

BIG IDEA SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Small groups that focus on the Big Idea for the week can use this guide to apply the message to life and take action. Feel free to use whatever parts of this guide best fit your group personality and time frame. All verses, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version (NIV).

4.11/4.12.09 // MISSING JESUS

BiG iDEA: I need the real Jesus, not my own comfortable images of Him

// Ice Breaker _____

Option 1: Think of a time when you emotionally connected with a character in a movie or book. Who was the character and what was it about them that connected you?

Option 2: What memories do you have of Easter as a child?

// Questions for Discussion _____

1 How we picture Jesus matters. How do you picture Jesus? What image of Jesus do you most relate to as a kid, and/or today? Spooky Jesus; Suburban Jesus; Sunday School Jesus; Buddy Christ; or something else?

2 Some tend to emphasize Christ's his divinity at the expense of his humanity. But he was fully human so that he could truly take our place on the cross, and so that he could sympathize with our struggles and temptations. How do you react to the claim here that Jesus was "tempted in all things, just as we are"? Do you ever think about Him being tempted in all the same ways you are? What sort of impact can that have on our lives, once we really believe it?

Hebrews 4:15-16

"For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

3 What are the pitfalls of ignoring the "fully human" side of Jesus and only focusing on His divinity? How does understanding Jesus' humanity help us to move forward in our "relationship" with Jesus? Jesus talks in John 15 about the importance of staying connected to Him on a relational level:

John 15:5

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

4 Around Easter time each year, it seems the media inevitably focuses on ways to discredit the Bible's picture of Jesus, especially his divinity. Whether it comes from *Newsweek*, the Discovery Channel, CNN, or *The DaVinci Code*, the emphasis is on purported "new" views of the "historical Jesus" presented by modern "authoritative" scholars to exploit and undercut the Bible. What these reports leave out are Bible scholars who actually respect and believe the Bible. Many of the religion/Bible scholars of Jesus' day didn't accept him then, and many still do not now. What do you think motivates their rejection?

John 5:37-40

"And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

5 What are some of the ways you see the "Suburban Jesus" image portrayed in churches today? How do you think current cultural views of Jesus have influenced us? How much have people created Jesus in their own image?

6 What are some ways that we tend to treat Jesus like a vending machine? Does he really want us to be happy, healthy, and prosperous?

Mark 8:34-37

34Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? 37Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

7 Jesus seemed to spend a lot of time with the poor and marginalized of society--what does that say about who He is and why He came? Who are the marginalized in our world today? Have you ever spent time with them? Why or why not?

8 What was your Sunday School experience like growing up? How did you view Jesus growing up? Do you think he was really a "nice" guy?

9 Jesus is more than a teacher, an example, and a friend. What does it really mean to have Jesus as your "Lord?" What area(s) is Jesus not yet "Lord of your life" in? What needs to be your first step to allow Him to be Lord in those areas?

Luke 6:46

Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

10 What do these verses mean to you? How is (or should) your view of Jesus affected by these truths?

2 Corinthians 5:21

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Isaiah 53:5

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

"3For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures..."

11 Jesus doesn't always fit our preconceived ideas and so it can be difficult to "see" him. Mary Magdalene didn't recognize him after the resurrection—she thought he was the gardener. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus didn't recognize him either. When do you have trouble "seeing" Jesus?

// Application_____

Read and commit to memory John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Read and study the 4 Gospels. Try to notice everything you can about Jesus: How does He interact with people He doesn't know? How does He treat His friends? How does He spend His free time? Does He ever seem to feel stuff that you do (tired, hungry, overwhelmed, excited, etc.)?

// Prayer_____

Pray that you will set aside the things of the world and experience and live for the "real" Jesus. Pray for several couples and invite them to Southpoint to learn how to "Fireproof" their marriage.