

CHRISTIAN WITNESS IN A COMPLICATED WORLD

DISCUSSION GUIDE 1

ABOUT THIS SERIES

Have you ever felt the need to speak up for Christian values but didn't know how?

Whether it was in social media post or in a conversation with a family member, you wanted to stand up for the truth, but you didn't want to lose the relationship. Or, you did speak up, and everyone ended up angry and further entrenched in their opinions.

In this 3-part series called *Christian Witness in a Complicated World* you'll learn how to have hard conversations with people different than you. Whether the topic is politics, religion, or someone's moral choices, there are Biblical principles that simplify the conversation, let the person know you love them, and everyone walks away learning something new.

It's not what you say, it's why you say it.

ITEMS NEEDED

☐ Bibles

CHECKLIST BEFORE YOUR GROUP ARRIVES

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| ☐ Pray for your group | ☐ Read through the Discussion Guide | ☐ Refreshments (optional) |
| ☐ Clean meeting area | ☐ Clean bathroom | ☐ Crack front door |

OPENING (10 MIN)

After a general welcome, say: Hey friends! Good to see you again. Let's start today's discussion with an icebreaker question—

WHAT IS SOMETHING THAT'S SIMPLE TO YOU BUT COMPLICATED TO OTHERS?

After a brief discussion, say: Today we begin a series called *Christian Witness in a Complicated World*. And we're going to make simple what can feel so complicated. Don't worry, we WON'T get into any one particular political or social issue in this series, (and if we do, my job as a host is to bring us back from the tangent) but we will talk about some principles of faith that simplify talking about a variety of topics.

HOST TIP: Please, do not miss this promise to your group that we won't be debating politics or social issues. You don't want to derail the discussion with any topic, and people need that reassurance so they're able to relax and listen with an open mind.

OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

Host, lead the group in prayer.

OUR FIRST CONCERN (10-15 MIN)

After a prayer, say: On Sunday, Pastor Chris talked about how there's so much we COULD say (or want to say!) when we're talking with others about social and political issues. That's not to

say those things don't matter, and there's a time and place for all of that, but our first concern is something else. And we can see it hiding in plain sight throughout Scripture:

CAN I GET VOLUNTEERS TO READ THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES?

1 CORINTHIANS 15:14

ACTS 17:18

1 PETER 1:3

ACTS 26:22-23

ACCORDING TO THESE READINGS, WHAT'S THE CENTRAL ISSUE OF CHRISTIANITY?

After the readings, say: If you can't tell from these passages, the topic of discussion in the early Church was the resurrection. They led with the news of Jesus. This doesn't mean we shouldn't talk about other issues. But it does mean it's less important than what someone believes about the resurrection. Because what they believe about the resurrection determines how they will answer every other moral question to follow.

IF YOU'RE COMFORTABLE SHARING, AS YOU CONSIDER YOUR CHRISTIAN WITNESS IN A COMPLICATED WORLD, WHO DO YOU THINK ABOUT TALKING WITH IN PARTICULAR? (YOU DON'T HAVE TO SHARE THE DISAGREEMENT TOPIC, JUST THEIR RELATIONSHIP.)

WHY DO YOU THINK WE "BURY THE LEDE" AND TALK ABOUT OTHER ISSUES RATHER THAN TALKING ABOUT THE RESURRECTION?

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO BRING UP THE RESURRECTION IN A CASUAL, CONVERSATIONAL WAY THAT FEELS NATURAL?

ACCIDENTAL PHARISEES AND IDOLATRY (10-15 MIN)

After a discussion, say: Pastor Chris talked about how when we place any moral issue ahead of the resurrection, we run the risk of becoming an accidental pharisee—where we care more about someone following God's Law more than we care about someone following God's Son. Even more, it becomes idolatry.

WHAT SUBJECT STRUGGLES TO BE MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU THAN YOUR FAITH? (FAMILY, HEALTH, POLITICS, CAREER)?

THE REASON (5-7 MIN)

After a discussion, say: To close today, some of the popular verses that talk about sharing our faith might sound a little bit different after today's discussion on the resurrection.

CAN SOMEONE READ THE FOLLOWING VERSES FOR US? AS THEY DO, LET'S SHARE HOW WE HEAR THIS VERSE DIFFERENTLY IN LIGHT OF TODAY'S DISCUSSION ON THE RESURRECTION.

COLOSSIANS 4:5-6

1 PETER 3:15

EPHESIANS 6:19

After a discussion, say: May God help us to an effective and godly Christian witness in a complicated world.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (3 MIN)

Before we pray, just one quick announcement—

HAPPY THANKS GIVEAWAY

There are just a few spots left for our Happy Thanks Giveaway! St. Mark is teaming up with Minges Brook Elementary to put 100 turkeys and meals on the table of Battle Creek families in need. If you go to the Hub on our website (www.stmark.net) you'll find a link to the Sign Up Genius form.

It's the morning of Saturday, November 22nd and it'd be a lot of fun if a few of us from our Small Group could serve! There are two shifts and different roles—from 7:30 AM to 10:00 AM or another shift from 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 – 7 MIN)

We'll pray about becoming like Christ but, before we do—

ARE THERE ANY OTHER PRAYER REQUESTS TODAY?

Host, after taking prayer requests. Then, close the group in prayer. Start by praying for the people you're trying to reach with the good news of the resurrection.