

*student*GROUPS

DISCUSSION GUIDES

Our weekly discussion guides are the main resource that you will use during your Wednesday night Student Groups. We want you to use this Discussion Guide to do exactly that... guide a discussion! These guides will typically be created around what we are teaching on Sunday mornings, but we create the Discussion Guides in a way to engage students in the series even if they weren't at church that Sunday or don't attend Calvary Student Ministries outside of Wednesday nights.

This front page of the Discussion Guide is our Leader Info. The sections listed on the front page help you to be informed about what we are currently doing within this series and any specific information pertaining to this week's discussion, a section to help you connect with the parents of your students, and a series overview so that you can see the bigger vision of where Student Ministries is headed over several weeks! We want to help prepare you as leaders as best we can and this page is one of the main ways we do that. Another way that we help our leaders to prepare is by posting our podcasts from Sunday on our website and video recaps on Facebook so that leaders can review those in order to prepare for Wednesday night discussions.

HOW TO USE THE DISCUSSION GUIDE

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NOTE TO LEADERS:

Look here to find helpful insight into this weeks discussion guide, upcoming events and how you can best prepare for leading a discussion. This section will also include information on other ways we are promoting our series, whether it is discussion guides, cards or social media posts, and these will help you and your students connect with the content during the week.

PARENT EMAIL:

We find that one of the best ways to partner with parents is to send them weekly emails, letting them know what is happening in their student's group! **Each group needs to decide which leader will be responsible for sending out these weekly parent emails.** We encourage you to copy and paste this section of the Discussion Guide into your weekly parent email to inform them about what you will be discussing each week. (We're doing some of the hard work for you!) Make sure you also inform parents about upcoming events and ways they can pray for your group!

SERIES OVERVIEW:

This section will give you the breakdown of our current series and what is coming up next. **This will help you to see the larger context of your discussion and how it fits in to the overall series.** This will also help you to plan ahead and challenge your students to prepare for future weeks.

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DISCUSSION GUIDES

The back page of this Discussion Guide is the actual guide for your discussion with your group. It is important that you look over the Discussion Guide before your time with your group on Wednesday nights! (Review the handout *5 Essentials - Filling Up First*) In this Discussion Guide, we always provide more than you will need, in hopes that you will take out, change, or create any questions that you think will be best for your group. **We want the Bible to be your guide, and you will see that we highlight the Main Passage every week!** This is NOT a “what did you learn on Sunday” discussion, but a discussion that will focus on “what does the Bible say?”

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BOTTOM LINE:

This is the main point that we want students to walk away with. **The bottom line should guide and redirect discussion to come back to the main point of the passage** and not get lost in other conversations. All of the questions are geared at highlighting and discussing the bottom line, so make sure you have a good grasp of this as you enter your Student Group.

MAIN SCRIPTURE:

We want to make sure that your group spends time in God’s Word every week! Make sure you are familiar with the main scripture and that you read and discuss that each week. Though there may be other passages in your discussion guide (in orange), we want you to **focus on the main scripture** and use those other verses to help to interpret it.

INTRODUCTION:

To start your discussion, **we want to get students thinking about the bottom line**, break the ice and ask questions or do an exercise that will get students engaged and thinking. This should be fun and grab their attention as you enter your discussion.

OBSERVATION:

We want to read and understand our main passage. In order to do that, we want to ask observation questions and then find answers to those questions. Let the questions we provide be a starting point and see where your students take the discussion. What stands out to them in the main passage? What do they not understand? Don’t teach a lesson, but help students ask and answer questions on their own.

APPLICATION:

We don’t just want to learn what the Bible says, we want to practically apply it to our lives! How does what the main passage says change the way I need to live my life this week? How can you as a group help each other to be more like Jesus?

LANDING:

This is a summary statement that will wrap up what we discussed and reiterate the bottom line as we end our discussion. **This will help you transition your discussion and application into a time of prayer.**

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DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR 11/2/2016

One Page Letters: Philemon

Note to Leaders:

With this new series, we are looking at the shortest books in the Bible, the one chapter letters tucked away in the New Testament. Encourage your students to read ahead, study the scriptures for themselves and learn what they can about each book before we study it.

As you look through the discussion guide, please feel free to edit and change what you want so that it will best suit your group (make it your own). An important question to ask yourself each week is: Have I taken the time to fill up first? Have I prepared and prayed over this important time I have with my group? (*These are your disciples!*)

Parent Email:

Dear Parents,

After an incredible Fusion weekend, we jump into our next series called One Page Letters. We believe that all of scripture is inspired by God, from the longest to the shortest book. In our new series, One Page Letters, we focus on the often forgotten short epistle. The first letter we are looking at is Philemon, an incredible story of a slave who stole from his owner, ran away, became a christian and must not face up to Philemon, his master. As Paul writes to Philemon, we will see how the gospel changes our relationships, how God's grace and love for us, should be shown to others.

Pray that students will see Gods love for them, that they do not need to feel guilt and shame or try to pay back God for the grace we are given. Pray that students would seek to reconcile relationships that they have broken and that they would forgive others as God has forgiven them.

Your partner in ministry,

Series Overview:

We believe that all of scripture is inspired by God, from the longest to the shortest book. In our new series, **One Page Letters**, we focus on the often forgotten short epistle. **Philemon, 2 & 3 John** and **Jude**, may only be one chapter long and fit on just one page, but they are full of important lessons for living out the gospel in our lives today. As we study these short letters, we need to understand the context in which they are written and the purpose for why they are written. Since they are so short, we are able to see the whole context and let that speak into our lives today.

Current Series: One Page Letters

10/30 - Philemon
11/06 - 2 John / 3 John
11/13 - Jude

Next Series: Family Tree (The Genealogy of Jesus)

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DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR 11/2/2016

One Page Letters: Philemon

Bottom Line:
The Gospel changes our relationships.

Main Scriptures:
Philemon 1:15-16

Introduction:

What is an **action** that someone could do to completely **destroy** a **friendship/relationship**?

- Have you had someone do something to you and now you aren't friends anymore? What was that?

Recap the story of Philemon, what do they remember about the situation that Paul is writing to?

- **Philemon** was a wealthy man in Colossae and a leader in the church.
- **Onesimus** was a slave of Philemon who stole from him and ran away, fleeing to Rome
- In Rome Onesimus met Paul, became a christian and started being discipled and helping Paul
- **Paul** now writes to Philemon, asking him to forgive and reconcile with Onesimus

Observation:

- **Greeting (1:1-7)**
 - What can you learn about Philemon from Paul's greeting? What does Paul say about his character and relationship with God and others?
- **Request (1:8-20)**
 - Knowing this situation, what would your advice be to Philemon and Onesimus? What would you tell them to do?
 - Read **verse 8-9** and **verse 14**. What is the difference between **command** and **appeal**? What is the difference between **compulsion** and **own accord**? Why doesn't Paul just tell him what to do?
 - What is Paul asking Philemon to do (focus on **verse 15-16**)? Does this request seem right to you? Why or Why not?
- **Farewell (1:21-25)**
 - We know that Onesimus delivered this letter, that had to have been an awkward situation! What do you think happened? What do you think Philemon's reaction would have been? What would your reaction have been?

Application:

- What is significant about **verse 18-19**? How is Paul being an example of what Jesus has done for us?
- How do you respond to God when you sin? How does God respond to us?
- Read **Ephesians 4:32**, how does the gospel change our relationships?
- Is there a relationship in your life that needs reconciliation (big or small)? Who do you need to forgive? Who do you need to ask for forgiveness?

Landing:

The Gospel is all about how God, because of Jesus, forgives us of ALL our sin! We can't repay him, we are no longer condemned, we don't have to feel ashamed anymore. When we sin, we can get up and try again, knowing that God forgives. When others sin against us, we can forgive, because of how God forgives us!