



Week One

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for this time together. Help us to use this time to connect with what you have for us. Amen.

Talk It Over

This Easter week we started a new series that's all about exploring who Jesus is, what Jesus did, and why his story matters to us now.

- Tell us what you did on Easter as a child and what messages you were taught about the holiday.
- Tell us what you do now to celebrate Easter as an adult and why you celebrate.
- If we took a random survey of 10-20 people, what are some ways people might describe Jesus?
- How would you have described who Jesus is during some of the various seasons of your life?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:14 (NLT)

As odd as it might seem, Easter is intended to be a time we reflect and celebrate on the resurrection of Jesus. This holiday is the most important holiday on the Christian calendar. According to what our faith tradition, the story is that for 40 days after Jesus came back from death more than 500 people claimed to be eyewitnesses to the resurrected Jesus. It's from that place, Christianity exploded out of Jerusalem across the Roman Empire despite the threat of being killed for associating with this new faith movement.

- Knowing what you know about Christianity, why do you think the resurrection is such a key part of the story?
- How difficult or easy is it for you to buy into the idea that Jesus physically resurrected?

Read John 8:36 (NLT)

This week we looked at the idea that Jesus' resurrection gives us freedom. Freedom, in the ultimate sense, is the gift of being who we were intended to be without hindrance or restraint. The opposite of freedom in this case would be bondage or the state of being a slave — be it a slave to fear, to anger, to jealousy, to addictions, or to an oppressor. Jesus' resurrection, the fact he conquered death, represents the ultimate act of freedom. And solidifies God's heart and desire for each of us to live free.

- The best stories and movies often depict a journey of seeking freedom. What are some of your favorite freedom fighting stories or movies?
- How much do you believe in the idea of God wanting you to experience the gift of freedom? Is this an idea that comes naturally? Or does this grind against the old or current narrative in your head?

- In what areas of life do you feel free right now? Share where you feel free, how you'd describe that freedom, and let us celebrate that win together.
- In what areas of life do you feel stuck right now? What would freedom bring to that situation?

This week we looked at the “Cycle of Freedom”.



The idea here is we are wired at our core for freedom — we are made to enjoy the good of life and to not get stuck in the sin, evil, or brokenness of life. But somehow we lost that freedom. Sometimes that freedom is taken away and sometimes we act in ways that compromises our freedom. Regardless of how we lose the freedom, God actively works with us to try and restore our freedom. We don't move forward in the cycle by trying to earn our way back, but rather, by putting our trust in who Jesus is and all he has done. God invites us to regain our freedom by saying “yes” to his grace in our hearts. As we put our faith in Jesus, we start to enjoy the fruits of a life with Jesus or the good results that come from all Jesus is and all he has done.

- What part of this cycle jumps out to you the most this season? Why does that part jump out?
- In what ways do you find yourself trying to earn your freedom?
- Piggybacking on that last question, what would it look like to put more trust in Jesus?

Closing Prayer

Instead of closing the group in a group prayer, let's close by going around our circle praying in these two specific ways:

- Go around thanking God for the fruit and freedom you see in some specific areas of your life.
- Go around asking for more of his freedom in specific area of life.

You are welcome to pray full sentences or keep your prayer to simple phrases like “thank you for the freedom I have in my family and at work” or “help me to find more freedom in my anger and with my money”.

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group connect in friendship and grow faith.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

Spend some time praying for your group, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance regarding your specific group.