



MODULE 3 | **The Real Jesus**

# Leader's Guide



## Session 5

# Which passages in Luke's Gospel?

**Key idea:** *Jesus' teaching on forgiveness is rich and nuanced. He also teaches on justice, judgement and repentance. Forgiveness is only one possible theme we could trace through Luke's Gospel.*

**Key encouragement:** *Jesus has an encouragement or challenge for everyone. If one story doesn't easily connect with someone, there will be another story that does.*

**Practical challenge:** *Think through which particular passage(s) you would like to read with each of the five people you are praying for.*

**Session goals:**

- *Discuss different aspects of Jesus' teaching on forgiveness.*
- *Recognise that there are many different paths you could take through Luke's Gospel.*
- *Pray for each other and each other's friends.*

### Session Introduction

Watch the introduction video for Session 5.

We are taking a forgiveness-themed journey through Luke's Gospel. Jesus' teaching on forgiveness is rich and nuanced. He also teaches on justice, judgement and repentance. While everyone needs to hear all that Jesus says about forgiveness, people might start their journey in different places because of their life experiences and worldviews.

### Share

Choose one of the following to share about:

- Which passage from Luke 11-14 did you choose for an in-depth read? Why did you choose this one?
- Share stories of evangelistic opportunities God gave you this week. These might be conversations you are grateful for or ones that didn't go as you hoped. They might be interesting conversations with potential or clear answers to our prayers.
- How did inviting someone to read Luke's Gospel with you go? Who will you see or speak with this week that you would also like to invite?

*The question about Luke 11-14 allows everyone to say something even if they feel like they have made no progress with evangelistic conversations or invitations to read Luke's Gospel.*

*If some group members are struggling to have conversations, encourage them to persevere in prayer. God's timeline might be longer than we imagine. God's Spirit might be working in ways we can't see yet. God might be working in someone other than the five people we chose to pray for.*

## **Pray**

As you read Luke's Gospel you discover that Jesus meets people where they are at and relates to them individually. He doesn't take a 'one size fits all' approach.

- | Thank God that Jesus knows us by name.
- | Ask God to help us know and love the people he has placed in our life.
- | Pray these things for yourself, each other and your friends.

## **Train**

### ***Luke's Gospel***

*This is where you hand over to the group member who is leading the discussion on Luke 18:1-14. Invite everyone in the group to make life easier for the facilitator by offering answers, asking questions, and helping the discussion move forward. Everyone is going to take a turn at this, so invite people to make it a positive experience for everyone.*

From this session forward, different people will be facilitating our discussion on Luke's Gospel. This will give each of us practice at doing it.

1. Read Luke 18:1-14 and discuss the three questions:
  - a. Jesus: What do we learn about Jesus in this story?
    - *What does Jesus say and who does he say it to?*
    - *What is the main point of each story?*
    - *What does Jesus promise?*
    - *How do the stories relate to each other? What do they have in common?*
  - b. People: What do we learn about the people who met Jesus?
    - *Who is Jesus speaking to? How do they relate to the characters in the stories Jesus tells?*

- *What does Jesus want people to recognise about God, themselves and life in this world?*
  - *What or who does he want them to hope and trust in?*
  - *How does he want them to relate to God and others?*
- c. Me: What is my response to Jesus and this story?
- *Which of the people or characters do I most relate to?*
  - *How do I feel about these stories?*
  - *What questions do I have with these stories?*
  - *Do I think justice is possible in this life?*
  - *How do I approach God?*

2. Review your discussion.

*Thank your group member for leading the discussion as you start the review section. Give them helpful encouragement and feedback in this section. We want all group members to have a positive experience at leading discussion so that they are willing to read Luke's Gospel with a non-Christian friend or family member.*

- 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. Did discussing a passage with multiple stories change the way the three questions operated? If so, how?
- *There may be another layer of expansion questions. eg*
    - *What is the main point of each story?*
    - *How do the stories relate to each other?*
    - *What do they have in common?*
- c. What does this passage add to our discussion about forgiveness?
- *Jesus doesn't just talk about forgiveness. He also recognises the importance of justice for those who have been wronged.*
  - *God promises justice for and mercy to everyone who trusts Jesus.*
  - *How can justice, mercy and forgiveness go together?*
- d. What aspects of the passage would you like to have discussed, or to have discussed more fully, if you had your time again?

***Skill: Which passages?***

Jesus' teaching on forgiveness and its related ideas is multifaceted, and the angle on forgiveness that he begins with when talking with a person seems to depend on a person's particular circumstances, values and/or griefs. While we all need all of Jesus' teaching on forgiveness, wisdom might lead us to begin conversation in one place rather than another.

1. Think of one of the five people you are praying for. Spend a few minutes considering which one of the following questions might be helpful for them to wrestle with as they investigate Jesus. Share with the group which question you chose and why.

Please note that these questions are often complex, nuanced and emotional. The answers below are brief and incomplete, and don't do anything more than suggest a possible trajectory for conversation. For further reading on the challenges of forgiveness read *Forgive: Why Should I and How Can I?* by Tim Keller.

- a. Do I really need forgiveness?

Yes. No one loves God and their neighbour with all their heart, soul, strength and mind. People enjoy God's gifts without honouring the God who gives them life. Luke 10:25-37, 12:13-21.

- b. Am I too bad to be forgiven?

No one is too bad for forgiveness. Jesus forgave anyone who was willing to receive it. Luke 7:36-50, 15:11-32.

- c. Does forgiveness mean that God doesn't care about justice?

The cross demonstrates God's justice and mercy. Sin is punished and forgiveness is offered. The risen Jesus will return and judge. He calls his followers to care for and protect vulnerable people while we wait for him to return. Luke 10:25-37, 18:15-17, 35-43.

- d. Is suffering evidence that God has not forgiven someone and is punishing them instead?

The relationship between sin, judgement and suffering is complex. Jesus recognises the existence of unjust suffering and warns his followers not to assume that if someone is suffering then it is their own fault. Luke 13:1-9, 18:1-8.

- e. Does receiving God's forgiveness really change anything?

When Jesus forgives people they are welcomed into God's family. This gives them the freedom of a genuinely new start. Luke 7:36-50, 19:1-10.

*Give people a few minutes to read through and choose the one that is most relevant for their friend.*

*It is possible that some people in the group are wrestling with these questions personally. If this is the case, suggest they read the passages during the week and share what they learnt next session.*

*Google Tim Keller's talks on forgiveness and send the link to them.*

2. Forgiveness is not the only theme we could trace through Luke's Gospel and other themes might be a better entry point towards Jesus for someone. Think of another of the five people you are praying for. Answer some of the following questions as you are able.

- a. What do they hope or long for?
- b. What do they value or fear?
- c. What misunderstandings about God, people, themselves or the world do they have?
- d. Given this, are there any passages in Luke's Gospel that you would like to ask God to give you an opportunity to share with them?

*Come with a worked example for one of your five people to show group members what this question is asking for.*

*Give people a few minutes to start thinking about these questions before they share.*

*Additional ways into this question if your group needs more help:*

- *What values does this person hold? Where do these come from?*
- *Are they confident in their own goodness, or burdened by failure, or concerned for justice?*
- *Are they anxious, fearful or lonely?*
- *Do they live for the moment and chase the next experience?*
- *Do they seek safety and identity in family, money, being a good person, or something else?*

- *Do they want to make the world a better place or reach their full potential?*
  - *What religious background do they come from?*
3. Pray. Thank God that Jesus recognises the complexity of our lives. Ask God to give us the sensitivity and wisdom we need to know which stories to share with our family and friends.

*For Session 6: Ask a group member to lead discussion on Luke 23:32-49 using the three questions. Ask them to spend 20 minutes preparing using the three questions and the Expansion Questions document attached to Session 2. Share the Leader's Guide for Session 6 with them so that they have access to the expansion question ideas for Luke 23:32-49.*

*Even though they are only leading Luke's Gospel Question 1, encourage them to read the whole session so that they see how the passage connects to the 'forgiveness' theme and the Skill.*

### **Revise**

Read Luke 15:1-19:27 in one sitting. Here Luke records many of Jesus' parables and teachings. Choose one passage from Luke 15:1-19:27 that you think might be relevant to one of the five people you are praying for. For this passage 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?

Answer the Me question from both your perspective and your friend or family member's perspective.

Invite another person to read Luke's Gospel with you.

- Look back at the Session 3 Skill: Questions 3-4. Choose another one of the five people you are praying for that you will either see or speak with this week and work through these questions.
- Pray for an opportunity. Plan for an opportunity. Take a deep breath and invite them to read Luke's Gospel with you.
- If asking someone to read Luke's Gospel with you feels like a bridge too far at the moment, consider asking a Christian friend to read a passage in Luke's Gospel with you to help you practice.



Connect with other group members during the week.

- Share with each other which passage you chose for an in-depth reading and why you chose it, or your plans to invite someone to read Luke with you, or how God has been answering our prayers.

### ***After Session Reflection***

- *Send encouraging feedback to the person who facilitated discussion this session.*
- *Follow-up any group members who were wrestling with the questions in Skill Question 1.*
- *Contact the person facilitating discussion on Luke 23:32-49 next session and check that they understand their role.*
- *Send them a copy of the Leader's Guide for Session 6 to help their preparation.*
- *Offer to chat through the passage and the three questions.*
- *Remind them to use the Expansion Questions document attached to Session 2.*
- *Pray with them.*



Keep learning at  
[ripple-effect.net.au](http://ripple-effect.net.au)