

"It's a Meaningful Life!"
Discussion Questions
11.29.15

Leader Prep Section

Take time before your small group meeting to prepare by reading through the questions and scripture passage so that you can select 4-5 questions that are best suited to your group.

Try to work through at least one question from each of the sections - Hook, Book, Look, Took in order to move from observation to application.

When possible spend time in prayer for each member of your group.

Questions

Hook - Ice breaker type questions to help make the transition into the study time.

1. Share your first Christmas memory or a funny Christmas memory.
2. Is the Christmas season for you actually characterized by the words "merry, joy, blessing and fun"? If not, what words would you characterize it with?

Background

This is the first week of the Advent season. This is the time the church has set aside for centuries to create space to remember Jesus's birth and to look forward with anticipation to his return. This week we will be looking at Creation (Genesis 1:1-2:2) and the birth of Jesus (John 1:1-18). The goal is to compare the language of the stories and see if that sheds any light on who John believed Jesus to be and the impact that can have on our lives.

Read Genesis 1:1 - 2:2 and John 1:1 - 18

Book - These questions are designed to get you into the text itself.

1. What is God's assessment of the work he did in Creation?
2. That which was created last is the crowning achievement of Creation, what was created last?
3. What language does John use to describe Jesus?
4. What similarities are there in John 1 with the opening of Genesis?
5. What struck you as good news from these passages?

Look - These questions will take you on a deeper look at what the passage means for us today.

1. Humanity is the pinnacle of Creation. Those who have chosen to follow Jesus not only are created in God's image but reflect Christ's image to the world. What then should we do as a result of this reality?
(We should love others in a way that reflects the love of our Father and puts him on display for all the world to see.)
2. The Creation narrative and Jesus's birth narrative assume a connection between the human and spiritual realms of life. How do we avoid the division that so often happens between secular and spiritual in our world?
3. How does putting your story within the context of the larger narrative that began with Creation and that Jesus entered into at his birth change or deepen it?

Took - These questions are focused on applying the big idea from the text to our lives.

1. The story of Creation and the story of Jesus both start from a place of goodness. IS this how you have generally heard the Biblical story told? What is lost if we begin the story with evil, sin, and brokenness?
2. How does understanding that the Biblical story starts with goodness change how we interpret our experiences?
(Possibly we should see our lives as also coming from a place of goodness and meaning rather than meaninglessness and brokenness.)
(Having this perspective should also give rise to a different way to interact with one another and provide some context for why Christmas is worth celebrating beyond the giving and getting of gifts.)
3. Before Adam and Eve's rebellion against God they had a perfect relationship with him and with each other. Jesus entered the world to stop the downward spiral of broken relationships. What can we do during this season to reclaim the hope Jesus offers?
4. What can we do during this Advent season to not allow the busy nature of the season to keep us from enjoying those we love?
5. What did the sermon and these passages make you want to pray?

Closing

This is the time of year when it is not unusual to hear the story of Jesus's birth being sung about in shopping malls all over the world. Somehow, even though this is true we miss the opportunities that this season affords us because we get so busy trying to buy the perfect gift or be the perfect host. We miss out on the fact that we have been given the very best gift possible and it is one that in giving it away we gain even more. Take some time to pray together for many opportunities to share the truth of what Jesus has done for you and how this time of year reminds you how amazing he is.

Reminder: Jesus calls us to live fully human lives and that means we must share what we know of him and the love he offers with others. The story we are living began with goodness and meaning which means our lives have meaning.