



**FLOURISH
BIBLE STUDY**

LUKE

LEADER'S GUIDE



LYDIA BROWNBACK



INTRODUCTION: GETTING INTO THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

You might want to begin your first gathering by asking the group to share what they already know about the Gospel of Luke and what parts, if any, have impacted them most. Ideally, you'll read through the introduction at this initial meeting. You'll want to consider why Luke wrote his Gospel and then touch on what makes his Gospel distinctive from the other three Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and John). Luke's overarching aim is to answer the question: *Who is this Jesus?* He wants us to believe in Jesus and entrust him with our very lives, and he sets out to show us that Jesus is worthy of our trust. This leads you right into how to spend the rest of your group time this first week—asking the group to share how they would answer this “Who is Jesus?” question.

WEEK 1: JOY TO THE WORLD

LUKE 1:1-2:52

Talk about the unique ways Luke begins his Gospel—with the story of two mothers to be. Cover how their stories intertwine and how this carries forward Old Testament prophecy. Be sure to talk about the amazing characteristics of God that are revealed here—his providential directing of even small details, his gracious provision, his ability to keep his promises, how he reverses circumstances, and why there is joy in his presence. An important part of your discussion will be what is revealed about Jesus in these early chapters—his purpose for coming to earth as a man. Talk too about Jesus's mother Mary. How is the Mary shown to us in Luke different from the Mary of legend and some church traditions? Be sure to leave time to discuss the “Let's Talk” questions at the end of the lesson.



WEEK 2: GET READY!

LUKE 3:1-4:15

John the Baptist should definitely factor into your discussion this week. Be sure the group understands the purpose of John's ministry, that his calling was all about preparing people for the coming of Jesus the promised Messiah. Be sure that the group understands that Jesus came to John for baptism in order to identify himself with the people he came to save. Spend time discussing other ways Jesus identified with his people, most especially the temptations he experienced in the wilderness, and why this identifying work is a significant part of how he saves us (the sinless one stands in the place of sinners, covering their failures with his perfections).

WEEK 3: IS HE FOR REAL?

LUKE 4:16-49

Discuss how Jesus became known all over the region of Galilee. Draw out what he did and said that got people talking about him. Talk about the sort of people Jesus seems drawn to and how he converses with them. Touch on what made him popular among some and despised by others, and bring the Pharisees into the discussion at this point. Be sure to identify the motives of the Pharisees, and encourage the group to recognize that what motivated the Pharisees is just as potent—and dangerous—today.

WEEK 4: THE COMPASSIONATE SAVIOR

LUKE 7:1-8:56

Christ's heart for the hurting is front and center this week. Discuss the various people who cross his path—how he helps them and how their lives change as a result. Another issue to cover is John's doubt. In one sense, we can be comforted a bit by his struggle—if John had his moments of doubt, then it makes sense that we might too on occasion. But don't leave it there—be sure to include Jesus's response to John's doubt and the implications for Jesus's followers in every age. Talk too about the women who accompanied Jesus as he carried out his ministry—ask what it conveys about the significance of our own discipleship as women. Be sure the group understands the purpose of parables.



WEEK 5: WHO IS THIS JESUS?

LUKE 9:1-50

Jesus's disciples are beginning to grasp who Jesus is, but for the most part, Jesus wants to keep his identity hidden from the public for the time being. This is a good place to bring in a discussion of *expectations*—What sort of messiah were people looking for back then? The majority didn't want to think in terms of sin. They simply wanted comfort and deliverance from the oppressive power of Rome. That's all they really wanted in a messiah. So what about people today—about us? Do we want Jesus as he is presented in Scripture, or do we just want a “hero” to come deliver us from all our earthly problems? Those are good questions to spend time discussing. Be sure the group understands the transfiguration: Moses and Elijah, who appeared with Jesus on the mountain, represented the law and the prophets, and their presence there with Jesus was meant to point to Jesus as the fulfillment of the law and all that the prophets had spoken in the Old Testament. Also spend some time talking about the disciples' argument at the end of Luke 9, about which one was the greatest, and how the desire for place and position runs counter to true discipleship. An important note: *The question at the top of page 71 mistakenly conveys that Peter, James, and John were the disciples who were unable to help the boy, but given the timing, it was not these three disciples. The question should thus read this way: Look back at Luke 9:1. How does that verse explain Jesus's holy frustration with the disciples here?*

WEEK 6: JOURNEY WITH JESUS

LUKE 9:51-19:27

This is the longest week of the study, so you can approach the discussion time in one of two ways. Either you can lightly touch on each point, or you can pick just a few key points and talk more in depth about those. Whichever you choose, the primary emphasis this week is on discipleship. Luke shows us the nature of discipleship in Jesus's conversations with people and in his parables. Spelled out for us all through this section of Luke is the cost of discipleship. Does your group understand this cost, and are they willing to commit to it? If obstacles are named, take time to work through them.



WEEK 7: THE BEGINNING OF THE END

LUKE 19:28–21:38

The last week of Jesus's life begins as he enters the city of Jerusalem. Talk about the various people who hate Jesus—why do they despise him? Be sure to discuss Jesus's prophecy about the destruction of the temple and the way in which this has a double fulfillment—the final part of which won't happen until Jesus returns at the end of time. The theme of judgment is important here. People—both then and now—have an opportunity to turn to him in faith, but one day it will be too late. Ask the group to summarize Jesus's primary teaching here—keep watch and be ready. What does that look like practically? The second discussion point in the “Let's Talk” section focuses on this, so be sure to save time for it.

WEEK 8: THE POWER OF DARKNESS

LUKE 22:1–71

Be sure the group understands the significance of the Lord's Supper. Jesus initiated this sacrament during the last evening of fellowship with his disciples. He wanted them—and us—to see that his life and death usher in a whole new way of life for God's people—a relationship with God rooted in the finished work of Christ. His life and death mean that our standing with God no longer rests on Old Testament law-keeping but on the merits of Jesus. This is why theologians talk about *grace*—we get to benefit from what someone else—Jesus—did for us, and the Lord's Supper exposes us body, mind, and soul to this finished work. Spend some talking about the ways in which Jesus responds to all the people he encounters in this week's lesson and what this reveals about him.



WEEK 9: CRUCIFY HIM!

LUKE 23:1-56

This week we take a close look at the last day of Jesus's life. Pilate and Herod are each thrown into a tailspin by what's going on with Jesus. Focus on the events surrounding the crucifixion. Cover the two criminals who are crucified with Jesus and what this teaches us about salvation. Be sure your group understands the meaning of the temple curtain ripping in two, that the way into God's presence has been opened for believers through the death of Christ. Talk about the reactions of various people to Jesus (Pilate and Herod, the centurion, Joseph of Arimathea, and others). These reactions help us answer the "Let's Talk" question, "What will *you* do with Jesus?"

WEEK 10: HE IS RISEN!

LUKE 24:1-53

To those Jesus encountered along the Emmaus Road, we're told that "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (v. 27). He says something similar to his disciples later, in verses 44–46. Both times Jesus declares that the entire Old Testament—indeed all of history—is about him. Be sure that everyone gets this. Also recount the ways that disappointment turns to joy in Luke 24. Conclude by connecting this joy to your group. Talk about why and how the resurrection makes joy something not merely to be glimpsed but lived out in our daily lives.