

BASIC CHRISTIANITY

Video Series

DISCUSSION GUIDE

VIDEO ONE . . . Introduction to the Holy Land

Respond to the Video:

1. *Have you ever visited the land of Israel? If so, what did you learn there? If not, would you want to go there someday? Why, or why not?*
2. In this introductory video, Ken Nelson says the purpose of this video series is to help us grow closer to God, have a greater understanding of the Bible, be assured of our place in eternity, and learn how to share the good news of Christ. *What do you personally hope to gain from this video series?*
3. Dave Faust makes the point that following Jesus Christ is not boring. *Why do you think so many people consider faith a dull subject? Why do so many stay away from church?*
4. Bob Russell mentions the slogan, *“In doctrines, unity. In opinions, liberty. In all things, love.” What do you think of this slogan? How might it be helpful as we talk about our faith with others?*

Respond to God’s Word:

5. Read Matthew 7:7, 8. Jesus encouraged his disciples to “ask,” “seek,” and “knock.” *When you think about your relationship with God, what are you seeking right now?*
6. Read Hebrews 11:6. *How does God “reward” those who earnestly seek him?*
7. Read 1 Peter 3:15. *Do you feel well-equipped to explain and defend what you believe? Why, or why not? Which part of this verse do you need to apply in your life during the coming week?*

____ Set apart Christ as Lord in my heart.

____ Prepare myself to give answers to others who ask about my faith.

____ Set a better example in my daily life so others will want to ask me about my faith.

____ Defend my faith with greater gentleness and respect.

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Video Two . . . The Bible: God's Written Word

Respond to the Video:

1. Do you believe the Bible is relevant to your personal life? If so, how have you found it timely and practical? If not, why not?
2. Do you find the Bible easy or difficult to understand? What could help you understand the Bible's message more clearly?
 - a. "A translation of the Bible that speaks my language."
 - b. "A knowledgeable teacher who can explain confusing passages."
 - c. "Greater unity among Christians who read the same book but come to different conclusions."
 - d. Other:
3. In the video Dave Faust explains that the authors of the Bible were inspired and aided by the Holy Spirit so they had "enhanced memory" to recall what Jesus said (John 14:26); they made "judicious selection" of the many events of Jesus' life (John 20:30, 31); and they were given "direct revelation" from God.
 - a. What questions do you have about these points?
 - b. How do these ideas impact the way you view the authors of Scripture?

Respond to God's Word:

4. Read 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, and 2 Peter 1:20, 21. What do these verses tell you about the Bible?
5. Read Luke 24:44-47. What does this text tell you about the overall theme and purpose of the Bible? Why is it so important to see Christ himself as the central character of the Scriptures?
6. Read Psalm 19. According to verses 1-2, God speaks through his creation ("the heavens declare the glory of God"). According to verses 7-11, God speaks through his "law, precepts, and commands." How do you personally recognize the voice of God?
7. To close this session, use Psalm 19:14 as a personal prayer.

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Video Three . . . God and His Creation

Respond to the Video:

1. “There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man, which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus” (Blaise Pascal). What is your reaction to this quote?
2. Do you believe God exists? If so, why? If not, why not?
3. What delights or intrigues you most about the nature of God? What puzzles you most about him?
4. Do you know anyone who struggles to believe in God? What could you say or do that might help them take a step closer to faith?

Respond to God’s Word:

5. Dave Faust suggests three reasons to believe God truly exists:
 - (1) The universe requires a Creator (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:18-20; Hebrews 11:3)
 - (2) Life requires a Designer (Psalm 139:13, 14)
 - (3) The Bible requires a Revealer (Deuteronomy 29:29; Ephesians 3:2-5)

Which of these points do you think is most likely to help convince a skeptic about the reality of God? What reasons to believe in God would you add to this list?

6. In Matthew 28:19, Jesus says his disciples are to be baptized in the “name” (singular) of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. How does this verse impact our understanding of the trinity?
7. First Peter 1:21 says, “Through him [Jesus Christ] you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.” How do the life, teachings, and miracles of Jesus affect your faith in God?
8. Jesus said, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). How does knowing Jesus shape the way we think about God? What are some facts we know about God that we wouldn’t understand if Jesus had never come to earth?

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Video Four . . . The Fall of the Human Race

Respond to the Video:

1. How do you define *sin*? Is it something we do (action, behavior) or is it mainly something inside of us (attitude, motivation)? Explain.
2. What evils do you see in today's world? Consider the sins mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:1-5. Do you see parallels between this list and what is happening today? What can (or should) we do about the evil around us?
3. Do you believe Satan exists? If so, why? If not, why not? What questions do you have about the devil and his demons?
4. Sometimes people wonder, "If God is good, why is there so much evil in the world?" How would you answer this question? Does anything you saw or heard in this video lesson help to inform your answer?

Respond to God's Word:

5. According to Genesis 3:6, what made the forbidden fruit so appealing? What specific temptations were so enticing to Adam and Eve?
6. First John 2:16 mentions three trouble spots we encounter: "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." What do these three temptations look like in everyday life? Which of them creates the most problem for you?
7. Ephesians 4:27 says, "Do not give the devil a foothold." How do you see Satan attempting to gain a foothold in your life? In society as a whole? What do we learn in 1 Peter 5:8-10 about the devil?
8. According to Romans 3:23, why is sin such a major problem for all of us? According to Romans 3:24, what is the solution to the problem? See also Romans 6:23.
9. On a personal level, how do you complete the following statement? "I need a Savior because

_____."
10. What one thing could you change in your life to bring you closer to God?

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Video Five . . . God Sends a Savior

Respond to the Video

1. Why do you think God chose to send the Messiah to earth in the form of a baby?
2. In the biblical account surrounding the birth and childhood of Jesus, which character do you relate to the most: Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph, or the Magi? Explain.
3. How do you picture angels? What is their purpose and mission? What do they do? How does Hebrews 1:14 shed light on these questions?
4. Based on the information presented in this video lesson, how would you explain the significance of Jesus' virgin birth?
5. How do you personally view the Christmas season?
 - a. It is a fun family holiday.
 - b. It is a stressful time of year.
 - c. It is a time to rest from work and observe religious traditions.
 - d. It is a special, meaningful time for worshipping God.
 - e. All of the above.
 - f. None of the above.

Respond to God's Word

6. Read John 1:14, 2 Corinthians 8:9, and Philippians 2:5-11. What do these Scriptures teach us about the significance of Jesus Christ's coming to earth?
7. What do the following verses tell us about Jesus' mission?

Matthew 20:28
Luke 19:10
8. What does it mean to you to say, "Jesus is my Savior"?

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Video Six . . . The Ministry of Jesus

Respond to the Video

1. What does it mean to repent? Can you think of an example of a time when you have repented?
2. What did you learn from the video about what it means to be a “disciple” of Jesus? Do you consider yourself one of Jesus’ disciples? Why, or why not?
3. What did you learn from the video about the purpose and meaning of Jesus’ miracles?
4. Which of the miracles Jesus performed seems most impressive and impactful to you? Why?
5. What impresses you the most about the lessons Jesus taught?

Respond to God’s Word

7. What do you think Jesus was like as a young boy? What do Luke 2:40 and Luke 2:52 tell us about his childhood?
8. Jesus committed no sins, so why was he baptized? See Matthew 3:15.
9. Read Luke 4:1-13.
 - a. In your opinion, which of the three temptations Jesus faced would have been the most difficult to withstand? Why?
 - b. What did Jesus do to resist temptation? What can we learn from his example?

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VIDEO SEVEN . . . Jesus' Words and Actions (Continued)

Respond to the Video

1. What new information did you learn from this video lesson?
2. What does prayer mean to you?
 - a. Can you tell about a time when the Lord answered a prayer for you?
 - b. What do Jesus' words in Matthew 6:9-13 teach you about prayer? How could this basic outline help you in your personal prayers?
3. As you consider the way Jesus is portrayed in the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), what impresses you most about his words and deeds?

Respond to God's Word

4. What do the following tell us about Jesus?
 - a. His encounter with the woman at the well (John 4:1-42).
 - b. His question to the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:13-16).
 - c. His transfiguration on the mountain (Matthew 17:1-8).
 - d. His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (John 12:12-19).

Personally, which character(s) in these biblical stories do you relate to most?

____ The woman at the well with a difficult past, surprised Jesus was willing to talk with her

____ The disciples, wrestling with Jesus' true identity as the Messiah

____ The disciples who accompanied Jesus on the mountain of transfiguration, amazed to hear God say, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

____ Members of the crowd who praised Jesus gladly as he rode into Jerusalem

5. Why do you think Jesus cried as he looked over the city (Luke 19:41-44)?
6. Why do you think that many of the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus 2,000 years ago? Why do some individuals still reject him today?

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VIDEO EIGHT . . . Jesus' Death and Resurrection

Respond to the Video

1. Think of all that Jesus endured in the Garden of Gethsemane and during his arrest, trial, and crucifixion. Which aspect of his suffering (physical, emotional, and spiritual) impacts you the most? Why?
2. In your own words, how would you explain why Jesus died on the cross? What does Peter tell us about the meaning of Jesus' death in 1 Peter 2:24, 25 and 1 Peter 3:18?
3. Consider Jesus' interaction with Thomas (John 20:24-31). Do you believe Jesus actually rose from the dead? If so, what evidence convinces you the resurrection is a fact? If not, what evidence would it take to convince you it really happened?
4. Some churches are growing today, but why do you think so many people are turning away from the church and ignoring the Bible? As followers of Christ, what is our responsibility to reverse this trend? What is YOUR part in growing Christ's church?

Respond to God's Word

5. The apostle Paul recounts what Jesus said at the Last Supper and applies it to the church in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (compare Matthew 26:26-30). What does the Lord's Supper (Communion) mean to you?
6. Read the account of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46). How can this Scripture text help us when we face suffering ourselves?
7. Why are the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ so crucial to the Christian faith? See Jesus' words in Mark 8:31-38 and Luke 24:46, 47, and Paul's comments in 1 Corinthians 15:1-20. What do these Scriptures tell you about Jesus' resurrection and the evidence that supports it?
8. What have you learned from this 8-part video study about the basics of the Christian faith? Can you think of a group or a person who might appreciate seeing these videos and discussing them with you?