

Stories of the Old Testament

Cain and Abel

GOAL- Lifegroups are an environment to grow closer in our relationships to Jesus and each other. We are working toward this goal by focusing on the stories of the Bible, and placing ourselves in the environment to hear them, discuss them and apply them. Ask yourself, “Am I willing to listen, participate and be changed?”

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 in the group; decisions for Christ, service projects, personal investment time spent outside of group, breakthroughs, answers to prayer etc.

Step 2- Opening Prayer

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

Step 4- Review the Lifegroup Guidelines (Back Page)

Step 5- Preparing Our Heart to Experience a Lifegroup- Ask everyone to stay personally engaged throughout the story. Ask them to focus on the story, how they relate to it and why. Encourage everyone to share from their hearts and to be transparent and authentic and that every person will share. **It helps for the leader to share first, setting the tone of transparency. If you don't dig deep, they won't either.**

Step 6- Setting the Scene for Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-16)

LEADERS, READ THIS- *The tragic story of Cain and Abel shows how dramatically sin has affected humanity. Less than a generation after their parents, Adam and Eve, were banished from The Garden of Eden, jealousy leads to murder. In most sibling relationships there is a mixture of competition and cooperation, loving and fighting but here, jealousy overcame love.*

As you listen to the story, be thinking of the questions you will be answering after the story...

*Currently, in this season of your life..... **Who do you personally identify with and why? Where do you fit in?***

Step 7- 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. **(Genesis 4:1-16)** After they finish telling the story, ask the group if anything was added or omitted. Was everything in order?

Step 8- Rebuild the Story- Read the story from the Word as a group **(Genesis 4:1-16)**. Were you correct, in your earlier discussion about what was added, omitted and the proper order of the story?

Step 9- Debrief the Story- Everyone participates from the heart and answers the question; Currently, in this season of your life, **Who do you identify with and why? What can YOU specifically do, to respond?**

LEADERS, READ THIS-

Are you Cain? Do you feel at times that your gifts are rejected? Have you ever taken your anger out on other people? Do you struggle at times with envy or jealousy? Do you have difficulty correcting your attitude when disciplined? Do you deny that you need to correct your behavior?

Are you Abel? Do you strive to obey God, regardless of the cost? Do you trust God to make it right no matter what obstacles you come up against? Do you bring the Lord the best of your gifts?

Are you their parents, Adam and Eve? With Adam and Eve, sin came into the world and look how quickly it developed in their child! Have you ever felt that a sin you committed as a person or parent may have caused or escalated a current situation that you are experiencing with your own child? Do you feel trapped or hopeless watching the pain that your children are producing or experiencing?

Are you the people who came in contact with Cain after the murder and could not touch him? How do you feel when you encounter someone who has committed a horrible sin against you, someone you know or love? As a Christian you know that you can't judge them. How do you handle your anger against them?

Are you God in this story? Do you feel you have the right to stand in judgement of those around you?

Additional Important Discussion Points;

- **The Bible doesn't say why Cain's gift was not accepted.** Perhaps his attitude was improper? Read Proverbs 21:27. God evaluates our motives. We should give with a joyful heart, what we are able to give. We should not worry about how much we are giving up. It all belongs to God anyway. What other scriptures can you find to illustrate this?
- **Are you able to admit your mistakes?** We can't correct our mistakes if we won't admit them. Being disciplined is not easy. The next time someone suggests you are wrong, take an honest look at yourself, seek God and choose God's way instead of Cain's way. Ask God for help in your weakness.
- **How can we do better?** We need to give up our jealous anger and choose not to give Satan a foothold in our life. Sin is always waiting to attack and destroy us. If we don't master it, we will be a victim of it, but we can't master it in our own strength. Turn to God for the tools and strength, and to other believers for encouragement. The Holy Spirit will be our guide in this lifelong battle.
- **Who was Cain afraid of?** The guilt of killing his brother was weighing heavily on Cain. The only people on the earth during this time frame, were Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel and other unnamed siblings along with possible nieces and nephews. If Cain were capable of murder, others may have been also. The fear of what he had done and what he was capable of, had him afraid. Read Proverbs 28:1

Step 10- Close in Prayer

Guidelines on the following page.

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).