

## Faith Studies for Small Groups

Fall 2023 – Spring 2024

Version:7/31/2023



### For Everyone

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#### **The Inward/Outward Journey: A Jesus-Shaped Vision for Life**

Jesus has a vision for living life – it's a life lived *for* others. He shared this vision in stories and in teachings and in how Jesus lived his own life. What does it look like to live *for* others? How are you already doing this? Where can you stretch and grow? The world's messages are often filled with a very different vision. How do those messages influence your life? What practices or habits can help you to remember that you are beloved and that you have great potential and unique ways to make a difference for others. If you had a map for living a Jesus-shaped vision for life, what would it look like?

This faith study is connected to a fall worship/sermon series and will be available in October 2023. It will be available on the Incarnation website to view or print. This faith study can be used in small groups or in other settings or as an individual. Sessions include:

- *The Jesus-Shaped Vision – A Life Lived for Others*
- *You are Here on the Map – Beloved by God to Make a Difference*
- *Creating a Roadmap – Practices to Live a Jesus-Shaped Life*
- *Finding a Map when Feeling Lost – A Compass in Difficult Times*
- *Rest Stops and Sacred Sites – Finding the Sacred in the Ordinary*

#### **Acts: Catching Up with the Spirit**

Dive into the book of Acts with Luther Seminary professor Matthew Skinner. The faith study explores six key themes that illustrate the ways in which reading Acts can ignite our imagination about the character of the Christian gospel, the work of God's people and the challenges of living faithfully in a complex and changing world.

- Six videos, leader guide and book. Reading the book is recommended, but it may be possible to take part without having read the chapter.
- Watch a preview video and find out more at: <https://www.cokesbury.com/Acts>

#### **Questions God Asks**

We often go to the Bible looking for answers, but in the Biblical stories we find that God asks us questions too! This faith study is based on Trevor Hudson's book, *Questions God Asks Us*. The chapters are fast and easy to read.

- Used in many small groups in 2022-23.
- Use the Incarnation faith study or add one of the following...
- Options: (1) videos and chapter summaries by Josh Allen of Brentwood Hills Church or (2) Short videos of Trevor Hudson and guided meditations from The Upper Room.
- For a no-homework option, consider reading selections from the chapters OR use the chapter summaries from Brentwood Hills Church at: <https://brentwoodhills.org/event-items/questions-god-asks-us/>.
- See the last page for more information...

### **Undistracted**

How to move back from all the busy, all the crazy to find purpose in a less distracted life. Bob Goff brings his inspirational, engaging and humorous stories to show how to live a more focused and attentive life, present to others and to joy and purpose.

- Used in 5+ small groups in 2022-23.
- Check out the promo at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9ZhFimxL1Y>
- Preview session one at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcVcOSZVR7o>
- Five sessions with 15-minute videos and a study guide.
- Easy to use and upbeat.

### **Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi**

Take a closer look at the timeless stories Jesus told through parables. In *Short Stories by Jesus*, Amy-Jill Levine takes you back in time to explain how the original audiences understood Jesus' parables. What did the parables mean in Jesus' time and what is their meaning for us today? Amy-Jill Levine is a professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace.

- DVD or streaming video with leader guide and participant guide.
- Six sessions with 10 minute videos.
- Find out more at: <https://www.abingdonpress.com/product/9781501858208>

### **Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts and Outlaws**

Jesus came to lift up the lowly through relationships with ordinary, flawed and unexpected people. Explore the Gospel of Luke to see Jesus' concern for those who were considered unimportant and hear a hopeful and inspiring word for our lives today.

- DVD and leader guide
- Six sessions with 10 minute videos
- Find out more at: <https://www.adamhamilton.com/books/item/9781791025045>

## The Saint John's Bible

Reflect with others in your group on Bible texts and engage your spiritual imagination with the illuminations from *The Saint John's Bible*. A series of short sessions have been written to open-up the rich discussion and new insights that can happen only in a group setting. Grant Rykken or others from The Saint John's Bible Action Group can also visit your small group for an introductory session. Incarnation is incredibly blessed to have a Heritage Edition of the Bible to view on-site or use the "coffee table" size books available for use in other settings. Some illuminations can also be viewed on-line (for Zoom gatherings).

- Can be short or longer, depending on time available.
- Use for a devotion, single session or a series.

## More Resources – Available at Incarnation or Used by Other Groups

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**Incarnation Faith Studies** – Easy to use and available on the website: *Renew Your Life, Caring for One Another, Our Story, Be Loved, Your Life Matters, Connecting in Grace: Radical Gifts, Radical Grace and Energized*. Go to:  
<https://www.incarnationmn.org/ministries/small-groups/faith-studies-for-small-groups/>

## Bible and Bible Themes

### On-Line Resources

*The Bible Project* – [www.thebibleproject.com](http://www.thebibleproject.com) or [www.bibleproject.com/bible-studies](http://www.bibleproject.com/bible-studies) – book studies/thematic studies on-line.

*Enter the Bible* – [www.enterthebible.org](http://www.enterthebible.org) – more information below.

*The Gospel of Matthew: Life in the Way of God* - <https://faithlead.org/academy> - Video course from FAITH+LEAD at Luther Seminary. Preview available by creating a log-in.

*The Bible for Normal People* - <https://thebiblefornormalpeople.com/>

### Video/DVD/Study Guides

Adam Hamilton – *Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts and Outlaws* - **NEW**

Other Adam Hamilton studies – *Making Sense of the Bible; The Lord's Prayer* (and many more faith studies).

Matthew Skinner – *Acts: Catching Up with the Spirit* (see above)

Amy Jill-Levine studies – *Short Stories by Jesus* (and more). Preview on YouTube – **NEW** to Incarnation resources

Josh Scott – *Bible Studies for Grown-Ups: Reading Scripture with New Eyes* - **NEW**

Matt Rawle – *Jesus Revealed* (I Am Statements) – **NEW** to Incarnation resources

## **Book Study**

*What is the Bible?* – Rob Bell – Book/discussion questions

## **Practicing Your Faith or Faith Practices**

*An Altar in the World* – Barbara Brown Taylor – discussion questions available

*Renew Your Life* – Pastor Kai Nilsen – study guide available

*Liturgy of the Ordinary* – Tish Harrison Warren

*Abide* – Randy Frazee and Phil Collins – **NEW** to Incarnation resources

*Get Your Life Back / Resilient* – John Eldredge – **NEW** to Incarnation resources

## **Care for One Another**

*Alongside* – How to walk with others in difficult times – Sarah Beckman – video/questions

– [www.sarahbeckman.org/alongside-book/](http://www.sarahbeckman.org/alongside-book/)

*Caring for One Another* – Incarnation series – Go to:

<https://www.incarnationmn.org/ministries/small-groups/faith-studies-for-small-groups/>

*No Cure for Being Human* – Kate Bowler – book/discussion questions

## **Grace**

*What's So Amazing About Grace* – This Philip Yancey classic has changed lives – now newly filmed and updated. <https://philipyancey.com/books/whats-so-amazing-about-grace>

## **Justice**

*Dear White Peacemakers* – Oshetta Moore – book/study guide

*Dialogues: On Race* – Sparkhouse – DVD/study guide

See also *Dr. Jacqui Lewis* resources below

## **Other Faith Traditions** (recommended by other leaders)

*Holy Envy* – Barbara Brown Taylor – book/discussion questions

*Christianity and World Religions* – Adam Hamilton – DVD/study guide

## **Women**

*12 Tiny Things* – Local writers, Ellie Roscher and Heidi Barr, explore 12 essential areas of life where small, doable changes can make a big difference in growth and renewal;

Book/study guide for faith settings; <https://12tinythings.com/>

*I Guess I Haven't Learned That Yet* – Shauna Niequist – DVD and study guide.

*Talk with Denise* for other ideas and studies available at Incarnation

## **Podcasts – Blogs – Articles – Books**

*Church Anew* – Genesis study; Blog articles for discussion – A ministry of St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church in Eden Prairie; [www.churchanew.org](http://www.churchanew.org)

*Enter the Bible* – Blog, podcasts, courses from Luther Seminary; Free faith studies; May need to create your own questions; [www.enterthebible.org](http://www.enterthebible.org)

*Living Lutheran* – Website for this monthly publication includes articles and study guides at <https://www.livinglutheran.org/category/spiritual-practices-and-resources/>

*Fierce Love (book) and podcasts* – Dr. Jacqui Lewis – <https://jacquilewis.com/>

## **Window Shopping**

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If you like “window shopping” check out these websites where you might find a unique fit for your small group:

### **The Ministry Lab**

<https://theministrylab.org/faith-formation/> AND

<https://unitedseminary.libguides.com/ml/faithformation/adults>

### **Publisher Websites**

Cokesbury – [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com)

Sparkhouse – [www.wearesparkhouse.org](http://www.wearesparkhouse.org)

The Upper Room – [www.upperroom.org](http://www.upperroom.org) (go to “shop”)

Fortress Press - <https://www.fortresspress.com/store/category/287006/Ministry>

Zondervan – [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com)

## Things to Know...

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### Previews

- Most resources can be previewed directly on the publisher's website or on YouTube.
- Samples of selected resources are available in Adult B or contact Denise.
- Most Incarnation resources are available on the website or through a link to view and print.

### Locations

- Groups can be scheduled on-site, by Zoom or as a hybrid, depending on availability. Plan ahead and schedule your group to be sure there is staff to open the building.
- Think about where your group prefers to meet and how to be flexible and adapt, if needed. This might make a difference in the resource you select.

### Orders

- Incarnation will order leader resources and asks group members to order their own copies of books/study guides. Please allow 2-3 weeks before the time that you need a resource to prepare for the group, when ordering through Incarnation.
- If your group is struggling with a resource, consider making a change mid-season.

### Links for *Questions God Asks*

*Incarnation faith study outline* – contact Denise at [dfloe@incarnationmn.org](mailto:dfloe@incarnationmn.org)

*Questions God Asks Us* by Trevor Hudson, Upper Room Books

<https://www.cokesbury.com/Questions-God-Asks-Us?refq=questions%20god%20asks%20us>

<https://upperroombooks.com/?s=questions+god+asks+us>

*Brentwood Hills Church, Pastor Josh Allen*

Questions, video, written reflection – Note: discussion questions also in the Incarnation guide. We have permission to use this resource.

<https://brentwoodhills.org/event-items/questions-god-asks-us/>

*e-Learning Course* with Trevor Hudson, Upper Room Books

Videos with Trevor Hudson, e-book, guided meditations

Ask Denise for instructions on how to preview

***Thank you for creating sacred space to connect with God and one another!***