

Lenten Small
Group Study Guide
Midtown

The Questions Jesus Asked

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?



CONNECT (15 MIN)

WEEK 5: MAR 26 - APR 1

WELCOME

- Spend the first few minutes visiting and catching up.
- Take attendance. Who's missing?

PRAY

Circle Prayer

This spiritual practice gives us an opportunity to experiment with praying out loud, forming our prayer thoughts into words that we voice to God.

I will start but I won't say amen. Each of you will have a chance to offer a short prayer of thanks for these weeks of studying and sharing together. And if you have no words, that's ok. Just say, "Thank you God."

Leave a little silent break between each prayer. God is in the silence too. Don't worry if you begin to speak over one another. You know how to step back and take turns. God does not expect us to be perfect at this. God is present in all. The Spirit will be our guide.

Ready? Take a deep breath and let it out slowly. (Breathe.) Do it again. (Breathe.) One more time. (Breathe.)

Holy God, we are grateful for your presence as we have studied your Word together. You have guided us as we have opened our hearts to receive your wisdom for our lives. Thank you for the gift of these people who have bravely shared, questioned, and traveled this time together. Each one has brought something special to us.

- (Pause and allow everyone to offer their prayers.)

Amen.

CULTIVATE (35 MIN)

READ THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Matthew 16:13-20

Matthew 16:13-20 (CEB)

13 Now when Jesus came to the area of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Human One is?"

14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the other prophets."

15 He said, "And what about you? Who do you say that I am?"

16 Simon Peter said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Then Jesus replied, "Happy are you, Simon son of Jonah, because no human has shown this to you. Rather my Father who is in heaven has shown you.

18 I tell you that you are Peter. And I'll build my church on this rock. The gates of the underworld won't be able to stand against it.

19 I'll give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Anything you fasten on earth will be fastened in heaven. Anything you loosen on earth will be loosened in heaven."

20 Then he ordered the disciples not to tell anybody that he was the Christ.

GROUP VALUES: It's important that you agree on the values you want to have in your group, such as openness, authenticity, and confidentiality. Honoring these values together creates a safe and healthy group environment.

DISCUSS

- What do you hear when Jesus is talked about in our world today? What do you notice about the way Jesus is viewed? What do you think about that?
- Who do YOU say Jesus is? What has shaped the way you answer this question?
- This question is not just a thought exercise, but it is designed to impact our life. How do you react to this? What can get in the way of your faith moving from your head to your actions?
- What part of Peter's story do you most identify with? What do you learn about your own relationship with Jesus by hearing how Jesus related to Peter?
- Re-read v. 16. Peter made a commitment that he likely did not fully understand. What can God do with this type of commitment? Have you ever made a commitment like this?
- Jesus wants to shape every part of our lives- what aspect of your life feels the easiest to let him shape? In what part of your life are you more resistant to this?

WHAT SHALL WE DO NEXT? (5 MIN)

Lent is drawing to a close. What shall we do next? Here are some ideas:

- Walk the Stations of the Cross as a group, from March 27 - April 7.
- Attend Maundy Thursday service and take communion as a group.
- Attend Good Friday service.
- Be sure to attend Easter service.
- More info at <https://stlukesumc.com/easter>

And what about after Easter?

- You can celebrate your time together by scheduling lunch somewhere. Or have a post-Easter party. Let us know your plans and we can email some ideas to help you get started.
- You can stick together for 3 more weeks of sermon discussions for our post-Easter series. It's going to be a good one.

CHANGE THE WORLD (5 MIN)

Crooked Creek Food Pantry (Impact = Food Security)

Sign up to volunteer or donate at <https://www.ccfpindy.org/>

When children go hungry, the consequences go far beyond having an empty tummy. They face higher risks of health conditions, and are more likely to repeat a grade in elementary school, experience developmental impairments, and have more social and behavioral problems. Our pantry serves over 3,000 families per month, is one of the largest food pantries in Central Indiana, and utilizes 140 volunteers per week. We need your help!

CLOSE (5 MIN)

- Ask for any prayer requests
- Prayer idea: Dear God, Lent has been a rich experience for us. We are so thankful for your son, Jesus. And thankful for the fellowship we have with each other. We praise your name. Amen.