

Dear Small Group Leader,

Thank you for agreeing to facilitate one of our Lenten Small groups! We are so grateful to you for sharing this important ministry with us. This packet includes all of the leadership materials for your small group. Each gathering will be based upon our Conversations with God Dramas that will be used as a part of Wednesday Evening Lenten worship. These begin Wednesday March 4<sup>th</sup> so we recommend waiting to hold your 1<sup>st</sup> gathering until after March 4<sup>th</sup>.

Each session will begin with a Conversational Scripture Study that focuses on a passage of scripture that relates to a character in the Drama. After taking time to study the Bible together in this way, we recommend watching the Drama as a group. **Recordings of the Dramas will be archived on [www.bethanylive.org](http://www.bethanylive.org) under the “Lent 2020” tab.**

After watching the Drama feel free to engage as many of the provided questions as your group sees fit. Perhaps you’ll spend the rest of your time discussing one of the proposed questions, perhaps your group will go in an entirely different direction unrelated to the provided questions. That’s ok! Please allow your group to go in the direction that the Holy Spirit leads, use this packet as a guide not a regimented curriculum.

Thank you again for your help in making ministry at Bethany come to life! I pray that these Small Group studies provide you with a renewed sense of God’s presence in your life.

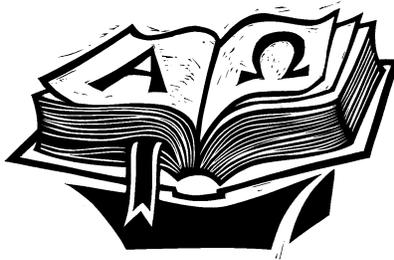
Peace and Grace,

Pastor Nate

## Small Group Night I: The Woman who anointed Jesus at Bethany

### PREPARATION

- ✚ Have 2 Bibles available for the Dwelling In the Word time
- ✚ Have a plan for how to show the video of the dialogue from Last Wednesday's evening service



### A CONVERSATIONAL SCRIPTURE STUDY (20 MINUTES)

Mark 14:3-9

This is a short Bible Study that's meant as a way to begin your time together. Don't spend all evening on this study and don't try to answer the questions that arise (there will be time later for more concrete conversation). **This is meant to open our imaginations to God's Word.**

Have 2 people volunteer to read the scripture passage.

Before reading, **have someone open the group in prayer, then allow for at least 15 seconds of silence** before the first person reads.

- ✚ The first person reads the passage aloud for the group while others follow along. **After the reading leave a good 15 seconds of silence.**
- ✚ Then, the 2<sup>nd</sup> volunteer reads the same passage a second time.
- ✚ While the scripture is being read, people should make note of any words or phrases that caught their attention.

After the passage has been read aloud twice, everyone should **pair up (hopefully with someone you don't know that well)** and share with each other answers to the following questions:

- ✚ What words or phrases stood out?
- ✚ What captured your imagination?
- ✚ What questions do you have about the text?

**Take 4-5 minutes** to talk in your groups of 2, then gather together as a full group.

**Take 5-10 minutes** to share as a group what you heard in your pairs. Individuals should share with the group what your partner shared with you (don't talk about your insights! Share your partner's insights!)



### DRAMATIC DIALOGUE – CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD (10 MINUTES)

Take time to watch together a recording of the short **dialogue from last Wednesday's Lenten evening service.**

After watching the dialogue, consider the following questions:

- ✚ What caught your imagination or attention?
- ✚ What connections between the scripture and the dialogue did you see?
- ✚ What did you like or not like about the drama?

### CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE DRAMA (15 MINUTES)

- ✚ The woman in the drama has caught a glimpse of the long-term plan for Jesus and this is what prompts her to anoint him. Have you ever thought about God's long-term plan for the world? What do you think it is? How does the thought of God having a plan give you hope or make you uneasy?
- ✚ The woman and God share their frustration about trying to get the disciples to understand what is actually going on with Jesus. If you are willing, share a time when you felt frustrated when trying to share your faith with someone else? Is there anyone in your life that you wish you could get to see things differently?
- ✚ The disciples tell the woman that she should have sold the oil and given the money to the poor. Why do you think Jesus (who was always standing up for the poor) affirmed the woman's choice to use the oil? How do you understand Jesus' statement that "we will always have the poor with you but you will not always have me?"

### A TIME OF PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Once you feel discussion has concluded, take time to pray together. **Prayer is simply a conversation with God and so each week you are encouraged to talk with God together.**

### A WORD FOR THE ROAD (1 MINUTE)

Group members are encouraged to **recite and memorize the theme verse below throughout the week** as a way of keeping the Conversation with God going throughout the week.

*"But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations."  
-Psalms 33:11*

## Small Group Night 2: James, the Sleeping Disciple

### PREPARATION

- ✚ Have 2 Bibles available for the Dwelling In the Word time
- ✚ Have a plan for how to show the video of the dialogue from Last Wednesday evening service



### A CONVERSATIONAL SCRIPTURE STUDY (20 MINUTES)

Luke 22:39-46

This is a short Bible Study that's meant as a way to begin your time together. Don't spend all evening on this study and don't try to answer the questions that arise (there will be time later for more concrete conversation). **This is meant to open our imaginations to God's Word.**

**Have 2 people volunteer to read the scripture passage.**

Before reading, have someone open the group in prayer, then allow for at least 15 seconds of silence before the first person reads.

- ✚ The first person reads the passage aloud for the group while others follow along. **After the reading leave a good 15 seconds of silence.**
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After the passage has been read aloud twice, everyone should **pair up (hopefully with someone you don't know that well)** and share with each other answers to the following questions:

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**Take 4-5 minutes** to talk in your groups of 2, then gather together as a full group.

**Take 5-10 minutes** to share as a group what you heard in your pairs. Individuals should share with the group what your partner shared with you (don't talk about your insights! Share your partner's insights!)



## DRAMATIC DIALOGUE – CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD (10 MINUTES)

Take time to watch together a recording of the short dialogue from last Wednesday's Lenten evening service.

After watching the dialogue talk consider the following questions:

- ✚ What caught your imagination or attention?
- ✚ What connections between the scripture and the dialogue did you see?
- ✚ What did you like or not like about the drama?

## CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE DRAMA (15 MINUTES)

- ✚ James describes the moment when Jesus say "Not my will but yours". If you are willing, share about a time when you needed to pray a similar prayer.
- ✚ God tells James that God's Spirit will be inside of him. What do you think it means to have God's spirit inside of us? Share about a time when you sensed the Spirit at work in you.
- ✚ God recognizes that James wanted to do what was right. Have you ever felt like this, as if you knew the right thing to do and yet you did the exact opposite? What have you done to try to help yourself be more faithful?

## A TIME OF PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

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## A WORD FOR THE ROAD (1 MINUTE)

Group members are encouraged to **recite and memorize the theme verse throughout the week** as a way of keeping the Conversation with God, that was begun tonight, going throughout the week.

*"Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." - Romans 8:26*

## Small Group Night 3: Peter, the flawed Rock

### PREPARATION

- Have 2 Bibles available for the Dwelling In the Word time
- Have a plan for how to show the video of the dialogue from Last Wednesday evening service



### A CONVERSATIONAL SCRIPTURE STUDY (20 MINUTES)

Luke 22:54-62

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**Have 2 people volunteer to read the scripture passage.**

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- ✚ The first person reads the passage aloud for the group while others follow along. **After the reading leave a good 15 seconds of silence.**
- ✚ Then, the 2<sup>nd</sup> volunteer reads the same passage a second time.
- ✚ While the scripture is being read, people should make note of any words or phrases that caught their attention.

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## DRAMATIC DIALOGUE – CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD (10 MINUTES)

Take time to watch together a recording of the short dialogue from last Wednesday's Lenten evening service.

After watching the dialogue talk consider the following questions:

- ✚ What caught your imagination or attention?
- ✚ What connections between the scripture and the dialogue did you see?
- ✚ What did you like or not like about the drama?

## CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE DRAMA (15 MINUTES)

- ✚ Peter mentions the time when he and the other disciples argued about being the best disciple. Where do you see this type of behavior happening in the church today? How do you see people fighting to be the best?
- ✚ Peter describes all of his mistakes in this dialogue. Yet we should remember that in Matthew 16:18a Jesus says "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church". What do you think about the fact that Jesus chose to build his church on a very flawed rock like Peter? What do you think this means for how we understand our church and its mission?
- ✚ God reminds Peter that God's forgiveness is infinite. As Lutherans, we talk about God's infinite forgiveness as God's grace. Share a story when you experienced God's grace in your life.

## A TIME OF PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Once you feel discussion has concluded, take time to pray together. **Prayer is simply a conversation with God and so each week you are encouraged to talk with God together.**

## A WORD FOR THE ROAD (1 MINUTE)

Group members are encouraged to **recite and memorize the theme verse throughout the week** as a way of keeping the Conversation with God, that was begun tonight, going throughout the week.

**"Answer me when I call, O God of my right! You gave me room when I was in distress. Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer." – Psalm 4:1**

## Small Group Night 4: Barabbas, The notorious prisoner

### PREPARATION

- ✚ Have 2 Bibles available for the Dwelling In the Word time
- ✚ Have a plan for how to show the video of the dialogue from Last Wednesday evening service



### A CONVERSATIONAL SCRIPTURE STUDY (20 MINUTES)

Matthew 27:15-26

This is a short Bible Study that's meant as a way to begin your time together. Don't spend all evening on this study and don't try to answer the questions that arise (there will be time later for more concrete conversation). **This is meant to open our imaginations to God's Word.**

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## DRAMATIC DIALOGUE – CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD (10 MINUTES)

Take time to watch together a recording of the short dialogue from last Wednesday's Lenten evening service.

After watching the dialogue talk consider the following questions:

- ✚ What caught your imagination or attention?
- ✚ What connections between the scripture and the dialogue did you see?
- ✚ What did you like or not like about the drama?

## CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE DRAMA (15 MINUTES)

- ✚ Barabbas seems to think the only way forward is his way. If you are willing, share about a time when you ever felt like there was only one way forward and then you were surprised by God's path forward? How were you surprised by God this week?
- ✚ Barabbas wants to use force so that Rome can be overthrown and Israel restored. But it seems as if God has another way. Talk about this idea of God using sacrifice and weakness rather than force. How does this change the way we understand our walk as Christians and our mission as a church?
- ✚ Barabbas comes to see that Jesus took his place on the cross. The message is clear- Jesus willingly enters the worst situations we can imagine for our sake. How does this make difficult situations easier to held? When has knowing that Jesus suffers with you eased your pain?

## A TIME OF PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Once you feel discussion has concluded, take time to pray together. **Prayer is simply a conversation with God and so each week you are encouraged to talk with God together.**

## A WORD FOR THE ROAD (1 MINUTE)

Group members are encouraged to **recite and memorize the theme verse throughout the week** as a way of keeping the Conversation with God, that was begun tonight, going throughout the week.

*"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

*– 2 Chronicles 7:14*

## Small Group Night 5: The Thief on the Cross

### PREPARATION

- ✚ Have 2 Bibles available for the Dwelling In the Word time
- ✚ Have a plan for how to show the video of the dialogue from Last Wednesday evening service



### A CONVERSATIONAL SCRIPTURE STUDY (20 MINUTES)

Luke 23:39-43

This is a short Bible Study that's meant as a way to begin your time together. Don't spend all evening on this study and don't try to answer the questions that arise (there will be time later for more concrete conversation). **This is meant to open our imaginations to God's Word.**

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## DRAMATIC DIALOGUE – CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD (10 MINUTES)

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After watching the dialogue talk consider the following questions:

- ✚ What caught your imagination or attention?
- ✚ What connections between the scripture and the dialogue did you see?
- ✚ What did you like or not like about the drama?

## CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE DRAMA (15 MINUTES)

- ✚ The Thief wants to know what paradise is like, what do you think? Why is this your understanding of paradise?
- ✚ In the dialogue, the thief talks about his burdens being too much to bare. If you have ever felt this way in your life, how did you make it through that time?
- ✚ God says to the thief, "Suffering people feel deserted." What would you say to someone who felt abandoned by God?

## A TIME OF PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Once you feel discussion has concluded, take time to pray together. **Prayer is simply a conversation with God and so each week you are encouraged to talk with God together.**

## A WORD FOR THE ROAD (1 MINUTE)

Group members are encouraged to **recite and memorize the theme verse throughout the week** as a way of keeping the Conversation with God, that was begun tonight, going throughout the week.

*"The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desire of all who fear him; he also hears their cry, and saves them." - Psalm 145:18-19*