

Jesus and the Eucharist Study

PARTICIPANT HANDOUT SESSION 1: WHAT'S OUR STORY?



We all love a good story—from the characters to the twists and turns of a captivating plot, from the dynamics of a conflict to the resolution at the end. Perhaps we love stories because they give us insight into ourselves, animating a deeper sense of meaning in our lives. The Bible is the story of God's love for us. It begins with him creating us out of love, redeeming us by that love, and finally transforming us in his love.

This divine author is love—an exchange of love within the life of the Blessed Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. What a story!

LECTIO PRAYER

1. **Jeremiah 29:11-14**

For I know well the plans I have in mind for you... plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope.

When you call me, and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all of your heart, I will let you find me... and I will change your lot.

STUDY OVERVIEW

- 1: What's Our Story?
- 2: Who Is Jesus?
- 3: Am I Saved?
- 4: Why a Church?
- 5: God is with Us
- 6: The Story of the Eucharist
- 7: Bread for the Journey

2. **Litany of Trust**, abridged. Please respond, "**Jesus, I trust in you.**"

- ◆ That you are continually holding me, sustaining me, loving me, **Jesus, I trust in you.**
- ◆ That your love goes deeper than my sins and failings, and transforms me, **Jesus, I trust in you.**
- ◆ That not knowing what tomorrow brings is an invitation to lean on you, **Jesus, I trust in you.**
- ◆ That you are with me in my suffering, **Jesus, I trust in you.**
- ◆ That my suffering, united to your own, will bear fruit in this life and the next, **Jesus, I trust in you.**
- ◆ That you will not leave me orphan, and you are present in your Church, **Jesus, I trust in you.**
- ◆ That your plan is better than anything else, **Jesus, I trust in you.**
- ◆ That you always hear me, and in your goodness always respond to me, **Jesus, I trust in you.**
- ◆ That you give me the grace to accept forgiveness and to forgive others, **Jesus, I trust in you.**
- ◆ That you give me all the strength I need for what is asked, **Jesus, I trust in you.**
- ◆ That my life is a gift, **Jesus, I trust in you.**
- ◆ That you will teach me to trust you, **Jesus, I trust in you.**
- ◆ That you are my Lord and my God, **Jesus, I trust in you.**
- ◆ That I am your beloved one, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

PART 1: LESSON * (Selected quotes from the lesson are provided below for your reference.



As you listen, feel free to write notes in the space provided.)

1. "Ta Biblia" means "the books" in Greek. It's 73 books in one big story. What story is it? . . . It's very simply a love story. **Chris Stefanick**

2. Christians go way further than just believing there is a God. The light of reason shows us that there is a God. The light of faith shows us who that God is. **Chris Stefanick**

3. So who is God? The Bible says God is love. **Dr. Edward Sri**

4. At the heart of the Christian faith is the love of God that we see most clearly revealed to us in the Trinity. . . God is three Persons who from all eternity love one another. **Dr. Michael Barber**

5. God is love . . . And out of that love comes this creative work which gives life to you and me and to every good gift to which he supplies. **Dr. Sean Innerst**

6. Your life, it's part of a love story . . . You are the beloved. **Chris Stefanick**

7. An act of love is what brings us from nothingness into existence. **Chris Stefanick**

* Lesson content provided by the Augustine Institute's study, The Search, Session 4

PART 1: TABLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

After reading the Table Discussion Guidelines on page 3, Facilitator please read the following out loud:

I will read the discussion questions out loud and pause for a moment to allow time for reflection, and then I will share first.

For the first discussion, each person is invited to share on one or both of the following questions:

- 1. What stood out to you in the time of prayer or in the lesson?
- 2. Please share an experience where you felt God's immense love for you.



1. General Discussion Guidelines (read by the table facilitator)

- ◆ My job as a facilitator is simply to make sure that everyone at the table has an opportunity to contribute, the time is shared amongst all table members, and the discussion stays on track. As a member of the small group, I will be involved in the table discussion.
- ◆ Note that table facilitators are not necessarily theologians or experts.

2. Respectful Discussion Guidelines (read by a member of the group who volunteers)

- ◆ Everyone's input is valued. We are here to listen to each other and to the promptings of the Holy Spirit with a disposition of the heart that we all have something to learn. As it says in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, "Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do."
- ◆ The purpose of the table discussions is to build relationships and exchange perspectives among table members. We are not here to debate or to try to reach a table consensus. Expect differing viewpoints and presume the good will of the other.
- ◆ People may share personal experiences. Please be sensitive to this vulnerability and do not share others' private information outside this group.

3. Process for Sharing (read by another member of the group who volunteers)

- ◆ To open our table discussion, we will use the "Process for Sharing," which offers everyone an opportunity to comment.
 - **The table facilitator will read the discussion questions out loud and pause for a moment to allow time for reflection, and then the facilitator will share first.**
 - **After the facilitator is done, he or she invites another to share. You can invite anyone at the table, whether they are next to you or across from you. After that person has shared, they invite another. You will do this until everyone at your table has been asked to share.**
 - **All are encouraged to share but no one should feel pressured to speak. If you don't want to share, simply say "pass," and ask another to share.**
 - **We ask you to listen and not immediately respond to someone's sharing during this process. Listening is one of the greatest gifts we can give to each other.**
 - **Please limit your sharing to a couple of minutes to allow time for all to share.**
- ◆ Once this process is complete, the table facilitator will initiate an open table discussion. Now, please turn to Page 2 and your Table Facilitator will open the table discussion.

PART 2: LESSON * (Selected quotes from the lesson are provided below for your reference.



As you listen, feel free to write notes in the space provided.)

1. The biblical story describes the Garden as a paradise. That is a beautiful picture of what God originally intended for the human race—in communion with each other, and with nature, and with him.

Dr. Sean Innerst

2. What happens with the Fall? . . . Because the most important and foundational relationship with God is broken, all these other relationships fall apart as well. The intellect becomes darkened; the will becomes weakened; the passions are disordered; the relationship between Adam and Eve is broken . . . the relationship with creation is broken as well . . . the world becomes broken.

Dr. Ben Akers

3. We don't live in the world God made. We live in the world we have made of the world God made.

Dr. Sean Innerst

4. The maker of space and time so loved you that he entered space and time to save you.

Chris Stefanick

5. Take the love story out of the Bible . . . and what you're left with is a to-do list.

Chris Stefanick

6. For a Christian, joy isn't what happens when life is going perfectly; it's what happens when you know you are loved perfectly, even when life is a mess.

Chris Stefanick

* Lesson content provided by the Augustine Institute's study, *The Search, Session 4*

PART 2: TABLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Table Facilitator, please read the following out loud:

We will once again begin our table discussion with the "Process for Sharing." I will read the discussion questions out loud, and pause for a moment to allow time for reflection, and then I will share first.

For the discussion, each person is invited to share on one or two of the following questions:

1. What stood out to you or was an "aha" moment in the video lesson?
2. Are you living by a "to-do" list? How might accepting that life is God's love story help you live out Christian joy?
3. What does it look like to live out Christian joy in the messiness of daily life?