



# COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

## The Big Questions / Week 1

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### SERIES BOTTOM LINE

Our biggest questions deserve better answers.

### GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students think about what it really means to follow Jesus and to take a step in the direction of following Jesus with their lives.

### WEEK 1 BOTTOM LINE

**When you really understand who Jesus is, it changes everything.**

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### SCRIPTURE

- Matthew 4:18-20 NLT
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### TEACHING SLIDES

All scripture, bottom lines, and teaching points that are bolded in this script are also provided as slides in your weekly "Teaching" folder.

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### OPTIONAL VIDEOS

\*[OPTIONAL MEDIA](#) for this week available for purchase through the XP3 HS Media Package:

- The Big Questions Countdown (10 minutes)
  - The Big Questions Teaching Video – week 1
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# TEACHING OUTLINE

## INTRODUCTION

- We never outgrow the need to ask questions.
- We're wired to look for answers. And usually, the topics of our biggest questions can be pretty intense.
- We may wonder things like, "Why am I here? Who are my people? What am I supposed to do with my life?"
- For the next few weeks, we're going to spend some time discussing some big questions.

## TENSION

- To start off, we're going to ask a somewhat churchy question. The question is, "What does it mean to follow Jesus?"
- Some people would say that our answer to this question changes everything about our lives.
- The thing is, you'd probably get a lot of different answers. And when there are multiple possible answers to a question, it's confusing.
- In fact, let's take a quick look at what TikTok (or Google) suggests as the answer to that question.
- The point? A lot of people have different opinions about what it looks like to follow Jesus.
- And if following Jesus doesn't seem to really do anything for your life, then it makes sense you wouldn't want to follow Jesus.

## TRUTH

- In the gospels—the part of the Bible that tells us about Jesus' life—we're given an insider look at what following Jesus is all about.
- *One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, 'Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!' And they left their nets at once and followed him (Matthew 4:18-20 NLT).*
- Back in the day, religious leaders—not just Jesus—had disciples, people who followed them around to learn from them.
- Surely Peter and Andrew wondered what made Jesus different from other teachers and probably wondered things like: Where would following Jesus take them? And how long would they be gone?
- For whatever reason, Andrew and Peter agreed to go with Jesus. They left their fishing nets, their careers, their identities, and their community. And they followed Jesus.
- Jesus invited them to follow in His footsteps and do as He did, talk as He talked, and love as He loved. He invited them to go where He went so that they could be more like Him. Lots of other men and women joined them as they went.
- Fast-forward three years. Throughout their time together, these disciples would see Jesus walk on water, heal the sick, and raise people from the dead. They would hear Him speak and watch Him forgive sins. They would see Him arrested and sentenced to death without even putting up a fight. And finally, after three days of being dead and buried, they'd see Him alive again.
- What's also crazy is what following Jesus meant to the disciples after Jesus was gone!
- When Jesus asked them to follow Him, they had no idea what they would do and who they would become. But He did. He had a life in mind for them that was bigger than the life they were currently living.

- Jesus had more in mind for their lives in the areas that mattered most. And in the same way, He has more in mind for our lives in the areas that matter most.
- The disciples just had to commit, one day at a time, one step at a time to following Jesus and His example. And in doing that, they began to live out what following Jesus meant.
- When you really understand who Jesus is, it changes everything.

#### APPLICATION

- Whether you are already following Jesus or are just thinking about it, here are a few things we can do to get started:
  - Start reimagining what following Jesus looks like.
  - Take a step.
  - Think about these three questions: *Who am I? Where do I fit in? Can I make a difference?*

#### LANDING

- Jesus has more in mind for our lives in the areas that matter most.
- Remember that this is one of the reasons why we have small groups. We want to have a safe place to ask big questions with others who are asking the same sorts of things.



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# TEACHING SCRIPT

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The Big Questions / Week 1

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PRELUDE SOCIAL WORSHIP STORY GROUPS HOME

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## BOTTOM LINE

**When you really understand who Jesus is, it changes everything.**

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## INTRODUCTION

2 MINUTES

No matter how old we are, we never outgrow the need to ask questions. The truth is we just don't know all the answers. Most of us go to Google with our questions. Just think about the things you've googled—Questions like why you can't put the dog in the washing machine, to wondering how old certain celebrities are, to how to spell certain words, to how to learn the hottest TikTok dance.

But here's the thing: We can't Google search EVERY answer we're looking for. Actually, I take that back. We can. We just may not always get a clear answer. I once Googled, "Are blueberries *good* for you?" I got answers like, "Ten proven health benefits of blueberries." And then, just to see, I Googled, "Are blueberries *bad* for you?" I got answers like, "The health risks of eating blueberries." No lie!

That's a random example, but you get my point. We're wired to look for answers. And usually, the topics of our biggest questions are more intense than blueberries. We may wonder things like, *Why am I here? Who are my people? What am I supposed to do with my life?* And hunting for answers to questions like this can get complicated. That's why for the next few weeks, we're going to spend time discussing some big questions. And the goal is that by the end of this series, we'll not only become more comfortable asking questions, but we'll also grow closer to other people who we can ask those questions with.

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## TENSION

3 MINUTES

To start off, we're going to ask a somewhat churchy question. Maybe you've wondered this before, or maybe you haven't. It's totally fine either way. But the question is, "**What does it mean to follow Jesus?**"

Some people would say that our answer to this question changes everything about our lives. If that's true, then yes, this is a big question. However, if you watched five different TikToks or five

different YouTube videos, you'd get five different answers for what that means. **And when there are multiple possible answers to a question, it can be confusing.**

In fact, let's take a quick look at what TikTok (or Google) suggests as the answer to that question.

*\*\* (COMMUNICATOR NOTE: You can either show TikToks you have pre-watched or pre-watch them and write down answers and share those. You can also write down some results of a Google search. Look for a wide variety of answers).*

"Use this kind of Bible, play this kind of music, pray for fifteen hours a week. Real Christians dress like this, talk like this, and spend their time like this . . ." My point is that a lot of people have different opinions about what it looks like to follow Jesus.

But here's what's difficult about this. If we say the answer to the question "What does it mean to follow Jesus" could change everything for us, but then the answers we find online are shallow, then why follow Jesus at all? In fact, we aren't even sure God really does much of anything for our lives other than making our social media bio look better or giving us something to do for a few hours on the weekend. For a lot of people, Jesus just kind of lives off to the side of their real life and, every once in a while, might cross their mind. For some of you, that's maybe why you don't follow Jesus at all. Because you don't really see how following would change much of anything for you. So then, what's the point?

In other words, if following Jesus doesn't seem to really do anything for your life, then it makes sense why you wouldn't want to follow. I get it.

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## TRUTH

### 5 MINUTES

See, people have been asking what it means to follow Jesus for a long time. People are asking it now, and people were asking it thousands of years ago when Jesus showed up. In the gospels—the part of the Bible that tells us about Jesus' life—we're given an insider look at what following Jesus is all about.

*One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" And they left their nets at once and followed him" (Matthew 4:18-20 NLT).*

Back in that time period, religious leaders—not just Jesus—had disciples. Disciples were people who followed teachers or leaders around to learn from them. Disciples kind of found their identity in being associated with a certain teacher because of what that teacher taught. Surely Peter and Andrew wondered what made Jesus different from other teachers and probably wondered things like where would following this teacher take them? And how long would they be gone?

Jesus answers by basically saying, "Follow me and watch the way I live my life. Watch how I do things. And then go and do the same. And when you do that, you know what will happen? Instead of being people who pull fish out of the water, you'll spend your time inviting humans to know God better and be who God has made them to be. I will bring out of you a new way of living and being in the world."

What Jesus offered was enough to inspire Andrew and Peter to go with him. They left their fishing nets, their careers, their identities, and their community, and they followed Jesus. A bunch of other women and men joined them as they went. What I want us to really notice is that Jesus didn't . . .

- Have them first pass a Bible test
- Ask them if they were “religious”
- Ask around to find out how good their behavior was
- Tell them that they were going to be better than other people

Nope. Jesus simply invited them to follow in his footsteps and do as Jesus did, talk as Jesus talked, and love as Jesus loved. **Jesus invited them to go where he went so they could be more like him.**

And the thing is, when they left their nets, their families, and their way of doing life, they were probably filled with a ton of questions like, “Where are we going? How’s all this going to turn out?” For those of us who are familiar with the life of Jesus, it can be easy to forget that when Jesus started out; no one knew how the story would unfold. No one could’ve anticipated how it would all go down. As far as they knew, Jesus was just another interesting religious teacher.

Fast-forward three years. Throughout their time together, these disciples would see Jesus walk on water, heal the sick, and raise people from the dead. They would hear him speak and watch him forgive sins. They would see him arrested and sentenced to death without even putting up a fight. And finally, after three days of being dead and buried, they’d see him alive again. Things they never could’ve imagined!

What’s also crazy is what following Jesus meant to the disciples after Jesus was gone . . .

- Peter eventually becomes the first leader of the Church.
- Except for John, every one of Jesus’ closest disciples died defending their love and faith in Jesus and what he represented.
- Thousands of years later, we’re still looking at their stories, learning from them, and even naming children after them!

When Jesus asked them to follow, they had no idea what they would do and who they would become. But God knew. **God had a life in mind for them that was bigger than the life they were currently living.** Jesus had more in mind for who they’d become and more in mind for the relationships they would have. He had more in mind for how much they would matter in the world. Their biggest life questions found answers bigger and better than they would have ever dreamed of from their boats.

You could say it this way: **Jesus had more in mind for their lives in the areas that mattered most.** And in the same way, Jesus has more in mind for our lives in the areas that matter most.

If we had asked Andrew, Peter, and the other disciples, “What does it mean to follow Jesus?” at the beginning, they wouldn’t have known. But they knew enough to take one step at a time. They knew they didn’t have to have everything figured out on day one. They just had to commit, one day at a time, one step at a time to following Jesus and his example. And in doing that, they began to live out what following Jesus meant. As a result, they found more purpose and direction. They found better relationships. They had more joy and peace. They found something worth giving their lives to. They found answers to what they were looking for. And we can, too. Think of it this way . . .

**When you really understand who Jesus is, it changes everything.**

Following Jesus can help us answer our biggest questions because if Jesus has more in mind for our lives in the areas that matter most, then following him will lead to clarity in those areas.

## APPLICATION

4 MINUTES

For the disciples, following Jesus was an adventure that changed who they were and who they became. Jesus changed their lives in the best way possible. Sure, he taught them so many things about life and even their behavior. But more than that, Jesus loved them and served them. To them, following Jesus wasn't about religion and a bunch of rules. It wasn't about a social media aesthetic or about following second-hand information from other people who claimed to know Jesus. To them, it was a personal experience, a life changing encounter with Jesus himself. It was a journey that led them to richer, deeper, more fully *human* lives than they ever could've imagined.

But what about us? We can't be physically present with Jesus like they were. So what can we do? Whether you are already following Jesus or are just thinking about it, here are a few things that I think we can do to get started:

1. **Start reimagining what following Jesus looks like.** Consider asking yourself a few things: *Has my view of following Jesus become too small? Have I reduced it to a bunch of rules, or lists of do's and don'ts? What if it's bigger than that? What if it's an adventure? What if it's life-changing? What if it's the friendship I've always wanted?* Reimagine it. Write it down. Draw it out. Visualize it in a new way.
2. **Take a step.** Follow the example of Andrew and Peter. They simply took a step to follow Jesus. They left their nets. They didn't know what would happen with their lives. They just trusted Jesus enough to take one next step. So what would a step look like for you? Don't overwhelm yourself all the steps to take to get three or four years down the road. Start with just one single thing, one single step. Maybe you start by being honest with God and open about some questions you have. Maybe it would mean having a conversation with your small group leader, or another adult you trust, about what's going on in your life. Maybe it's showing up here consistently or engage with your small group. Maybe it would cost you something, but maybe it would be worth it. Identify your next step, and then be bold enough to take it.
3. **Think about these three questions: *Who am I? Where do I fit in? Can I make a difference?*** Over the next few weeks, we're going to look at and dig into these questions. Following Jesus can help us as we learn to answer these questions. Jesus isn't just a separate category in our lives. He's part of figuring this stuff out. Invite Jesus into the process. See what Jesus has to say about the biggest questions you have about yourself. You may be surprised by what you discover. So spend some time thinking about those questions.

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## LANDING

1 MINUTE

**Jesus has more in mind for our lives in the areas that matter most.** Imagine if we could really understand this fully. What if we could see that following Jesus is life-changing? What if we quit seeing it as a list of religious rules and start seeing it as bigger than that? And what if we trusted that following Jesus can help us answer our biggest questions? We have no idea where that journey will take us. But neither did Andrew and Peter, and it took them places beyond what they could imagine!

As you head out, remember that this is one of the reasons why we have small groups. We want to have a safe place for you to ask big questions with other people who are asking the same sorts of things. We want the opportunity to learn from each other and encourage one another as we figure out what following Jesus is all about.



## TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS

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