

# CONNECT GROUP GUIDE

WE HAVE FOUND THE **ONE**



# Series Overview

LENT 1 February 26	<b>John 1:35-51</b>	Call of the Disciples
LENT 2 March 5	<b>John 3:1-21</b>	Nicodemus
LENT 3 March 12	<b>John 4:4-42</b>	Woman at the Well
LENT 4 March 19	<b>John 9:1-41</b>	The Blind Man
LENT 5 March 26	<b>John 11:1-53</b>	Lazarus
PALM SUNDAY April 2	<b>John 12:12-19</b>	Palm Sunday

## CONNECT GROUPS

At ACN, the primary avenue for **discipleship** is in a **Connect Group**, and we **encourage everyone** to be involved because these groups are specifically designed to help us **grow** as disciples. Connect Groups help us to **connect** with **each other**, **connect** with the **Word** and **connect** with **God** through **prayer**.

We need time to **relate** to one another by connecting personally. Depending on the members, this can be done in a variety of ways. As we get into the Word, we **examine** its **truth** and **relevance** in order to apply it to our lives. Scripture is **explored**, **explained** and **discussed**, and the goal is to minister to each other's lives through what is learned, not necessarily to finish all the material.

**Prayer** is a vital part of a Connect Group's time together. Leave plenty of time so your prayer is not rushed. This is not just an 'opening' or 'closing' prayer, but a time for everyone in the group to take specific requests to God, in a simple and conversational way. This is where the action is! The goal is to create a space where people feel enabled and comfortable to pray, and can see God at work.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

It is very helpful that the Gospel of John tells us why it was written .... so that people would believe in Jesus Christ as Messiah and Son of God. (Read John 20:31). It was written with an evangelistic purpose. The various 'signs' John records are intended to produce belief and faith, and there are many significant references in the gospel to 'believing' and 'non-believing'.

If you were to compare the Gospel of John with the other three Gospels you will find many differences in style. It is more focussed on Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem, it's written in a different style, it's more themed than chronological, and the content is often more theological.

When we comprehend the purpose of John's gospel, it makes these contrasts more understandable.

## **What makes a study during Lent just that little bit different?**

As a Lenten study, it is a focussed opportunity for spiritual renewal ... renewal that requires discipline, deep reflection, honesty and prayer, alongside a renewed understanding of the Scriptures.

Lent invites us to make our hearts ready for remembering Jesus' passion and celebrating his resurrection.

The practice of a forty-day preparation period began in the Christian church during the third and fourth centuries. The number forty carries Biblical significance based on the forty years Israel spent in the wilderness and Jesus' forty-day fast in the wilderness. The forty days of Lent begin on Ash Wednesday and continue to Easter Day (not counting Sundays).

For Lent many people set aside special time for self-examination, prayer and refocusing our lives on what is truly important.

Some people choose to fast, or give something up for Lent. It may be a meal, or something else you enjoy. It could be anything that takes some time regularly in your days.

The purpose of this is not to show off how self-disciplined we are, it is not even to make ourselves right so we can be with God. Salvation is a gift of God through Jesus, not something we earn.

The purpose of fasting or giving something up is so that we can be focused on God. We free up time for prayer and reorient our lives, and our minds, towards God. And our motivation is not other people's approval; it is the infinite rewards of God in this life and eternity.

May you have a holy Lent.

# JOHN 1:35-51

## Lent 1 ~ Call of the Disciples

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... WE HAVE FOUND THE ONE ...

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### INTRO

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When you think of evangelism what comes to mind? Are you an evangelist?

When you think of witnessing for Jesus what comes to mind? Are you a witness?

### John 1:35-51

1. What brought each of these five men to Jesus?
2. How much do you think they knew about who Jesus was?
3. What was Philip's testimony about Jesus to Nathanael?

WE HAVE FOUND THE **ONE**

# NOTES

4. Jesus is given various titles throughout this passage, revealing something of his identity. Which one do you resonate with the best?
5. What testimony can you give to others about Jesus?
6. Do we make evangelism or witnessing too complicated? What did evangelism or witnessing look like for Andrew and Philip?
7. v.51 uses the plural you (yous / y'all) - meaning that all of the disciples would see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. Compare with Genesis 28:12-13. What does this mean about who Jesus is?
8. 'Come and see' Jesus is probably the simplest form of evangelism. What is one thing about Jesus that you would like not-yet-believers to see? Why?

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- Pray for your personal evangelism and witnessing.
- Pray for Jesus to reveal himself through your words and actions at work / school / home / in the community, where you meet people who don't yet know him.



# NOTES

# JOHN 3:1-21

## LENT 2 ~ Nicodemus

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... NO ONE COULD DO WHAT YOU DO WITHOUT GOD!

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### INTRO

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What would you say to people who say:

*"If only God would prove Himself to me, then I would believe."*

### John 3:1-8

1. Why do you think Nicodemus came to Jesus at night?
2. What has impressed Nicodemus about Jesus?
3. What do you think needs to happen to Nicodemus?

# NOTES

4. How did Nicodemus react when Jesus first spoke about being born again?

5. How do vv.6-8 compare physical birth with spiritual birth?  
How does v.8 emphasise the sovereignty of God?

### **John 3:9-15**

6. Why is it still so surprising that Nicodemus doesn't understand?

*Take time to read Ezekiel 37:14.  
This and other prophecies promised  
that one day God would give new  
inward life by His Spirit.*

### **John 3:16-21**

7. What do we learn about God's action and intention from these verses?

8. How would you answer someone who says God's judgement is unfair?

*There are no speech marks  
in the original manuscripts.  
These wonderful verses may be  
John's inspired comment  
rather than Jesus' own words.*

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Think about the cost to God of the gift He gave. Remember that his one and only Son lived with Him in the intimacy of loving delight from all eternity.

Praise God for the wonderful love of the cross.

# NOTES

# JOHN 4:4-42

## Lent 3 ~ Woman at the Well

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... COULD THIS BE THE CHRIST?

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### INTRO

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Share about a time in your life when you found something very difficult to understand at first, but when you persevered understanding came.

*We move from Nicodemus, a man with all the religious privilege in the world, to an unnamed, morally messed-up Samaritan woman. What a remarkable visit to Samaria!!*

### John 4:4-42

1. What is the significance of Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman?
2. Share what it means for you to know Jesus as living water in your life?
3. What important principles of witnessing can we learn from Jesus in this story?

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# NOTES

4. What do you think Jesus means by worshipping in Spirit and in truth?
5. What might the Samaritan woman have understood by the term Messiah in her first century context?
6. What does it mean for us to declare Jesus as the Messiah?
7. vv.31-38 How can these verses encourage us in our witness? Are the fields 'ripe for harvest'?
8. vv.39-42 How does the witness of the Samaritan woman and Jesus work together? Jesus isn't physically present today, so how can this double witness happen for us?

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- Praise Jesus for his care for this Samaritan woman
- Pray for God to give you the same care for others; especially for those who are on the fringes. Pray for Jesus to show you how you can witness with the temperament he has given you.



# NOTES

# JOHN 9:1-41

## Lent 4 ~ The Blind Man

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... HE IS A PROPHET!

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### INTRO

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What do you think of the idea that people get what they deserve?

*I once was lost  
but now am found  
was blind  
but now I see*

### John 9:1-41

1. Why did the disciples ask whose sin caused the man to be born blind?
2. Does suffering and disease come because of our sin?
3. Jesus could heal with a word. Why do you think he got so dirty healing this man?

WE HAVE FOUND THE **ONE**

# NOTES

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| <p>4. What was in the 'clay' Jesus put on the blind man's eyes? Why would Jesus use that to heal?</p> <p>5. When did the blind man 'see' Jesus?<br/>When did the blind man see Jesus?</p> <p>6. Why were the man's parents afraid to take a stand?<br/>Are you sometimes fearful to take a stand for Jesus? Why?</p> | <p>7. What does v.38 indicate about Jesus' identity?</p> <p>8. What indications are there that the Pharisees were spiritually blind? What does Jesus mean in v.41?</p> |
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- Pray for those you know who are ill or suffering. Ask God to use the struggles and pains of this life for our good and His glory.
- Pray for your neighbours, friends and family who do not yet know Jesus.
- Pray for humility and openness to see the truth of who Jesus is, and what he has done for them.

# NOTES

# JOHN 11:1-53

## Lent 5 ~ Lazarus

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... IF YOU HAD BEEN HERE

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### INTRO

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If it is not too recent or too difficult, share about your journey with someone who has died.

### John 11:1-53

1. Name an element in this story that makes it very realistic for you.
2. vv.5-7 Is John telling the story with some humour?! Why did Jesus delay going to Bethany?
3. v.15 What is Jesus wanting his disciples to believe?

# NOTES

4. v.20 In what way is this story consistent with another story about Mary and Martha?
5. vv.21-22 What might Mary have meant with this comment?
6. v.25 Jesus gives a wonderful promise. Do you believe this?
7. Both Martha (v.21) and Mary (v.32) believe Lazarus would not have died if Jesus had been present. Why would they have this confidence?.
8. vv.45-53 Why did a miracle of this magnitude and an act of such great compassion provoke such a severe response from the chief priests and Pharisees?

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- Bring whatever fears you have about death to Jesus and claim his promise in v25.
- Pray for anyone you know who has been recently bereaved that they might know Jesus as the resurrection and the life.
- Pray for the power of the resurrection to be at work in our church.



# NOTES

# JOHN 12:12-19

## Palm Sunday

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... BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES

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### INTRO

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Share together some moments you remember of being at a big rally? How did it make you feel?

### John 12:12-19

1. Who is there?  
What do they do?  
What do they shout?  
Read Psalm 118:25-26
  
2. Did Jesus' closest followers understand what He was doing?  
When did they understand?

*Jesus says He has been anointed for burial, but the next day is acclaimed as the King. This whole chapter lies under the shadow of the cross.*

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# NOTES

3. Read Zechariah 9:9-10  
What will the promised King do?

4. In the huge Passover crowd, there was a sub-group. (v.17)  
What was the difference for them, and what did they do?

5. Why are the Pharisees so angry and frustrated?  
In what way is this ironic?

6. Notice the pattern in John's Gospel - eye-witnesses tell what they saw, and others believe.  
What challenge does this give you?

*Share together how this Series  
has helped you  
to have a holy Lent.*



- Pray about how you could tell others about Jesus.
- Ask Him to show you the opportunities he places in your path.

# NOTES

**IDEAS, THOUGHTS, THINGS TO MAKE HAPPEN  
AS YOU PREPARE FOR HOLY WEEK, GOOD FRIDAY  
AND EASTER DAY**

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Lent 2023



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