

Life Group Leaders' Guide

For Sunday Sermon, March 26, 2017

Reminders:

Before you get started, remind your group about the church-wide Day of Service that will be taking place on Saturday April 29th. As a life group, you will have priority in choosing what projects you would like to do together. Initiate a conversation with your group members about member availability, the opportunity to serve together, and what projects would be of top priority. For more information on what projects are available, go to <http://firstfreelincoln.org/day-of-service/>

Quick Review

According to Pastor Mark, there are seven statements that Christ communicated on the cross. What are the first two statements that he referred to in his message on Sunday? What did he say about these statements?

My Story

1. It's game time! Split up your group evenly as best you can. Each half will be given a word to act out without speaking. The goal is for each team to be able to guess the other's word. For this exercise, you will have to refrain from participating; if you would like, you can take on the role of a judge. To get the game started, give one group the word "forgive," and the other group the word "salvation." If you believe it will be necessary, set a time limit at five minutes.
2. What was the hardest aspect of forgiveness for you to learn or understand as a child? Feel free to share specific examples if you have any.
3. Alternative question: You've been asked to relocate to a colony on a distant planet and therefore you need to say goodbye to everyone on earth. What would be your final words to your family and friends before board the space ship?

Digging Deeper

1. Take a few moments to reflect on Luke's account of the Passion narrative in Luke 23. Before your life group meets, please take the time to let your members know that in order to adequately prepare for the meeting, they need to reflectively read the

entire chapter of Luke 23 on their own. Then, on the night that your life group meets, allow ten minutes for your group to discuss the following questions and share their insights.

- What parts stand out to you? What is your reaction after reading this passage? Take some time to share your insights and feelings about the Passion narrative with your group members.
2. In Luke 23:33-39, it becomes clear very quickly that the people watching Jesus suffer and die didn't believe that He was who He said He was.
 - Compare and contrast their lack of faith (along with the lack of faith of one of the criminals being crucified with Jesus (v. 39)), with the faith of the other criminal. Knowing this, how would you define faith? (Reference verses in your answer.) Here are some verses to get you started: Hebrews 11:1, 1 Thessalonians 5:8, and 1 Peter 1:8-9.
 3. As a group, narrow your focus to Luke 23:39-43.
 - In this section of the text, the two criminals are offered as stark contrasts to each other. This idea of a stark contrast is a real literary concept called a character foil. In literature, a foil is a character who sharply contrasts with another according to the author's intention of highlighting certain aspects of the other character (feel free to access <https://literarydevices.net/foil/> for more information). What character trait(s) do you think the author wanted to highlight in the criminal whom Jesus saves from the cross? Why?
 - What might the dialogue between this criminal and Jesus reveal to us about salvation?
 - Have someone read the following two verses: James 2:24 and Ephesians 2:8-9. How do you reconcile these two verses, and what light, if any, is shined on our understanding of salvation? As in the past with certain questions, don't feel pressure to come up with specific answers. The goal is to simply dialogue about it, and get everyone thinking.

Taking It Home

1. Is it easier for you to grant forgiveness, or ask for it? Why do you think that is? What can you do this week to improve in this area?
2. The criminals crucified on either side of Jesus had two very different responses to Him—one responded in arrogance, and the other in humility. What is your default response?