

Lenten Small Group

Session FIVE • Journey to the Cross • 60-90 Minutes

1. Welcome and Fellowship (10 minutes)

- Begin with a warm welcome and casual conversation.
- If applicable, share snacks or refreshments.
- Briefly check in with members about their week and Lenten practices.

2. Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

- Lead a prayer inviting God's presence and guidance for the discussion.
- Include a moment of silence to center hearts and minds on Christ.

3. Scripture Reading (5 minutes)

- Read Luke 22:39-46
- Read the passage aloud (Use multiple readers for engagement).

4. Group Discussion (30-60 minutes)

- Instructions: Have a group discussions on 3-4 of the following questions. The bolded questions are great starters. If time permits check out the DEEPER DIVE questions at the end of the list.
 - What emotions do you think Jesus was experiencing in the garden?
 - Why do you think Jesus asked the Father to "take this cup from me"?
 - Jesus prays, "not my will, but yours be done." What does this teach us about surrendering to God's plan?
 - Have you ever faced a moment when you had to surrender your desires to God? What was that experience like?
 - Luke 22:43 says, "An angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him." How does this show that even Jesus needed divine help?
 - In what ways has God strengthened you during a difficult time?
 - Jesus asks His disciples to pray, but they fall asleep. Why do you think they struggled to stay awake?
 - What are some ways we, like the disciples, "fall asleep" spiritually instead of staying watchful in prayer?



- How does Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane prepare Him for what is to come?
- How can prayer help us endure our own struggles and challenges?
- Is there an area in your life where you need to pray, "Not my will, but Yours be done"?
- How can Jesus' example in Gethsemane shape your approach to suffering and sacrifice?
- As we journey toward the cross during Lent, how does this passage deepen your understanding of Jesus' sacrifice?
- What practical steps can you take this week to follow Jesus' example of prayer, trust, and surrender?

Deeper Dive Questions

- What does the cross mean to you personally?
- How do you see Christ's suffering reflected in the world around you?
- In what ways can you "carry your cross" this Lent?

5. Reflection and Response (5-10 minutes)

Each person pick one question and share

- What about today's discussion brings you hope?
- Share a "high and/or low" point from the week.
- Where did you see Jesus this week?

6. Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

- Pray over any specific intentions or challenges shared by group members.
- Offer gratitude for the discussion and guidance as the group continues their Lenten journey.
- Conclude with a communal prayer like the Lord's Prayer.

7. Announcements and Sending (5 minutes)

- Share any upcoming events, readings, or service opportunities for Lent.
- Encourage members to check in with each other during the week and utilize their Lenten Journals.

The Agony in the Garden.

Luke 22:39-46

Then going out he went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. When he arrived at the place he said to them, "Pray that you may not undergo the test."

After withdrawing about a stone's throw from them and kneeling, he prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done."

And to strengthen him an angel from heaven appeared to him. He was in such agony and he prayed so fervently that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground.

When he rose from prayer and returned to his disciples, he found them sleeping from grief. He said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not undergo the test."



Small Group Guidelines & Expectations

To ensure a respectful, meaningful, and Christ-centered small group experience, it's helpful to establish clear expectations. Here are some suggested rules:

1. Respect Confidentiality

- What is shared in the group stays in the group.
- Avoid gossip or sharing others' personal stories outside the group.

2. Listen Actively

- Give full attention when someone is speaking.
- Avoid interrupting or side conversations.

3. Participate, But Don't Dominate

- Everyone should have an opportunity to share.
- Be mindful of how much you're speaking and allow space for others.

4. Stay on Topic

- Keep the discussion focused on the scripture, lesson, or theme.
- If a conversation drifts too far, the leader should gently refocus.

5. Be Honest and Open

- Share authentically but within your comfort level.
- Encourage each other without judgment.

6. No Fixing, Preaching, or Debating

- Offer encouragement rather than trying to "fix" someone's struggles.
- Avoid theological debates that could become divisive.

7. Be Punctual and Committed

- Arrive on time and be consistent in attending.
- If you can't make it, let the leader or group know in advance.

8. Respect Differences

- Everyone is on their own spiritual journey.
- Show kindness and understanding even when opinions differ.

9. Be Prayerful

- Pray for each other throughout the week.
- Approach discussions with a spirit of humility and openness to God.