

**“Engage the Life of Jesus…**

**…In My life”**

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20 (NIV)

**Segment 1 of 4**

**(8 Sessions)**

 **Bible Storying Guide**

Adapted from [www.blackhawkministries.org](http://www.blackhawkministries.org) and relationaldiscipleshipnetwork.com

**Starting in a small group is really just the beginning.**

Or, at least, a *new* beginning. Like getting into college, getting married, or becoming pregnant can sometimes seem like the end goal in and of themselves, they are really just the beginnings of new stages in our lives. Deciding to join a small group is also a new beginning of a deeper search through our faith and a new beginning of a closer relationship with God.

Over the next several weeks, you will have the opportunity to get to know one another in your group. You’ll begin to form connections with other Christians who support one another as you go deeper in your spiritual life and in pursuit of discipleship.

As followers of Christ, we believe that God is with us when we are with each other in authentic and meaningful ways—when we are in community. We need community to help us develop as human beings, into spiritual awareness and mature relationships with God. We need communities that let us be ourselves as well as challenge us to grow and learn and change. We need communities that will show us Christ and help us find Christ in ourselves.

May this small group be such a community for you.

**What you need to know about this Guide**

This is *not* a curriculum. It is a guide. The goal of curriculum is to *teach information*. The goal of a small group is to *become* more like Jesus. This guide is a simple method that gives every participant an opportunity to engage the scripture in a deeply personal way, allowing God’s Word to be a means of grace in their lives. By following the storytelling method below, you will quickly discover that you don’t have to be an expert to tell a story. By simply telling the story, asking questions, and committing to this process–everyone will know the Bible *and* each other better!

This is your 8-week startup guide. Being easy to facilitate, consider rotating weekly facilitation and storytelling among your group. At the end of the 8 weeks, consider continuing your group with the other segments, or explore other topics.

**Here’s how it works…**

1. Each week, assign someone to learn next week’s story. (Learn so the story is told without reading it, but not word for word.)
2. While the storyteller tells the story, the group reads along in their Bibles to see if the storyteller has missed anything.
3. When finished, the group rebuilds the story, pointing out anything that was missed.
4. Then the storyteller randomly asks someone to re-tell the story back to everyone without reading. (No one knows who will be asked, so everyone pays attention.) Statistics tell us that the majority of us actually learn better by re-telling a story. As the story is told and retold, your group will be better able to understand and apply the heart of the story.
5. Once the story has been told, rebuilt, and told again, this week’s facilitator asks questions to help participants intersect scripture with her or his life.
6. Each person identifies application points for their *own* life, and the group helps each person live it out.

**“Engage the Life of Jesus…In My Life”**

This guide follows the story of the disciples as they meet Jesus, follow Him, get to know Him and begin to grow. Overall, there are 34 chronological stories from all four gospels, divided into four segments to give your group the option to explore other topics. Jesus took these disciples on a journey together so they could become like Him and be His sent ones (“apostles”) to the world. If you face each situation they faced and respond like they did, you will be more like Jesus every day. Remember for thousands of years God’s people have used “story telling” or the oral tradition of telling the Word of God.

**Small Group Ground Rules**

This is the “operating system” of a small group. This is the most important piece to building an authentic community. These rules provide the boundaries of a space that is safe to be real, authentic and vulnerable so that Holy Spirit can do its work. We live, act, and talk differently in a small group! Developing this kind of environment takes time, team-work, and a lot of trust.

At the first gathering, go over these rules *in detail* and why they are important. Make sure they understand and agree to them. It is helpful to remind them *each week* of the rules and how to maintain them. Finally, it is *critical* that you ensure the group follows these rules. Interrupt any conversation in order to remind them to adjust their talk.

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| *1.* ***Safe Environment*** *– This is a judgment free zone! Feel safe to be your authentic self.* | *6.* ***Pause****—Allow a pause after someone finishes to provide room to consider what was said before responding.* |
|  |  |
| *2.* ***Accountability****—Everyone’s help is expected to make this safe.* | *7.* ***Silence****—Expect and welcome silence. Consider it sacred space for God to speak.* |
|  |  |
| *3.* ***Confidentiality****—What is said in the group stays in the group, unless permission is given.* | *8.* ***Respect****—Don’t try to solve or fix each other. Just receive what they share (even if you disagree) as a gift. Offer encouragement, speak truth, point to Jesus.* |
|  |  |
| *4.* ***“I” statements****—Speak for yourself-your beliefs, feelings, responses. It’s easy to talk about the issues of others, but we want you to put* ***yourself*** *on the table.  Use “I” statements rather than “them,” “the church,” “us,” “we,” “you.”* | *9.* ***Honor****-- Honor the different ways God works in individuals. Resist the temptation to console or offer condolences, as it may lead some to stop sharing, or try to fix.* |
|  |  |
| *5.* ***Listen****—Try to avoid thinking about what you are going to say next. Avoid “cross-talk” and interrupting.* | *10.* ***Sharing****—Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Recognize that all group members are invited to share aloud only what and when they are ready to share.* |

# Discovering Jesus

### John 1:29-51

**Opening (10 mins):**

What is your full name? Do you have a nickname? Where does your name comes from?

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Pass out copies of the ground rules. Take turns reading each one. Then explain what they mean and answer any questions. Upon completion, explain how you plan to hold them to it (e.g., If you are not using “I-statements,” I will gently interrupt you and say…”Who do you mean?” Know that I do this out of love, and in order to keep our promise to each other). Then, ask if everyone would agree to follow these rules while you meet.

**Transition:**

After the births of John the Baptist and Jesus, we hear little about either of them except a brief visit to the temple by Jesus when he was twelve years of age. John began his ministry by attracting large crowds to the Jordan River to hear him preach. We join the story when John and Jesus meet in Galilee and John’s testimony helps people discover the “lamb of God.” Here is the story of that meeting from God’s Word as told in the Gospel of John:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story the best you can without reading it. Have the group follow along in their Bibles and look for what was added or left out.

**Rebuild:** Invite the group to fill in the gaps.

**Re-tell**: Have the storyteller randomly ask someone to re-tell the story the best they can so everyone can better learn and understand the story. Invite the group to help.

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

## Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)

1. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
2. How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
3. What evidence do *you* have that Jesus is the Son of God?
4. How does seeing John release his disciples to Jesus apply to you?
5. How do you feel about leaving all the other teachers and following Jesus?
6. Who should you invite to come follow Jesus with you?

- next -

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

As a result of today’s time together, what is one thing you want to work on this week? How can the group help? Consider taking on as goal of the group to help each other memorize the theme scripture of Galatians 2:20.

**Next Week (1 min)**

Decide who will be the facilitator and who will be the storyteller for next week. (Email next week’s story to the group)

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 2. Call to Discipleship

### Luke 5:1-11

**Opening (10 mins):**

What was it like the first time you left home (for college, the military, a job, marriage, etc.)? Anyone like to practice reciting our theme scripture, Galatians 2:20, from memory?

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules from last week. Ask how we can do better at following them.

**Transition from last week:** Jesus left Judea to return to Galilee. John’s disciples continued to discover who Jesus was as he taught and did miracles in His home area. Jesus was rejected by the people at Nazareth and moved to Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee. Then Jesus began to call his disciples to go with Him and become fishers of people. Here is the story from God’s Word:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story the best you can without reading it. Have the group follow along in their Bibles and look for what was added or left out.

**Rebuild:** Invite the group to fill in the gaps.

**Re-tell**: Have the storyteller randomly ask someone to re-tell the story the best they can so everyone can better learn and understand the story. Invite the group to help.

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

## Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)

* 1. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
	2. How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
	3. How would you explain your spiritual beginning?
	4. What is the condition of your spiritual boat right now?
	5. What is the next level of following Jesus that he challenges you to?
	6. What is it going to take to get you going?

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

Assign partners who don’t know each other very well to get together this week for coffee, lunch, a walk in the park, or just a phone call. Ask each other, “what are you really hoping to get out of this small group?” Consider switching partners each week for spiritual conversation and prayer.

**Next Week (1 min):** Decide who will be the facilitator and who will be the storyteller for next week. (Email next week’s story to the group)

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 3. Jesus Casts out an Evil Spirit

### Mark 1:21-39

**Opening (10 mins):**

Who was one of your best teachers? What made that teacher so good?

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules from last week. Ask how we can do better at following them.

**Transition:** Jesus continued to show His power by teaching with authority and doing miracles. The disciples were amazed as much as the people! Jesus visited Peter’s mother-in-law and healed her. In this story we also see Jesus worshipping in two very different places. Here is the story from God’s Word:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story the best you can without reading it. Have the group follow along in their Bibles and look for what was added or left out.

**Rebuild:** Invite the group to fill in the gaps.

**Re-tell**: Have the storyteller randomly ask someone to re-tell the story the best they can so everyone can better learn and understand the story. Invite the group to help.

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

## Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)

1. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
2. How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
3. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much authority does Jesus have in your life? What would you have to cast out to rate a 10?
4. What two practices of worship does Jesus model in this story?
5. What commitments have you made about public and personal worship?
6. What is daily personal worship? What should one do during a daily personal worship to ensure a real meeting with God?
7. What has God communicated to you about your public and personal worship?

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

What can you do this week to grow spiritually as a child of God? Consider finding some time(s) to be alone with God in personal worship this week. When you meet your partner or return to the group, share your experience(s). Anyone like to practice reciting Galatians 2:20 from memory?

**Next Week (1 min):** Decide who will be the facilitator and who will be the storyteller for next week. (Email next week’s story to the group)

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 4. Jesus Chooses the Twelve

### Luke 6:12-23

**Opening (10 mins):**

What was one of the best teams you ever belonged to? Anyone like to practice reciting our theme scripture, Galatians 2:20, from memory?

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules from last week. Ask how we can do better at following them.

**Transition:** Many people begin to follow Jesus. He called others like Mathew, the tax collector, to follow Him. Then Jesus developed the relationships where He could make disciples. Out of all the people that were following Him, Jesus asked the Father to show Him who His twelve disciples should be. Here is the story from God’s Word:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story the best you can without reading it. Have the group follow along in their Bibles and look for what was added or left out.

**Rebuild:** Invite the group to fill in the gaps.

**Re-tell**: Have the storyteller randomly ask someone to re-tell the story the best they can so everyone can better learn and understand the story. Invite the group to help.

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

## Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)

1. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
2. How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
3. Why do you think Jesus prayed all night? (refer to John 17:5)
4. What was Jesus’ purpose in choosing these twelve?
5. Are you a disciple of Jesus? Why or why not?
6. What does the story reveal about your attitude as a disciple?

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

Reach out to someone who has discipled you (intentionally poured into you) and share with her or him the difference it has made. Begin asking God to reveal to you someone for you to disciple.

**Next Week (1 min):** Decide who will be the facilitator and who will be the storyteller for next week. (Email next week’s story to the group)

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 5. Sermon on the Mount (Part 1)

### Luke 6:27-36

**Opening (10 mins):**

Did you grow up in an openly “religious” home? How did you see others in your family model the disciple’s life?

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules from last week. Ask how we can do better at following them.

**Transition:** Immediately after choosing the twelve, Jesus began to teach them about the Kingdom of God. They needed to understand His teaching and apply it to their lives. Matthew records Jesus’ teaching as the Sermon on the Mount. Luke records a similar sermon called The Sermon on the Plains that has basically the same teaching but in a simpler form. The teaching rocked the disciple’s world. It shocked the people who heard it and even today we can hardly believe Jesus’ teaching about Kingdom Living. Here is the first part of the Sermon on the Plains:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story the best you can without reading it. Have the group follow along in their Bibles and look for what was added or left out.

**Rebuild:** Invite the group to fill in the gaps.

**Re-tell**: Have the storyteller randomly ask someone to re-tell the story the best they can so everyone can better learn and understand the story. Invite the group to help.

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

## Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)

1. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
2. How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
3. Who comes to mind as a result of this story? How does this teaching challenge you?
4. How do these teachings redefine love for you?
5. What specifically are we to do to enemies?
6. Have you ever shown love to an enemy? How?

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

How do you typically respond to evil persons or acts? Loving reactions are not usually natural to us when facing an evil person or act. Identify a moment when you reacted unlovingly in such a moment this week. Then, go back and reconcile. Anyone like to practice reciting our theme scripture, Galatians 2:20, from memory?

**Next Week (1 min):**Decide who will be the facilitator and who will be the storyteller for next week. (Email next week’s story to the group)

# 6. Sermon on the Mount (Part 2)

### Luke 6:37-49

**Opening (10 mins):**

Describe your past week in weather terms. (Was it stormy, cloudy, foggy, mostly sunny, or what?). Anyone like to practice reciting our theme scripture, Galatians 2:20, from memory?

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules from last week. Ask how we can do better at following them.

**Transition:** In the second part of Jesus’ sermon He gets even more practical. Instead of making it easier, Jesus raised their expectations. He applied his teachings with a story about the importance of obedience. Here is the rest of the story from God’s Word:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story the best you can without reading it. Have the group follow along in their Bibles and look for what was added or left out.

**Rebuild:** Invite the group to fill in the gaps.

**Re-tell**: Have the storyteller randomly ask someone to re-tell the story the best they can so everyone can better learn and understand the story. Invite the group to help.

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

## Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)

1. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
2. How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
3. In light of this passage, how do you recommend approaching people who need help or correction? How well do you receive help or correction?
4. What is the test of a disciple who follows Jesus as his teacher? Are you following Jesus this way?
5. How can you know if your fruit is good or bad? If your fruit and actions aren’t good, how do you correct the problem?
6. During the last “storm” to hit your life, what did you learn about your life’s “foundation?”

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

What one building block from Luke 6:27-45 do you need to add to your foundation? How can your group help you?

**Next Week (1 min):** Decide who will be the facilitator and who will be the storyteller for next week. (Email next week’s story to the group)

# 7. Farmer Scattering Seed

### Matthew 13:1-23

**Opening (10 mins):**

Have you ever tried to “grow” plants—flowers, vegetables, etc.? Did you enjoy it?

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules from last week. Ask how we can do better at following them.

**Transition:** Jesus was always teaching the difference in God’s view of things and the people’s view. He didn’t teach them anything without telling them a story. He loved to use parables that spoke to people on different levels. In Matthew 13 Jesus tells seven parables that gave light to the believers and confused those who rejected His teaching. Here is the first parable from God’s Word:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story the best you can without reading it. Have the group follow along in their Bibles and look for what was added or left out.

**Rebuild:** Invite the group to fill in the gaps.

**Re-tell**: Have the storyteller randomly ask someone to re-tell the story the best they can so everyone can better learn and understand the story. Invite the group to help.

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

## Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)

1. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
2. How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
3. How would you explain this parable to a bunch of city kids who don’t know anything about sowing a field?
4. Can you share about a time in your life when you experienced each of the four soils (Path, Rocky, Thorny, Good)? How does it feel to tell ‘your’ story of Christ?
5. What gives you deep “roots?”
6. What are the rocks or thorns in your life right now that choke your growth in Christ?
7. What “crop” does Jesus want you to yield?

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

Consider finding at least one person to tell part of your Christ story. Report back to the group how it went. Anyone like to practice reciting our theme scripture, Galatians 2:20, from memory?

**Next Week (1 min):** Decide who will be the facilitator and who will be the storyteller for next week. (Email next week’s story to the group)

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 8. Jesus Heals

### Mark 5:21-43

**Opening (10 mins):**

When did God become more than a word you? Anyone like to practice reciting our theme scripture, Galatians 2:20, from memory?

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules from last week. Ask how we can do better at following them.

**Transition:** Jesus taught through sermons and parables but He loved to teach through miracles also. He applied the teaching and power of God to all kinds of sick, demon-possessed persons and even the dead. Here are three stories that show His power and love:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story the best you can without reading it. Have the group follow along in their Bibles and look for what was added or left out.

**Rebuild:** Invite the group to fill in the gaps.

**Re-tell**: Have the storyteller randomly ask someone to re-tell the story the best they can so everyone can better learn and understand the story. Invite the group to help.

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

## Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)

1. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
2. How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
3. How does Jesus’ power over demons, disease, and death relate to your problems?
4. What is the relationship between crisis and faith in your life?
5. Who have you identified with in your life –Jairus, the sick woman, the disciples, the mourners, the dead girl, the parents? How does Jesus’ instructions guide you?
6. What would you like Jesus to heal in you (physically, emotionally, spiritually, relationally, etc.)?

**Put it Into Action (5 mins):** Consider visiting someone you know that is battling a demon, disease or death. Allow these stories to guide your visit and prayers.

**Next: Well DONE!**

This is the final week we have together, if we so choose. If it is, pray a special prayer of grace and growth for each other. If the group wishes to continue, make appropriate plans. Let Brandon Dirks know of your plans or if you need more help in deciding what to explore next, etc. brandon@ccum.net

**Prayer (5 mins)**