resonate, evoke warmth, wonder or joy, or it may jar you, discomfort you, or make you ask questions.

(Read slowly. Let it do its own work. Pause.)

I invite you now to share the word or phrase that caught your attention in some way. Just share the word or phrase. No need to elaborate or explain.

(Encourage everyone to share.)

Now let's offer a prayer of gratitude for the Living Word. Lord God, we do want to be your followers. We do want to deny ourselves and take up our own cross and follow you. We are grateful for your Word - for your Word that we read in the Bible, and for your Word made flesh in your Son, Jesus. Amen.

CULTIVATE (35 MIN)

What do you think Jesus means when he asks this week's question? How is this a challenging question for our world today?

This is actually a question of discipleship, which is a lot like the word apprenticeship. What does it mean to you to be an apprentice of Jesus?

Mark 8:34-38 (NRSV)

He called the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.

FOR WHAT WILL IT PROFIT (PEOPLE) TO GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD AND FORFEIT THEIR LIFE?

Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?

Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

GROUP VALUES: It's important that you agree on the values you want to have in your group, such as openness, authenticity, and confidentiality. Honoring these values together creates a safe and healthy group environment.

DISCUSS (CONT'D)

Following Jesus isn't easy. He makes the demand clear when he says, "If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." Remember, In Jesus' day, the cross was a symbol of Roman execution for criminals.

Why do you think Jesus used the image of the cross as an image for discipleship?

If people listening to Jesus were told to take up a cross, and they weren't criminals deserving death, then Jesus is suggesting that following him might mean doing things that make you wrongly accused, misunderstood, or unpopular.

How could doing things Jesus would do, make you misunderstood or wrongly accused by others?

Taking up the cross of Jesus is voluntarily chosen. It's not the difficulties that we have no choice in—being sick, caring for a family member, dealing with a relational problem. We often talk about these as "crosses we have to bear." But a true cross is something we choose as a result of obeying God.

What in your opinion might be crosses we take up? In other words, what difficulties or hardships have you faced as a result of being faithful to what you believe Jesus would want you to do?

But most significantly, behind the idea of taking up a cross is this question: Am I willing to give my life away for others? In Luke 9:23, Jesus said, "If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."

What does it mean to you to take up the cross of Jesus daily?

CHANGE THE WORLD (5 MIN)

Hub for Hope (Impact = Maternal and Child Health)

Sign up to volunteer or donate at <https://stlukesumc.com/diapers>

We need your help! Roll up your sleeves and join with us as we provide life-changing support to families through a centralized hub of support services including: diaper pantry, food pantry, parenting support group, mental health support, housing and utility payments, life skill classes, elementary student mentoring and tutoring, and access to the Freedom School summer literacy program.

WHAT SHALL WE DO NEXT? (5 MIN)

We've been together for 4 weeks of Lent. Only one more to go. What shall we do next? Here are some ideas:

- Walk the Stations of the Cross as a group, from March 27 - April 7, at North Indy campus.
- Attend Maundy Thursday service and take communion as a group, April 6, both campuses.

More info at <https://stlukesumc.com/easter>

CLOSE (5 MIN)

- Ask for any prayer requests.
- Prayer idea: Dear God, We are marching toward Easter. This Lent experience is going well for us. We are learning together and we are growing together. Thank you for your grace and your presence. Amen.