

GROWING IN FAITH



John 10:7-10

“⁷ So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

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STARTING OUT

Begin with a prayer. You can offer your own prayer or use the one below.

Dear God, Thank you for the gift of today and for the opportunity to join together to grow in our faith and find community. As we come together, lead us by the gift of your Holy Spirit to find deeper meaning, joy, and purpose in life. Help us to discover what it means to be Easter people. Amen.

If your group is new, begin with simple introductions or an icebreaker game.

Read the scripture verse for the day – John 10:7-10. Share that throughout the next 6 weeks we will be looking at two chapters of John each week beginning with John 10-11 today. Participants may want to read ahead each week in preparation for discussion.

PLAY THE VIDEO

GOING DEEPER

In the video, Josh told a story of a man who found new meaning and purpose in his life by coming to church and learning more about Jesus.

Have you ever had a time where you struggled to find meaning and purpose in life?

What changed, if anything?

What brings you back to church on a regular basis?

Josh mentioned that Jesus’ followers would have to experience Good Friday, but as people of faith we know that isn’t the end of the story.

Where do you see evidence of the darkness of Good Friday in the world?

How does knowing that Good Friday isn’t the end of the story give you hope?

We often read analogies of sheep and their shepherd in the Bible to describe our relationship with God. This is partly because sheep are completely reliant upon their shepherd for survival in that part of the world in the first century.

Why do you think Jesus would relate us to an animal that is completely reliant on a shepherd for survival?

What does this tell us about what our relationship with God should look like?

How can we become more reliant upon God in our everyday lives?

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GOING DEEPER

Jesus makes a clear statement of who He is with the “I am...” sayings in John’s gospel. How does knowing who Jesus is make a difference?

Jesus tried to tell us who He is in relation to us by using analogies that his audience would understand. What modern analogies could you use instead of “the gate” or “the good shepherd” to describe our relationship to Christ?

John Wesley’s idea of salvation was that it was a “way” and not just a destination. The idea was that it is a faith journey that has meaning every day for our lives. It’s not just something that holds meaning for life after death.

Looking back on your faith journey, where have you seen God’s prevenient grace at work in your life?

How does a response to God’s justifying grace begin to hold meaning to our lives?

If sanctifying grace is what leads us to love God and love our neighbor, what impact does that have on how we find meaning in our lives?

Read together the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead in John 11:38-44.

Remember that Josh pointed out John’s gospel always has a deeper theological purpose than just what you read on the surface.

In what ways do we all experience being bound up? What do you need freedom from? What does our world need freedom from?

After Jesus gave the command to unbind him and let him go free, someone had to actually remove the burial cloths. How can we respond to that command today to be the ones that remove bondage from others and offer freedom?

Remind the group that they may want to read John 12-13 before next week.

Closing

Take time to lift up joys and concerns in your group before closing in prayer. You can offer your own prayer or use the one below.

God of hope, we know that sometimes in life we will experience darkness and lose our way. But we are reminded that you are the Good Shepherd leading us and guiding us to freedom, meaning, and purpose. By the gift of your Spirit, help us to experience your grace that renews us in your image so that we might find new meaning and hope each day. Amen.