

Stories of the New Testament

Jesus sends demons into a herd of pigs.

GOAL- Lifegroups are an environment to grow closer to Jesus and each other. We work toward this by focusing on the stories of the Bible, discussing them and applying them to our lives. How do these teachings apply today?

REMINDER- Enjoy time visiting with each other, eating etc. After time simply connecting, and hanging out, please intentionally follow these steps created to promote and strengthen our relationship with Jesus.

Step 1- Welcome- Celebrate successes, breakthroughs, service projects, decisions for Christ etc.

Step 2- Opening Prayer

Step 3- Lifegroup Purpose/ Vision Casting- We are meeting together because we love Jesus, each other and we are creating disciples who will be able to create disciples.

Step 4- Review the Lifegroup Guidelines (Back Page)

Step 5- Reflection/Accountability- What stuck with you during the last week(s) from our last meeting and the scripture that we covered? How did you apply that scripture to your everyday life?

Step 6- Preparing Our Heart to Experience a Lifegroup- Ask everyone to stay personally engaged throughout the story. Ask them to focus on how they relate to it and why. Encourage everyone to share from their hearts, to be transparent and authentic. Every person will share.

Step 7- Preparing for, Jesus sends demons into a herd of pigs. (Mark 5:1-20)

LEADERS, READ THIS- Although we cannot be sure why demon possession occurs, we know that evil spirits can distort and destroy a person's relationship with God. Even today, demons are dangerous, powerful and destructive. We should be aware of their power but avoid any curiosity or involvement with demonic presence or the occult. In this story, the demons' goal was to control the human they inhabited but Jesus' goal was to give him freedom from sin and satan's control. They knew they had no power over Jesus, but their time for destruction had not yet come so they asked for alternative placement. This story takes place in a gentile region which explains why there are a herd of pigs. According to Jewish law, pigs were unclean and couldn't be eaten or touched.

As you listen, immerse yourself in the story and be thinking of the questions you will be answering afterward...

Currently, in this season of your life..... Who or What do you personally identify with and why?

Step 8- Telling the Story from Memory- Either yourself or someone else in the group tells the story from memory. You can ask someone ahead of time to be prepared to do this. After they finish telling the story, ask the group if anything was left out in the telling of scripture? Was anything added that didn't belong?

Step 9- Rebuild the Story- Read the story from the Word as a group (Mark 5:1-20).

Step 10- Debrief the Story- Everyone participates and answers the question; Currently, in this season of your life, **Who or What do you identify with and why? How can YOU respond in the next week(s)?**

LEADERS, READ THIS-

Are you the man Jesus released and set free? His life became a living example of Jesus' power and he joyfully and enthusiastically spread the message of Jesus with others.

Are you the people of Gerasenes? They witnessed the miraculous power of Jesus and were afraid and sent him away. They didn't want their lives or livelihoods to be changed.

Are you the herdsman? They saw, they fled and spread word all over about what they had seen, causing people to come running. They relayed the truth of what they had experienced, but those they told were afraid. Anyone else?

Further Study- How do each of these scriptures fit into the story?

How can we effectively and safely engage people in sinful situations, places and or/circumstances?

Matthew 9:9-13, 2 Corinthians 5:18, 20, Colossians 2:13-15, Luke 10:19

Step 11- Close in Prayer

LIFEGROUPS GUIDELINES- Please use these guidelines while you meet to ensure a safe growing environment. The leader ensures throughout the group meeting that these guidelines are met. If you have a member that needs more personalized attention, set up an appointment outside of group time.

- **Safe Environment-** This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening and sharing with one another. Below are some Lifegroup guidelines that will help to create a safe environment.
- **Confidentiality-** What is said at group, stays at group.
- **Listen-** Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you will respond or what you are going to say next.
- **Pause-** Allow a pause in conversation after someone shares. Give the person sharing a chance to finish and the group the opportunity to consider what was just shared before responding.
- **Silence-** It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for someone to share and members of the group to process the topic or question being considered.
- **No "Cross Talk"-** Be considerate of others as they are sharing- no side conversations.
- **No Fixing-** We are not here to fix each other. Jesus does that part. Give encouragement, speak truth, point to Jesus. Don't try to solve or fix each other.
- **No Rescuing-** When people are sharing something deeply personal, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause them to stop sharing. Resist the temptation to rescue people. **Point people to Jesus.**
- **Sharing-** Be sensitive about the amount of time that you share, both under sharing and oversharing.
- **Be Self Aware-** Be self-aware of how you are personally affecting the environment through your words, actions and nonverbal communication.
- **"I" Statements-** It is easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use "I" statements rather than "them", "the church", "us", "we", etc.
- **Conflict-** We will commit to resolve conflict biblically. When conflict or sin issues between group members arise, we want to make sure that we are honoring God and each other in the way we deal with these issues. The following are a few key scriptures in this regard (there are many others).