



MODULE 4 | **The Real Jesus**
Leader's Guide

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Course Overview

What is Ripple Effect?

Ripple Effect is a Christian discipleship course for evangelism. Ripple Effect is an accessible and comprehensive course that will help you:

- Better understand the good news about Jesus yourself.
- Love family and friends who don't know Jesus by entrusting them to God in prayer.
- Develop skills in talking about Jesus.
- Learn how to live a life always 'on mission' and ready to serve God.
- Encourage each other to trust God as you hear about and pray for His work in and through each other.

Who is Ripple Effect for?

This course is for you whether you want to dive into evangelism or just dip your toe in the water. Expect God to create ripples that impact others in ways you never would have imagined.

Depending where you are on your Christian journey, you should begin with Module 1 and/or 2 to establish Gospel themes and learn frameworks used in later modules.

Why does Ripple Effect work?

The course is built around small groups of people meeting weekly to engage with the brief session video and the session guide. These weekly meetings are where discipleship happens and their regularity is crucial to the momentum of Ripple Effect. In each session, the group will:

SHARE

Share stories of evangelistic opportunities since the last session to encourage and seek wisdom from others in the group. God is always working.

PRAY

Praise God for His love, salvation, and the privilege of evangelism. Ask God to save our family and friends and use us to help them come to know and trust Jesus.

TRAIN

Improve confidence and competence in evangelism by learning, practising, and reviewing skills that enable us to speak about Jesus in a natural and unforced manner.

What does Ripple Effect cover?

The Ripple Effect course is made up of 6 modules. You will find the modules cohesive as they build on Gospel themes and frameworks. Each module contains 8 sessions.

MODULE 1 | Jesus & Me

Talking about Jesus and His impact on me

MODULE 2 | Jesus & Conversation

Talking about the Gospel in everyday conversations

MODULE 3 | Tricky Questions

Answering the questions people have about Jesus and Christianity

MODULE 4 | The Real Jesus (This Module)

Reading a Gospel with someone investigating Jesus

MODULE 5 | Walking with Jesus

Describing what it means to follow Jesus day-by-day

MODULE 6 | Jesus & Mission

Sharing the Gospel with everyone

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Module Overview

MODULE 4 | The Real Jesus

This module is designed to help you read Luke's Gospel with someone investigating Jesus and Christianity.

1. Why read Luke's Gospel?
2. Reading Luke's Gospel with three questions
3. Inviting people to read Luke's Gospel
4. Loving your neighbour
5. Which passages in Luke's Gospel?
6. How we are forgiven
7. Inviting people to follow Jesus
8. The costs and benefits of following Jesus

Each session includes these components:

1. **INTRODUCTION.** Each session starts with a short training video.
2. **SHARE.** Talk through evangelistic opportunities in the past week.
3. **PRAY.** Praise God for Jesus and His forgiveness. Ask God to save our family and friends and speak through us to them.
4. **TRAIN.** Learn to read Luke's Gospel with people investigating Jesus and Christianity.
5. **REVIEW.** Revisit session content at home to consolidate our learning.

Module 4 Goals

- Learn to read Luke's Gospel with someone who is investigating Jesus.
- Pray regularly for our family and friends who don't know Jesus yet.
- Develop a heart for evangelism by reflecting on Jesus' forgiveness.

Tips for Leading

Tips for leading will be in Blue italics in this Leader's Guide. There will be suggestions about group dynamics, possible trajectories for answers and ideas about how you could particularise the session for your group.

General tips for effective Ripple Effect sessions

1. *Remember that Ripple Effect is about peer-to-peer encouragement. The leader doesn't need to be an expert at evangelism. You just need to prayerfully trust God and share honestly – just like in evangelism.*
2. *This Leader's Guide is useful for preparation but try not to use it in your Ripple Effect session. Having prepared well, trust God to give you the words you need when you need them – just like in evangelism.*
3. *Set clear group expectations. For example,*
 - *Listening to and not interrupting others when they are speaking.*
 - *Maintaining privacy.*
 - *If there is disagreement, expressing it gently and respectfully with the aim of building each other up in the Lord.*
 - *Keeping to the agreed start and finish time.*
 - *Notifying the group if you are unable to attend a session, etc.*
4. *Lock in a regular meeting time and place and commit to it.*
5. *As you move through the material, you'll get an idea of where your group should spend more time or less time. Each of the Share Pray, and Train sections are important. Try not to always cut the same one short if you feel pressed for time.*
6. *Avoid running overtime because it discourages people from attending. It's okay not to cover all the session material every week.*

Session 1

Why read Luke's Gospel?

Each session begins with a box containing the key idea, encouragement, challenge, and goals of the session. It will help you keep the group on track.

Key idea: Luke records eye-witness accounts of Jesus so that people might know Jesus and the forgiveness He brings, and that they might choose to follow Him.

Key encouragement: Trust God to speak about Jesus, through His word, as you invite people to read Luke's Gospel with you.

Practical challenge: Pray regularly for people to become Christian.

Session goals:

- Orientation to Ripple Effect 4.
- Consider who you could ask to read Luke with you and pray for them.
- Discuss reasons to read Luke with someone investigating Jesus.
- Know that God speaks through His word and Spirit about Jesus.

Session Introduction

Watch the Ripple Effect Module 4 introduction video.

In this Ripple Effect Module (RE4 – The Real Jesus) you will learn how to read Luke's Gospel with someone who is not yet a Christian. Why read Luke's Gospel with someone investigating Jesus? Because in the pages of Luke's biography of Jesus they will meet the 'real Jesus' and be able to make an informed decision about whether to trust and follow Him.

Share

If there are more than four people in your group, consider dividing into smaller groups for this part of the session so that everyone has a chance to share. You might keep the same groups for the entire module, or you could mix up the groups each session. Do whatever seems best for your group.

This is our first session so we'll spend time getting to know each other. Since we are learning to invite people to read Luke's Gospel with us, we'll share our favourite Gospel story with each other.

- Introduce yourself to the group.
- Why are you participating in RE4?

- What is your favourite story about Jesus or told by Jesus? Why is it your favourite?

Listen carefully to people's answers. It will help you understand what they want from this module and any apprehension they have about reading the Bible with someone.

As the leader, you can set the tone for the group by being honest and vulnerable when you share.

Encourage people to stick to a couple of minutes of sharing each. It will be too much time for some people and not enough for others. We'll be sharing at the start of each RE4 session so there will be plenty of opportunity to get to know each other in future sessions.

Time constraints reflect the reality of evangelism. We often find ourselves with limited time, and unfinished conversations that we want to pick up again later. Embrace the 'feeling' of evangelism in RE4 sessions so that your group grows comfortable with it.

Setting group expectations.

- How can we make our group a safe and comfortable place to Share, Pray and Train together?

Set clear group expectations so that participants know what to expect when they come. It helps make the group a safe space to learn. These will often be the same principles that facilitate good evangelistic conversations and relationships.

Look at paragraph 3 in 'Tips for Leading' on Page 4 for ideas.

Many of these group expectations will also be important when reading Luke's Gospel with someone investigating Jesus.

Pray.

The group leader prays for God to be at work as we meet for the next eight sessions.

Train

The Leader's Guide contains ideas for possible answers and trajectories. They are indicative not exhaustive, and you don't need to cover every point.

Encourage people to connect their responses to the Bible story that we read. When we read Luke's Gospel with someone investigating Jesus, we can't expect them to have broader knowledge of the Bible than what we have just read with them.

Watch the introduction video for Session 1.

In his introduction and conclusion, Luke tells us what to expect from his biography of Jesus.

1. Read Luke 1:1-4. Why did Luke write this book?

- *So that readers can learn the truth about Jesus from people who were eyewitnesses of Jesus.*

2. Read Luke 24:13-35.**a. 'What things' (v19) had Cleopas and his friend learnt or heard about Jesus?**

- *Jesus was a prophet who did and said amazing things. People hoped that Jesus was the one who would redeem (free) Israel as promised in the Old Testament. Jesus was killed by the Jewish authorities but three days later His tomb was empty. Angels said that He was alive.*

b. How did Cleopas and his friend recognise that they were speaking to Jesus?

- *Jesus did and said familiar things. He explained the Scriptures to them in a way that caused their hearts to burn within them, and He broke bread with them as He had done many times before. Their eyes were opened — a work of the Spirit.*
- *Their experience was confirmed when they returned to Jerusalem and heard that others also had seen Jesus alive.*

3. What encouragement do these passages give us to read Luke's Gospel with someone investigating Jesus?

- *These are real events in the real world. They are historically grounded and reliable. Luke was not an eyewitness but he cared about truth so he investigated eyewitness accounts.*
- *God has always worked through His word and Spirit to help people see the truth about Jesus. That was even true for the apostles and first Christians.*
- *Conversion is God's work, not our work. He is the one who opens people's eyes to see Jesus and stirs their hearts to love Jesus.*

4. What additional reasons to read Luke's Gospel can you think of that would encourage someone to read it? Be creative.

- *The influence of Jesus and the Bible on Western culture, art, literature, values, etc.*
- *Have an informed opinion from the source documents.*
- *The themes in Luke's Gospel still resonate powerfully today – love, hope, joy, suffering, betrayal, evil, transformation, forgiveness, etc.*
- *Jesus has changed my life for the better and I think that knowing Him could change yours too.*

5. Who would you like to invite to read Luke with you?

a. Why them?

(As you share, please remember to respect people's privacy.)

- *As a group, decide how much information about your family and friends to share with each other. Will you use their full names or just an initial? Consider how much detail about a conversation or their life circumstances to share. What you share may depend on how many people are in your RE4 group or whether your RE4 group know or might meet your family and friends.*

b. How do you feel about inviting this person? What are you excited or hesitant about?

Jesus is still a recognisable name today. Millions of people love and follow Him. People die for Him. Whether or not people believe in Him, they feel the influence of His life and teaching in many cultural values and institutions. The themes Luke addresses — love, hope, joy, suffering, betrayal, evil, transformation, forgiveness (just to name a few!) — still resonate with us today. There are all sorts of reasons for someone to read Luke's Gospel.

We invite people to read Luke's Gospel so that they can see Jesus through the eyes of people who knew Him. As they read Luke, we pray that God will open their eyes to see and stir their hearts to love Jesus, just as God has graciously done for us.

Pray

Aim for some things to thank God for and to ask God for.

Sound out how comfortable people are with praying out loud in a group. If people are nervous about this, suggest they write down a sentence or two and read it out during the prayer time. Work out a way to make it a safe space for even the nervous to pray out loud. Prayer is a key part of RE4.

What thanksgiving and prayer points flow out of:

- our Luke passages?
- our time of sharing?

Some members of the group may feel more comfortable praying out loud than others. Please remember that a one-sentence prayer written down and read out is just as authentic as a five-minute prayer prayed spontaneously.

Review

Discuss why revising session content between sessions is important and how much time people should spend on it. Approximately 60 minutes? Revision activities are designed to consolidate learning and to keep evangelism on our agenda throughout the week.

Read through the activities so that if people have any questions they can ask them.

After each session there will be review activities to complete at home. They are designed to consolidate learning and to keep evangelism on our agenda throughout the week.

- Complete the Relationship Network Worksheet attached to this session.
- Start reading Luke's Gospel. Each week we'll read through a section of Luke's Gospel so that by the end of the module we have read the whole book.

This week, read Luke 1:1-4:13 in one sitting. In these passages Luke tells us about Jesus' birth and His life before He began His public ministry. After you have read it, answer the following questions about:

- Jesus:** What do we learn about Jesus?
 - People around Jesus:** How did Jesus impact the lives of those around Him?
 - Me:** What particularly stood out for me in this story?
- Connect with other group members during the week. Share with each other your response to the Me question. When someone else shares, spend a few minutes praying for them.

Set up a group chat on a messaging app so that you can communicate prayer points and encouragements to each other during the week. If social media is not a helpful tool for your

group, then find another way to encourage each other between sessions.

Initiate conversation between sessions by sharing your own responses to the Me question. Do this early in the week so that it also acts as a reminder to others to look at the Review activities. If anyone else shares, make sure you pray for them and respond to them.

We are discussing the Me question because people tend to find it easier to talk about Jesus if they are learning and growing in their own relationship with Jesus.

After Session Reflection

- *How comfortable are people sharing and praying?*
- *How competent are people at reading the Bible?*
- *What went smoothly and what do I need to rethink?*
- *Did we miss anything important?*
- *What can I do or change to make the sessions run more smoothly?*

Don't panic if things feel clunky at the start. People will get to know each other and grow to understand how to use the material.

As you move through the material, you'll get an idea of where your group should spend more time or less time. Each of the Share, Pray, Train sections are important. Be careful not to always cut the same one short if you are under time pressures.

You'll also work out which person speaks first or longest or most authoritatively, etc. As you learn more about the people in your group, consider the best way to handle group dynamics so that everyone is encouraged to share.

Avoid running overtime because it discourages people from attending. Set a timer for various sections if you need to and don't feel the need to cover all the material every session.

Pray for yourself and the people in your group.

Relationship Network Worksheet

Unless we pause and reflect, we may not realise the opportunities that God has given us to proclaim the Gospel to others.

Use the following diagram to:

- identify the different relationship networks in your life.
- list the names of people who aren't Christian that you know in your network.

As you look at your relationship network, ask yourself 'Is my list broad enough?'

Here are some ideas to broaden your list:

- someone who catches the train at the same time you do.
- an old school friend you saw at a wedding.
- someone who walks the dog at the same park.
- a 'blast from the past' whose name appeared in your Facebook feed.
- a person at the gym.

As you look at your relationship network:

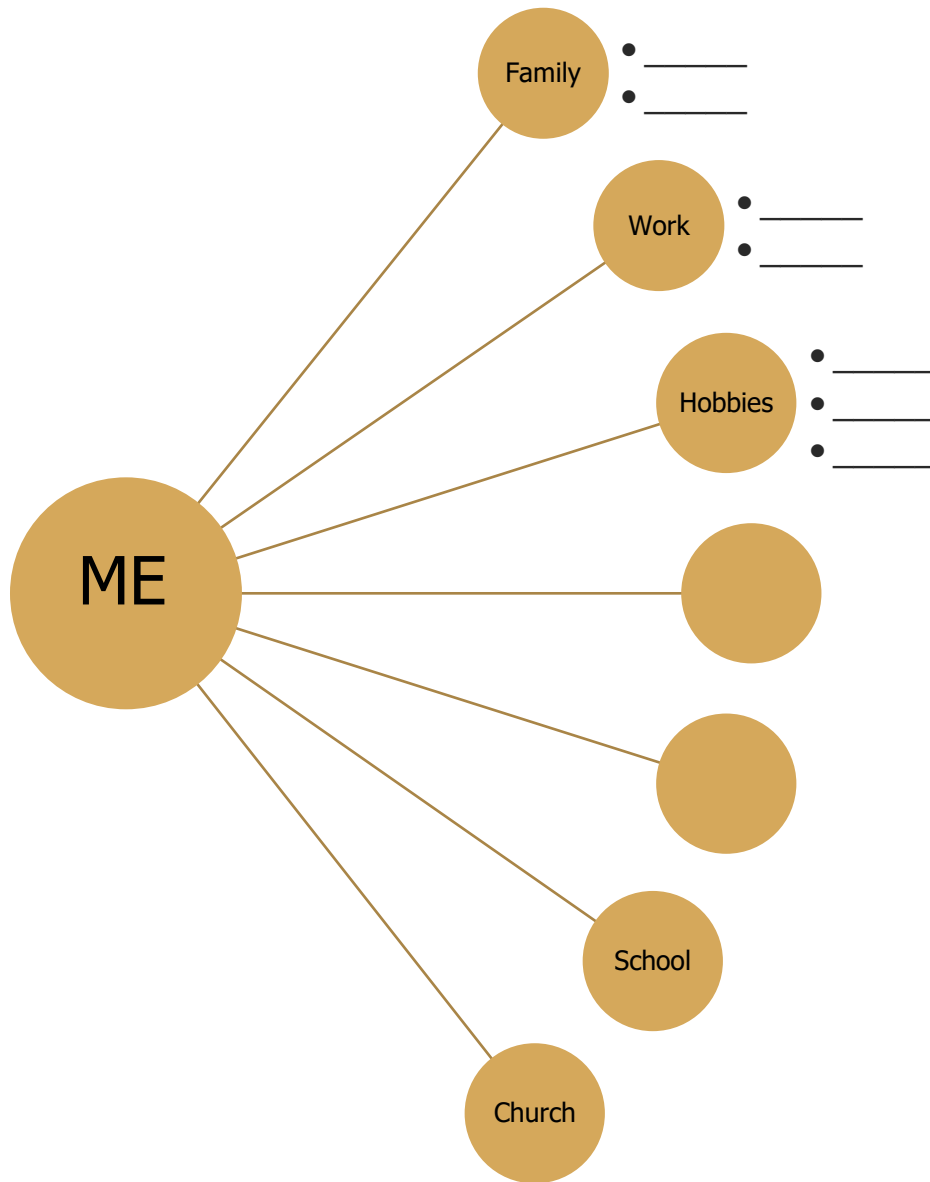
- underline the names of people you see regularly, even if you don't know them very well yet.
- circle the names of people you expect to see next week.

Choose 5 of the people you see or speak with regularly to pray for throughout RE4.

- Include the person you shared about in Session 1.
- These are the people we will be seeking to invite to read Luke's Gospel with us.

Reflect on and pray over these questions:

1. How might their lives be better if they knew Jesus?
2. Where and when do you see them?
3. What do you talk about?
4. How can you be more intentional in the way you share Jesus and your life with them?



Session 2

Reading Luke's Gospel with three questions

Key idea: As we read Luke's Gospel, we will focus on Jesus and how people responded to Him.

Key encouragement: You don't need to be an expert Bible teacher to read Luke's Gospel with others.

Practical challenge: Familiarise yourself with three questions that will help us read Luke's Gospel well.

Session goals:

- Learn to use three questions to read Luke's Gospel with someone investigating Jesus: Jesus. People. Me.
- Gain confidence that Jesus is willing and able to meet our needs, the most important of which is our need for forgiveness.
- Pray for each other and each other's friends.

Session Introduction

Watch the introduction video for Session 2.

In each session we will read one passage in Luke's Gospel and discuss it using three questions. The stories we've chosen draw attention to Jesus' offer of forgiveness. By the end of the module, we'll have eight passages ready to read with a person investigating Jesus.

Share

From the Relationship Network Worksheet, share about two more of the five people you hope to invite to read Luke's Gospel with you.

- Share a little bit about your relationship with them and the conversations, if any, that you have had about Jesus and Christianity.

What do they think about Jesus and Christians? What are their opinions based on? People's opinions about Jesus might be different from their opinions about Christians and the church.

Start where your group members are at and encourage them to take a small step forward. If they need to make friends with people who aren't Christian—then pray for that. If they need an

opportunity or courage to tell someone that they are Christian—then pray for that, etc.

Pray

The first few chapters of Luke are filled with people singing with joy about the birth of Jesus. Zechariah sings of his son John's privileged role in pointing people to Jesus.

you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,
to give his people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
because of the tender mercy of our God

Luke 1:76-78 (NIV)

- Thank God for Jesus and the mercy and forgiveness He offers to all who trust Him.
- Pray for your family and friends. Ask God to help them receive and rejoice in Jesus' offer of mercy and forgiveness.
- Ask God to use us in this process, in any way He chooses, including by inviting them to read Luke's Gospel with us.

Train

Skill: Three questions

Our three questions are about Jesus, the people who encountered Him, and how Jesus relates to us 2,000 years later. They can be used for discussing almost any passage in any Gospel. The questions, in their most general form, are:

Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus in this story?

People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?

Me: What is my response to Jesus and this story?

These questions keep us focused on Jesus and how He affected the people around Him. They start with the primary historical documents about Jesus, not secondary or personal opinions. They challenge us to consider the relevance of Jesus to us personally today.

Luke's Gospel

In Luke 4-9 we meet all sorts of people with all sorts of needs coming to Jesus for help. We will read one of their stories today.

1. Read Luke 5:17-31 and discuss the three questions:

a. Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus in this story?

- *What does He say and do? Why?*
- *How does He treat people?*
- *What do we learn about His relationship with God?*
- *What does Jesus want people to understand about Himself, themselves and God.*

b. People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?

- *What are we told about them and why might this matter?*
- *What do people think about Jesus? Why?*
- *What do they want from Jesus? Why?*

c. Me: What is my response to Jesus and this story?

- *What stood out for me?*
- *Who am I most like?*
- *What questions do I have about Jesus and this story?*
- *Do I agree with Jesus?*

Under each of the three questions are expansion questions. You can find more examples in the document attached to this session. These expansion questions help discussion keep moving and stay focused on Jesus. Over time you'll discover which ones work best for you and your group.

We do not need to discuss every detail of the passage, either in RE4 sessions or when we are reading Luke with someone investigating Jesus.

2. Review your discussion.

This section is designed to help group members 'notice' how the discussion evolved and where it got stuck or distracted.

When you are leading, it is easy to be intimidated by this process. Remember that RE4 is about ordinary Christians prayerfully trusting God to use us as we read Luke's Gospel with others. It is not about running the 'perfect' Bible study. If you model being relaxed about this process, including the things you would do differently if you had your time again, you'll help your group members be more relaxed when they are reading Luke's Gospel with someone investigating Jesus.

In each session we will review our discussion so that we notice how it evolved and what questions or comments moved it forward or deeper. We might also notice questions and comments which distracted us or took attention away from Jesus. Noticing these things will help us become better skilled at reading Luke's Gospel with others.

- a. **Think back to each of the three questions: Jesus. People. Me. What comments or additional questions helped keep discussion focused on Jesus, moving forward and going deeper?**
- b. **What does this story teach us about forgiveness?**
- *Jesus thinks forgiveness is our greatest need, even if it is not our only need.*
 - *Jesus is willing and able to forgive.*
 - *Jesus has authority to forgive because He is God.*
- c. **What aspects of the story would you like to have discussed, or to have discussed more fully, if you had your time again?**

We can't discuss every question every time and we are always making decisions about what to leave out or what to return to later. It's the same with evangelism.

Attached to today's session is a resource titled **Expansion Questions**. These questions can help keep discussion flowing and help people think more deeply about the passage. Which and how many of these we use depends on the passage, people's reading comprehension, their familiarity with Jesus and the Bible, whether they are an internal or external processor, how much time you have, etc. We're aiming for our discussion to feel more like a peer-to-peer conversation than a teacher-student conversation.

- 3. Pray. Thank God that Jesus is willing and able to forgive us. Ask God to help our family and friends see their need for forgiveness too.**

You could do this all together, or break up into pairs, or ask one person to pray for the group.

RE4 is about ordinary Christians prayerfully trusting God to use us as we read Luke's Gospel with others. It is not about running the 'perfect' Bible study. If God has given us an opportunity to read Luke's Gospel with someone, then it's been a good day, even if it didn't go exactly the way we hoped it would.

Review

Read Luke 4:14-7:35 in one sitting. In these chapters we hear Jesus' teaching and see some of His miracles. Both give us glimpses of what life is like in God's kingdom. After you have read these chapters answer the three questions.

- **Jesus:** What do we learn about Jesus?

- **People:** What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?
- **Me:** What is my response to Jesus and these stories?

Read the Expansion Questions attachment.

- For each of the three questions, choose one expansion question that you find interesting. Use it to add to your answers above.

Connect with other group members during the week.

- Share with each other your response to the Me question. When someone else shares, spend a few minutes praying for them.

After Session Reflection

- *How comfortable are people sharing and praying?*
- *How competent are people at reading the Bible?*
- *What went smoothly and what do I need to rethink?*
- *Did we miss anything important?*
- *What can I do or change to make the sessions run more smoothly?*

Again, set the tone by posting to the group chat earlier rather than later in the week.

Pray for yourself, your group, and the people they are praying for.

Expansion Questions

RE4 uses three questions to structure discussion on Luke's Gospel. They focus on Jesus and how He affected the people around Him. The last question encourages us to see how Jesus could affect us. For some people and groups these questions by themselves will be enough for fruitful discussion. Other people or groups might need more prompting. That's where expansion questions come in.

Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus in this story?

- What does Jesus say and do? Why does He say and do these things?
- Who does Jesus think He is? What evidence does He offer?
- What do we learn about Jesus' character and motives?
- What do we learn about Jesus' relationship with God? His relationship with people?
- What does Jesus want people to understand about Himself, themselves, God, and their world?

People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?

- Who are the people in the story? (Don't forget the crowd who watch and assess Jesus but have not committed to following Him.)
- What do they say and do? Why?
- What do they think and feel about Jesus? Why?
- What are we told about them and why might this be important?
- What do we learn about their circumstances, character, values and motives?
- What is their relationship with God like? With Jesus? With other people?

Me: What is my response to Jesus and this story?

- What stood out for me in this story?
- Who do I connect with in the story? Who am I most like or least like? Why?
- What questions do I have about Jesus and this story?
- How do I feel about this story?
- What do I think about Jesus? Do I agree with Jesus? Why?
- What does this tell me about trusting and following Jesus?

When preparing to read Luke's Gospel with someone it can be helpful to think through the Me question not only from your own perspective but also from their perspective. This helps you to love them well as you seek to view life from their perspective and better understand their joys, fears, hopes and griefs. God-willing, it will give you an opportunity to share with them how knowing Jesus could meet their deepest needs.

Keep learning at
ripple-effect.net.au