



Why Are There Four Books about Jesus?



Session Objective

The fact that we have four Gospels in the Bible can lead people to wonder not only why there are four books, but also which one is the most authentic, important, or “true” account. In this session, we will explore how each Gospel plays its own unique role in sharing the message of Christ’s life and ministry. We will also see how the combination of the four Gospels gives us a more holistic image of who Jesus was and why we believe what we do.

Faith Statement

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

—A Brief Statement of Faith (lines 7–26)



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- How do we know if something is true or not?
- When we research things, how do we know which sources to believe?
- What do you do when one source says one thing and another source says the opposite?
- Why do you think there are four Gospels in the Bible?



Explore

Read Mark 16:1–8 and John 20:1–18 and explore the following questions together:

- How are these two Gospel accounts different from one another?
- Do you think one account is more accurate than the other? Which one and why?
- Do you think the differences weaken or strengthen our faith? Which one and why?

Read Matthew 28:1–15 and Luke 24:1–12 and explore the following questions together:

- What similarities did you hear in these two accounts?
- Which do you think is more important: the similarities or the differences?
- Why do you think the Gospel accounts of the same event are different?



Express

Use the following questions to help the participants express what they’ve learned:

- Since people tell stories from their own perspectives, what does this tell us about the way we share our faith stories?
- Should we all try to tell these stories in exactly the same way? Why or why not?
- If you were to share the story of Jesus’ resurrection, what do you think would be the key points to share?



Exit

Close in prayer, thanking God for all the different ways in which the truth is revealed to us and asking for blessings on the group as they continue to explore their questions.





Does Jesus Really Want Me to Give Up My Cell Phone?



Session Objective

Does discipleship mean that we need to give up all the things we love or enjoy? Of course not! Christ does not expect us to deprive ourselves of necessities and even luxuries, as long as those items do not become more important than our faith. In this session, the participants will discuss how following Christ means that we need to make choices in our lives. Sometimes these decisions are easy to make, and at other times they can be difficult.

Faith Statement

The new life takes shape in a community in which people know that God loves and accepts them in spite of what they are. They therefore accept themselves and love others, knowing that no one has any ground on which to stand, except God's grace.

The new life does not release people from conflict with unbelief, pride, lust, and fear. They still have to struggle with disheartening difficulties and problems. Nevertheless, as they mature in love and faithfulness in their life with Christ, they live in freedom and good cheer, bearing witness on good days and evil days, confident that the new life is pleasing to God and helpful to others.

— Confession of 1967 (9.22–9.23),
Inclusive Language Text



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- If Christ asked you to give up your cell phone, do you think you could do so? Why or why not?
- Would giving up your cell phone be a hard choice to make? Why or why not?
- Do we have to make sacrifices to follow Jesus? Why or why not?



Explore

Read Matthew 19:16–26 and explore the following questions together:

- What is the point of this story?
- What does this story tell us about God?
- What does this story tell us about humanity?
- Does Jesus expect us to sell all of our possessions? If not, what does Jesus expect us to do?



Express

Use the following questions to help the participants express what they've learned:

- How does Matthew 19:16–26 challenge you to live differently?
- As a way to put your faith into action, what is one thing that you'd be willing to give up for the week? What wouldn't you be able to give up, even as an act of faith?
- How would you respond to someone if they asked you, "Does Jesus really want me to give up my cell phone?"



Exit

Close in prayer, asking God to help each participant make choices throughout the upcoming week.





Session Objective

When it comes to making decisions that seriously affect our lives, we tend to look for advice from others who have already made the decision. We want to know what it will be like before we make "a leap of faith." In this session, the participants will discuss what it really means to follow Christ and if they are ready to be pushed out of their comfort zones into a new way of living.

Faith Statement

When God converts a sinner and translates him into the state of grace, God freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and, by [God's] grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that, by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.

The will of [humanity] is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone, in the state of glory only.

— *Westminster Confession of Faith* (6.062–6.063)



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- How often do you believe what someone tells you without knowing any facts?
- What's the problem with taking people at their words?
- Do you think it is difficult to follow Christ? Why or why not?
- Do you think that following Christ really means that we are changed? Why or why not?
- What do you think that change could or should look like?



Explore

Read Luke 19:1–10 to the participants to familiarize them with the story. Read the passage again, inviting the participants to choose a word or phrase from the story that jumps out at them. Read the passage a third time, inviting the participants to reflect on their chosen word or phrase as they hear the story one more time. Explore the following questions:

- What word or phrase did you choose?
- Why do you think that word or phrase jumped out for you?
- What is the main point of this story?



Express

Use the following questions to help the participants express what they've learned:

- In what ways are you doing a good job of living as a disciple of Jesus Christ? How might you do a better job?
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "How do I need to lead my life if I want to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ?"
- As a community of believers, how can our group support each other as we seek to live our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ?



Exit

Invite the group members to think about a decision or question they have been struggling with lately. Close with prayer.





What Am I Supposed to Do Now?



Session Objective

So you've made the decision to follow Christ—now what? We are called to respond to God's grace through Christ in our actions. This session will look at what we are called to do as followers of Jesus Christ and help participants discover tangible ways to make their commitment a real thing.

Faith Statement

Biblical visions and images of the rule of Christ, such as a heavenly city, the household of God, a new heaven and earth, a marriage feast, and an unending day culminate in the image of the kingdom. The kingdom represents God's triumph over all that resists the divine will and disrupts God's creation. Already God's reign is present as a ferment in the world, stirring hope in all people and preparing the world to receive its ultimate judgment and redemption.

With an urgency born of this hope, the church applies itself to present tasks and strives for a better world. It does not identify limited progress with the kingdom of God on earth, nor does it despair in the face of disappointment and defeat. In steadfast hope, the church looks beyond all partial achievement to the final triumph of God.

—Confession of 1967 (9.54–9.55),
Inclusive Language Text



Engage

Open your time together in prayer and lead a conversation based on the following questions:

- In your life, who best exemplifies living his or her life as a follower of Jesus Christ? What about this person exemplifies the Christian life?
- Knowing what Jesus desires from you, how are you supposed to live your life?
- How easy or challenging is it to live your life as a disciple of Jesus Christ?



Explore

Read Matthew 25:31–46 together and explore the following questions:

- What are the pros and cons for living life as a "goat"?
- What are the pros and cons for living life as a "sheep"?
- To whom do you think Jesus is referring when he talks about "the least of these"?
- What does Jesus mean when he says that when we respond to those in need we are responding to him?
- How do we respond to Christ now?



Express

Use the following questions to help the participants express what they've learned:

- What is one thing you can do this week to put your faith into action and do something for someone who is in need of God's love?
- What typically gets in the way of you living the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ? What can you do to overcome this and live more like a disciple?
- Why are the Gospels important to the Christian faith?
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "What's the message of the Gospels in the Bible?"



Exit

Close in prayer, thanking God for the time that you've had together to explore tough questions of faith.

