



Discussion Guide Stories Worth Sharing – Part 1 LEADER GUIDE

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Hey leaders! This week we began our new summer series, "Stories Worth Sharing"! We're excited to help our church see the character of Jesus, see ourselves in these stories, and see that we all have impactful stories to share. Just like we'll hear the Gospel in these stories, people can hear the Gospel through our stories!

**NOTE* Due to the shorter passages used in this week's sermon, most of the questions are based on quotes and/or ideas from the sermon. Please feel free to spend more time on each question this week and/or choose which ones seem to fit your group best!*

Thank you for shepherding a group of people to Love God, Love Others, and Live Sent!

*NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc*

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"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God."

[Corrie Ten Boom]

LEADER RESOURCES || Leader Note *We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!*

- **Passage Summary**
 - Luke is writing to Theophilus to give him certainty about the narrative or story of events surrounding Jesus. Luke's intention and hope in writing are for him to live with confidence as part of this story. Acts 1:1-3 tells us that this is just the beginning!
- **Read the Bible As a Story**
 - Use the short article for background and encouragement. This would be a good resource to share with your group before you gather.
- **No Such Thing As Chance**
 - This would be a good resource to share with your group after you gather.

ICEBREAKER || Leader Note *The goal for the icebreaker is to build joy and gratitude together.*

Share about a time when someone invited you to be part of something (i.e. team, group, event). What impact did that have on you?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || Leader Note *Begin your time together by thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, beginning in a posture of humility and dependence!*

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

*"We wait for the Lord; he is our help and shield.
For our hearts rejoice in him because we trust in his holy name.
May your faithful love rest on us, Lord, for we put our hope in you."*

[Psalm 33:20-22]

BIG IDEA || Leader Note Read this aloud so your group knows what the theme of today's discussion is.

God is the author of a better story and invites us to JOIN His story with confidence and hope.

PASSAGES || Leader Note Have someone read the passages aloud slowly. Consider having another person read them aloud again (possibly in a different translation) or use [Dwell](#) to listen to it read aloud.

- Luke 1:1-4
- Acts 1:1-3

DISCUSSION || Leader Note Your role is to FACILITATE the conversation, so keep your group moving and encourage multiple people to share, looking for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two REMINDERS: 1) Every question does NOT have to be answered ... there is freedom to go where the Spirit leads! 2) The answers do NOT have to be read aloud ... they are simply there for guidance!

1. Describe the first time in your life that you clearly remember hearing the invitation to be part of God's better story? How did you respond to that invitation? How was your life different afterwards (or not)? *This is a good opportunity for you to go first!*
2. *"God Himself is authoring (telling) a story."* How have you participated in God's story over the past year? What may have prevented you from fully participating in His story for your life?
3. *"We choose the story we tell ourselves."* Just like Theophilus, we all tell ourselves a story, yet we need to be aware of some things that might affect that story. How have you seen the following things affect the story you have told yourself about God, others, and yourself?
 - The story the **world** offers us.
 - The story our **fears** suggest to us.
 - The story our **pleasures** offer us.
 - The story our **past** gives us.
4. *"God offers us an invitation: join His better story as it unfolds."* As you consider the stories the things above have offered you, how does God's BETTER story combat those? In other words, how does what God offers us lead to the fullness of life compared to those "false" stories?
5. *"We have a new point of reference: Jesus The story includes us but is not primarily about us."* What emotions rise to the surface when you ponder that God has chosen you to be part of His story? How might he be inviting you to respond to that emotion?
6. *"Surrender leads to significance, and the better story invites surrender to Jesus, full of love, truth, grace, power, and authority!"* What area of life needs to be surrendered to Jesus today? How can his love, truth, grace, power, and authority affect the areas of your life that need to be healed?
7. *"We must learn to reframe our story into His better story."* What is your "everyday, on the ground" understanding of God's involvement in your life? (Unexpected, unwelcomed, unplanned? Surprises, blessings, coincidences?) How could reframing your story into His better story transform your life so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God?
8. Let's be honest and vulnerable with one another. Which of these lists do you typically identify with? Which do you want to identify with?
 - LESSER Story= victim, controlling, hopeless, bitter, blaming
 - BETTER Story= participant, submitted, hopeful, better, trusting

STEP OF OBEDIENCE || Leader Note *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

The good news of God's better story is that EVERY day is an opportunity to begin (again)! In fact, Lamentations 3:22-23 tells us, "Because of the Lord's faithful love we do not perish, for his mercies never end. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness!"

Remember ... our next steps come from the story we most believe and most tell ourselves. Based on the Holy Spirit's prompting today, **what is a step of obedience that you can take?**

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question.

PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note *We want to commit to praying for OTHERS as a unified church who is dependent upon God for everything. Be intentional about saving at least 5 minutes for prayer at the end of your gathering each week to pray together. You can pray for one another as well as the prompt below!*

Simply read this prayer aloud together as you close your time. Allow for about 30 seconds of silence afterwards and then end with a short, simple prayer of thanksgiving.

Welcome, welcome, welcome.

We welcome everything that comes to us today because we know it's for our healing.

We welcome all thoughts, feelings, emotions, persons, situations, and conditions.

We let go of our desire for power and control.

We let go of our desire for affection, esteem, approval, and pleasure.

We let go of our desire for survival and security.

We let go of our desire to change any situation, condition, person, or ourselves.

We are open to the love and presence of God and God's action within. Amen

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE *Optional* *We include a monthly spiritual practice that can be shared with your group after you gather. Our hope is for this to enhance what we're learning and discussing together, so share about your experience with the practice at the beginning of your gatherings or throughout the week!*

Welcoming Prayer is an invitation to welcome everything, knowing that everything that happens to us is something we can learn and grow from. It also helps us consent to God's presence and action in our physical and emotional reactions to anything that happens to us and around us. Give it a try!

- [Welcoming Prayer](https://rockbridge.cc/welcoming-prayer) or rockbridge.cc/welcoming-prayer