

**“Engage the Life of Jesus…**

**…In My life”**

Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

Matthew 10:39 (NIV)

**Segment 2 of 4**

**(8 Sessions)**

**Bible Storying Guide**

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

**Continuing in your small group...is an adventure!**

Just like a hike, the small group is heading somewhere. At times, it may seem like wandering aimlessly, occasionally getting lost or distracted. Sometimes the group needs help: signs to point the way, affirming that they are exactly where they are supposed to be.

By starting Segment 2, the group has decided to continue together. This simple act is a profound sign that these people are committed to taking a deeper step into the adventure with you. What a gift!

The focus so far has been primarily to get to know one another as fellow ‘hikers.’ Questions emerge in our hearts: Can I trust these persons? Will they love me if they knew…? Will they accept me…? These are questions that will always be in their hearts, and the group will not get anywhere if these questions are not answered by the actions of the group. When a group embarks on an expedition, it matters if you trust those with whom you go. In a small group, we need each other to let us be ourselves as well as challenge us to learn and change.

Relationships are God’s vehicle for transformation. 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. Allow God’s Word to guide you into deeper, more personally transparent conversations. Be curious with each other about what the Holy Spirit is doing in your fellow hikers’ lives.

And, be curious about what the Holy Spirit is doing in your life, too!

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

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.

**What you need to know about Segment 2**

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.

Starting Segment 2 gives you an opportunity for a fresh start. Create a weekly rotation so everyone gets a chance to facilitate and story tell. Have an open and frank conversation about how well the group is holding to the guidelines. It is vital to be consistent, to redirect the group weekly to the guidelines in order to make the group safe and personal. Think long-term and listen to spiritual needs, and don’t be afraid to stop and explore other topics as needed.

**Here’s how Bible-Storying works…**

1. Each week, assign someone to learn next week’s story. (Learn so the story is told in one’s own words without reading it, but not word for word.)
2. While the storyteller tells the story, the group follows along in their Bibles.
3. When finished, the group rebuilds the story, by asking questions such as:
	1. Did our storyteller leave anything out? Add anything?
	2. Let’s rebuild from the beginning…
	3. What happened first? Then what?
4. Then, have a volunteer or volunteers read the story aloud.
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.

**Small Group Ground Rules**

This is the “operating system” of a small group--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 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.

**Review the Rules**

At the first gathering, have the group take stock of these ground rules. Pass out copies. You may be tempted to skip over this, or give lip service to it. But don’t. Ask specific questions such as: *Has this been a safe environment for you?*  Go over these rules *in detail* and why they are important. Make sure they understand and agree to them. It is *critical* that you remind and ensure the group to follow these rules, and give them permission to hold you to them as well!

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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.* |

# Transitional Gathering. Group Check-in

### John 15:1-5 NRSV

*A “Check-in” is a great tool that helps participants to re-frame and re-focus their commitment to the purpose of the group. It can be used at any time—between studies, when things get tense, when emotions run high, or when behavior becomes an issue (non-participation, chronic lateness or no-shows). It ensures that people are truly present. Verbal sharing, especially a brief story, weaves the interpersonal net. Check-in usually starts with a volunteer and proceeds around the circle. If an individual is not ready to speak, the turn is passed and another opportunity is offered after others have spoken. Sometimes people place individual objects in the center as a way of signifying their presence and relationship to the purpose.*

**Opening (10 mins):**

What is something that fills your bucket? (What refuels you? What activities or engagements restore your energy levels? What do you do to replenish yourself when you feel depleted? What relationships inspire you? What do you read that elevates you? What in your life is actually a bucket filler for you?)

**Prayer**

**Scripture focus:**

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. **2**He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. **3**You have already been cleansedby the word that I have spoken to you. **4**Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. **5**I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

**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*.

**Group “Check-in” (30 mins)**

1. **Safe Community**. Remind the group that the purpose of a small group is to build a safe place where each one can explore the purpose and power of Christ in their lives, in order to live more like Christ. This check-in is an opportunity for us to be honest with ourselves and each other on how well we are living up to our purpose. Pass out copies of the ground rules and explain them. Take turns reading each one.
* How safe has this small group been for you? How well are you holding to the ground rules?
* Next -
1. **Take Away Challenge.**
* Begin the sharing by asking one volunteer to share something with the group that the Holy Spirit is revealing to them as a result of being with the group so far.
* Then, the person who just shared picks someone else in the group and does ONE of the following (It is VERY important to look the other person in the eye and speak directly to each other, rather than to the group):
	+ Ask the person for forgiveness for something.
	+ Encourage or affirm the person.
	+ Challenge the person (personal growth, leadership, etc.)
* The person responds ONLY with “Thank you.”
* Then the next person share’s their take away and challenge…until everyone has had the opportunity to share their take-away and speak to someone in the group.

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

Assign partners to connect up with over the coming week. (You may decide to do a weekly rotation). Invite them to try to “connect” with either by meeting for coffee or lunch, taking a walk, a phone call. Challenge them to also send each other an encouraging text or email during the week.

**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)**

# Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

### Matthew 9:35-10:22

**Opening (10 mins):**

What is the longest you have hiked? What kind of person would you want in your expedition party (to complement your weakness) the next time you embark on a great adventure?

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

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

**Today’s Scripture Context:**

For more than a year Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God and healed people with all kinds of diseases in Galilee. Then He asked His disciples to pray for workers because the multitudes were milling around like sheep without a shepherd. So He gave the disciples the authority over unclean spirits and every kind of sickness. Then He sent them to the cities of Israel that he planned to visit.

Here is the story of what He told them to do:

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

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 3).

**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 should you respond to Jesus teaching to pray for laborers for the harvest?
4. How do Jesus’ instructions to His disciples apply to you today (make it personal)? What doesn’t apply to you today?
5. What have you been sent to do?
6. Have you been hated, persecuted, put down, made fun of because of Jesus? Where do you find encouragement?
7. Under what circumstances do you find it most difficult to talk about your faith?

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

Challenge each other to memorize the theme scripture of Segment 2: Matthew 10:39

**Next Week (1 min)**

Assign a facilitator and a storyteller for next week. (Email next week’s story to the group)

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 10. Jesus Feeds the 5000, Walks on Water

### Matthew 14:13-33

**Opening (10 mins):**

Anything left over from last week? After a long day, how do you like to unwind?

**Prayer**

**Bible Memorization:** Practice reciting Matthew 10:39 from memory.

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

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

**Today’s Scripture Context from last week:** Until now Jesus has ministered publicly to the multitudes, but now His strategy changes to more of a private one. He withdrew from His home area several times and for different reasons. Herod had just beheaded John the Baptist, the Scribes and Pharisees were planning Jesus’ death, some of the crowds wanted to make Him a king and His disciples needed time for more teaching and preparation for the last half of Jesus’ time on Earth. Here is the story of Jesus’ first withdrawal after John’s death when the people followed Him:

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

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 3).

**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 like to separate yourself and spend time alone in prayer as Jesus modeled?
	4. How should you react when things go wrong, yet people keep looking to you for answers?
	5. What are the implications for you today when Jesus said, “You feed them”?
	6. What might Jesus be asking you to do that feels like “walking on water”?
	7. When you start to “sink,” do you tend to reach out to Jesus or try to swim on your own? How has that worked out for you?

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

When you go out to a meal this week, consider finding a way to buy a stranger’s meal. Seek to do it as anonymously as possible. Pray for the person or family.

**Next Week (1 min):** Assign a facilitator and a storyteller for next week.

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 11. Jesus, The Bread of Life

### John 6:22-69

**Opening (10 mins):**

Anything left over from last week? Who is the easiest in your family for you to communicate with? With which person are you often misunderstood?

**Prayer**

**Bible Memorization:** Practice reciting Matthew 10:39 from memory.

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

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

**Today’s Scripture Context:** After Jesus fed the 5000, they pursued Him to the other side of the lake wanting more food. Jesus challenged them to move from seeking physical bread to seeking the bread of Life. He asks them to do something that separated the true disciples from just followers who had the wrong motivation. 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 in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 3).

**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. After looking at the Jews’ motivations for seeking Jesus, what are your motivations and what would Jesus say about them?
4. What are the main reasons you follow Jesus?
5. How can you “eat Jesus’ flesh and drink His blood?” (v. 53)
6. What words of Jesus do you find hard to accept?
7. How have you been tempted to make Jesus into an errand boy for your own personal agenda?
8. Have you ever been tempted to leave Jesus?

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

Make a meal for someone this week. Invite them over or take it to them. No strings attached.

**Next Week (1 min):** Assign a facilitator and a storyteller for next week. (Email next week’s story to the group)

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 12. Peter’s Confession of Christ

### Matthew 16:13-27

**Opening (10 mins):**

Anything left over from last week? If we polled two good friends from your late teen years, what adjective would they use to describe you?

**Prayer**

**Bible Memorization:** Practice reciting Matthew 10:39 from memory.

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

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

**Today’s Scripture Context:** At the halfway point in Jesus’ earthly ministry He took His disciples on a retreat to settle their questions about who He was and to explain His coming death and resurrection and its meaning for them. This was a real turning point in the disciples’ growth and preparation for their future ministry. 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 in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 3).

**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. Have you come to believe Jesus is the Messiah? How did you come to this belief?
4. How does verse 24 strike home to you now?
5. What does it look like in your life to “lose your life” for Christ? Did you feel like a ‘loser?’
6. What priorities in your life are affected by Jesus teaching in verses 25-26?

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

Name one area of your life that you would really like to ‘exchange’ for Jesus (v. 26). Invite the group to help you come up with a plan to make that real in your life.

**Next Week (1 min):** Assign a facilitator and a storyteller for next week. (Email next week’s story to the group)

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 13. The Transfiguration

### Matthew 17:1-21

**Opening (10 mins):**

Is there anything left over from last week? What was one mountaintop experience in your life?

**Prayer**

**Bible Memorization:** Practice reciting Matthew 10:39 from memory.

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

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

**Today’s Scripture Context:** After Christ’s revelation about who He was and what was going to happen to Him, Jesus gave three disciples the opportunity to see Him in His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. Meanwhile the disciples down in the valley faced another revelation- that they could do nothing without faith in Christ. 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 in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 3).

**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. Have you ever had a spiritual ‘valley’ experience? Which experience, valley or mountaintop, built your faith up more?
4. How has God said to *you*, “This is my child, with whom I am well pleased”?
5. What mountains do you have in front of you that need to be moved? How can you have faith enough to move them?

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

Go on a hike or a walk this week with God. Turn away from any music, cell phones, etc. as best as you can and simply try to listen for God’s voice. What is God trying to tell you?

**Next Week (1 min):** Assign a facilitator and a storyteller for next week.

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 14. Forgiving Others

### Matthew 18:15-35

**Opening (10 mins):**

Is there anything left over from last week? What funny things did you and a sibling (or close friend) argue about?

**Prayer**

**Bible Memorization:** Practice reciting Matthew 10:39 from memory.

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

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

**Today’s Scripture Context:** Jesus had just told the disciples that He would be killed and talked to Moses and Elijah about it on the Mount of Transfiguration. Then He taught the disciples how to deal with people that sin against them. It was a shock to them to learn that they needed to forgive people time after time. 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 in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 3).

**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. Is there anyone you have a hard time forgiving? Why?
4. How have you experienced forgiveness from others? From God?
5. How has unforgiveness held you captive or robbed you of time or energy?
6. What is the Biblical process of forgiving those who wrong you or have something done against you? How have you experienced (or not experienced) this process?

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

Name for your group one person with whom God is nudging you to seek reconciliation. Commit to praying for every name on your small group list, everyday, for one week.

**Next Week (1 min):** Assign a facilitator and a storyteller for next week.

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 15. The Cost of Following Jesus

### Luke 9:57-10:1

**Opening (10 mins):**

Is there anything left over from last week? What’s a favorite excuse you use for not doing something (e.g. “dog ate my homework”).

**Prayer**

**Bible Memorization:** Practice reciting Matthew 10:39 from memory.

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

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

**Today’s Scripture Context:** Just before Jesus started for Jerusalem He told the disciples that excuses did not work for true disciples. He then expanded the workers by seeding out the seventy on His mission. 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 in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 3).

**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 term are you most comfortable with describing your relationship with Jesus: Not sure, Believer, Follower, Disciple. Explain.
4. What excuses have you used for not following Jesus?
5. Of the issues listed here (comfort, social obligations, family concerns), which one would tempt you to not follow Jesus?
6. What is the cost of following Jesus? What is the cost of NOT following Jesus?

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

Name for your group one area of following Jesus that you have been putting off. Invite ideas of a ‘first step’ in a new direction.

**Next Week (1 min):** Assign a facilitator and a storyteller for next week. (Email next week’s story to the group)

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 16. The Lord’s Prayer

### Luke 11:1-13

**Opening (10 mins):**

Is there anything left over from last week? As a child, did you have a standard prayer that you recited? How much can you remember?

**Prayer**

**Bible Memorization:** Practice reciting Matthew 10:39 from memory.

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

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

**Today’s Scripture Context:** Jesus went to the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem and faced opposition. In the middle of this situation the disciples saw Jesus praying and asked them to teach them to pray. He gave them what is popularly called The Lord’s Prayer. Jesus emphasized His teaching by giving another story. 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 in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 3).

**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, if anyone, taught you how to pray?
4. How do you usually pray? Do you have a set time or place?
5. What concerns occupy most of your prayer time? (Praise? Confession? Petition?)
6. When have you felt as if God was not listening? What do you do then?
7. What is one thing you would like to seek the Father for?

**Put it Into Action (5 mins):** What is one area of your prayer life you would like to grow?

**Next: Well DONE! You’ve completed Segment 2!**

Now is a good time to assess where your group is. Are you open to a period of time to invite and welcome new participants? Want to go on to Segment 3, or is there a different faith issue your group needs to explore? How about a service project together, or a fellowship meal with spouses/families? Let Brandon Dirks brandon@ccum.net know of your plans or if you need more help.

**Prayer (5 mins)**