

 **highrock**  
CHURCH

# Kingdom LIFE

SERIES COMPANION



# INTRODUCTION

"New year, new you." But more often than not, we end the year feeling pretty similar. We want to change, we want to grow, but it's hard to break out of our old habits and patterns. So when we see how Jesus invites us to follow him in exciting, radical, fulfilling ways, we might be interested but also apprehensive. What if it doesn't "work"? What if we fall back into those same old ways of living? This winter, we are going to start the year on a different foot. As we continue exploring the Gospel of Luke, we'll put the teachings of Jesus into practice together, taking different steps each week so that we can replace those old habits with new ones. We hope you'll join us, not just to learn about life in Jesus' Kingdom, but to experience that life yourself!

## RESOURCE OVERVIEW

Here we provide space to take notes on the sermon and Scripture text and answer reflection questions that you can discuss with others. When considering the reflection questions, remember that the goal is not to have all the "right" answers—instead, let these questions serve as a starting point for curiosity in your conversation with God and others. See the Appendix of this guide for more resources and opportunities to engage with this study.

Please note this discussion guide is created before the series begins. Discussion questions are prepared before the sermons are written and based on the theme and text for the week. Thank you for your understanding that the topic and focus of the sermon as the pastor writes it may differ from what is written in the discussion questions.

## APPENDIX (PAGE 21)

Offers a deeper dive into the topic as well as resources for Bible study, leading small groups, and links for further support.

Works Cited & Links

Luke Bible Study Tools

"Icebreaker" Questions

Tips for Guiding Conversations

General Resources for Individual Support

## SERMON SCHEDULE & REQUIRED READING

*\*Subject to change at the discretion of the pastors.*

Along with the sermons and the questions in this guide, there will be weekly reading for participants to complete.

Book: ["Luke: the New Testament for Everyone,"](#) by N. T. Wright

Sermon	Topic	Assigned pages from N.T. Wright
Week 1	Luke 3:1-14	30-37
Week 2	Luke 4:14-30	45-49
Week 3	Luke 5:27-39	61-69
Week 4	Luke 6:17-26	69-72
Week 5	Luke 7:1-10	78-81
Week 6	Luke 8:41-48	102-105
Week 7	Luke 9:1-20	105-112

# WEEKLY FORMAT

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT:** Listen to the sermon, read weekly selections and scripture passages, and answer questions. (30-40 mins)

**SPIRITUAL PRACTICE:** New! Begin your gathering with a guided spiritual practice (20–35 mins)

**RELATE:** Discuss reflection questions with your small group. (20–35 mins)

**PRAY:** Use the suggested prayer prompt to conclude your time.

# CONVERSATION COVENANT

We hope all small group discussions are lively and enriching, but sometimes tough topics will be discussed. The Conversation Covenant\* is an agreement to hold respect and grace toward all participants within a small group, no matter the conversation. Please adhere to the Conversation Covenant or consider creating one that fits your context.

\*Adapted from <https://conversational-leadership.net/conversation-covenant/>

I pledge:

**To act in good faith, with curiosity.** *I will assume the best about my conversation partners when entering into our groups. I will give the benefit of the doubt, recognizing that they may know something I don't.*

**To show respect.** *I will show respect. I will be polite and give due regard to the feelings and traditions of others. I understand that I do not have to agree with someone to show them respect.*

**To speak the truth.** *I won't use rhetorical tricks to try to win an argument. I will speak what I genuinely believe is the nuanced truth.*

**To aim to discover the truth.** *I will not enter into a conversation with the purpose of changing the mind of anyone to my way of thinking.*

**To focus on what we can change.** *I will focus on what we can do differently in the future since we cannot change what we did in the past.*

**To take responsibility for the conversation.** *I will take responsibility for the quality of the conversation and the abidance of the rules both in principle and in spirit.*

**To follow the covenant even when others fail to do so.** *I will abide by the rules regardless of whether another person breaks them.*

**To respect the confidentiality of the group.** *I will not share the stories of group members verbally or in written form (including on social media and online outlets).*

**To lighten up and approach the conversation in good humor.** *I recognize that humor is a hallmark of a constructive, generative conversation and take the conversation in good humor.*



# PREPARE

The following questions are jumping-off points for personal reflection. Engage with them to awaken your awareness of themes in this sermon series. Pay attention to the questions that stand out to you and look back on them throughout the series to see how God might be speaking to you.

## CONSIDER

- How, if at all, has to engage with the Bible, particularly the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John) been part of your faith life? How has it shaped you and your relationship with God? List some of these things.
- What factors help you get the most out of reading and studying Scripture with others? Is there anything that makes it hard for you to read and study the Bible? Write down one or two of these reflections. What might enrich your experience with this sermon series on Luke?
- What questions do you have about the Gospels, perhaps, Luke's Gospel in particular, or the teachings of Jesus? If you used the previous Sermon Discussion Guide, how have your impressions of Jesus changed over the past few weeks? List them below.

# WEEK 1

## Luke 3:1–14

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had – curiosities, concerns, or delights.
- Read pages 30–37 in "[Luke: the New Testament for Everyone](#)," by N. T. Wright

**SPIRITUAL PRACTICE - PARAPHRASE** | Use this practice to open your small group time together. Leave 20-35 minutes for the practice. These are both very accessible practices. This guide will help you walk your group through the practice step by step.

**Introduction:** To remember is to keep something in mind. "Re" means again and "memor" is Latin for mindful. Recall and paraphrase are ways of remembering. In the scriptures, God teaches us, over and over again, to remember. Throughout the Old Testament, remembering shaped generations. This word is used more than 350 times in the Bible and twice as much in its various forms. Memory is often a funny thing! When we summarize or recall a story from memory, we sometimes inadvertently change details or forget something. Sometimes, we focus more on one aspect while pulling focus from another. It's also why re-reading stories is often so rewarding (especially if it's the Bible) because details we may have forgotten or never noticed can come to light. This week of your small group (and the next two) we will be putting this to the test to see what comes up! The invitations are to pay attention and be curious.

**Materials:** Pen and paper (for each person) and Bible

1. **Explain the Process:** The practice for this week is to read through Luke 3:1–14 twice (you can read the passage twice or invite two people to read) and then to paraphrase the text. To paraphrase is to write down a summary of the story in one to three sentences. We will read the passage twice at a moderate pace and then have several minutes of silence for each group member to write out their summary independently. The goal is not to have the "best" summary. The invitation is to be present and notice what stands out to you/what the story means to you.
2. **Pair & Share:** Lead with curiosity. Have group members turn to the person next to them and share their paraphrase. Invite them to notice what is similar and what is different. Contemplate these similarities and differences. Perhaps invite pairs to share back their observations with the entire group.
3. **Pray:** Close the practice by thanking God for revealing himself and asking for attentiveness to the Holy Spirit as you continue with your study.

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation or personal reflection:

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. John the Baptist issues a call for repentance or a change that aligns our ways with God's. Making changes can be hard. What's challenging about making changes for you? What do you find that helps?
3. Look at what John says in verses 11–14. What would you say is the heart of John's message here, and why do you think he asks his listeners to do these things prior to the arrival of Jesus?
4. Much of this story can be characterized by the word "expectation." What's something you hope God will do in your life? What's one thing you can do to prepare yourself for God to respond to your prayer (while being open to unexpected ways God may respond)?
5. Is there an invitation you sense God is making through your conversation or reflections this week? Is there a next step you could take in how you engage, act, or relate to others?

**PRAY** | Ask God to make you open and ready to hear God's voice. Confess ways where that might be difficult for you at this time, and ask God to strengthen you and help you in these things.

## Luke 3:1-14

1 It was now the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, the Roman emperor. Pontius Pilate was governor over Judea; Herod Antipas was ruler over Galilee; his brother Philip was ruler over Iturea and Traconitis; Lysanias was ruler over Abilene. 2 Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests. At this time a message from God came to John son of Zechariah, who was living in the wilderness. 3 Then John went from place to place on both sides of the Jordan River, preaching that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. 4 Isaiah had spoken of John when he said,

"He is a voice shouting in the wilderness,  
'Prepare the way for the LORD's coming!  
Clear the road for him!"

5 The valleys will be filled,  
and the mountains and hills made level.  
The curves will be straightened,  
and the rough places made smooth.

6 And then all people will see  
the salvation sent from God."

7 When the crowds came to John for baptism, he said, "You brood of snakes! Who warned you to flee the coming wrath? 8 Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.' That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. 9 Even now the ax of God's judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire."

10 The crowds asked, "What should we do?" 11 John replied, "If you have two shirts, give one to the poor. If you have food, share it with those who are hungry." 12 Even corrupt tax collectors came to be baptized and asked, "Teacher, what should we do?" 13 He replied, "Collect no more taxes than the government requires." 14 "What should we do?" asked some soldiers. John replied, "Don't extort money or make false accusations. And be content with your pay."

# WEEK 2

## Luke 4:14–30

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had- curiosities, concerns, or delights.
- Read pages 45–49 in "[Luke: the New Testament for Everyone](#)," by N. T. Wright

**SPIRITUAL PRACTICE - RECALL** | Use this practice to open your small group time together. Leave 20–35 minutes for the practice. These are both very accessible practices. This guide will help you walk your group through the practice step by step.

**Introduction:** To remember is to keep something in mind. "Re" means again and "memor" is Latin for mindful. Recall and paraphrase are ways of remembering. In the scriptures, God teaches us, over and over again, to remember. Throughout the Old Testament, remembering shaped generations. This word is used more than 350 times in the Bible and twice as much in its various forms. Memory is often a funny thing! When we summarize or recall a story from memory, we sometimes inadvertently change details or forget something. Sometimes, we focus more on one aspect while pulling focus from another. It's also why re-reading stories is often so rewarding (especially if it's the Bible) because details we may have forgotten or never noticed can come to light. This week of your small group (and the next one) we will be putting this to the test to see what comes up! The invitations are to pay attention and be curious.

**Materials:** Pen and paper (for each person) and Bible

1. **Explain the Process:** The practice for this week is similar to last week with a little twist. We will read through Luke 4:14–30 twice (you can read the passage twice or invite two people to read) and then have several minutes of silence to recall the text from memory. In other words, we will each rewrite this story with as much detail as we can remember, but only from memory. The goal is not to recall the passage perfectly! There is no right or wrong. The invitations are to be present and curious.
2. **Read the passage again:** As a group or individually, read the passage again. With curiosity, highlight or note on your paper what stood out to you and what you left out.
3. **Pair & Share:** Lead with curiosity. Have group members turn to the person next to them and share their rewritten stories. Invite them to notice what is similar and what is different. Ponder what stood out to each of you and what you left out. Perhaps invite pairs to share back their observations with the entire group.
4. **Pray:** Close the practice by thanking God for revealing himself and asking for attentiveness to the Holy Spirit as you continue with your study.

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation. Open with a check-in/getting-to-know-you question. Group opener options are available in the Appendix.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. Luke 4:18–19 is often described as Jesus' mission statement. What does it tell you about who Jesus is and the things Jesus cares about? How do they encourage or challenge you as a follower of Jesus?
3. Look back to Luke 4:1. How do you see the Spirit of God at work here (see Luke 4:18 also)? How do you think the Spirit helps Jesus in this story? How might the Spirit be present to you?
4. Jesus upsets the expectations of his listeners when he speaks about the breadth of his mission (to Jews *and* Gentiles [non-Jews] as well). Have you ever been not only comforted but challenged by God's grace and love? How did you respond? What could it look like for you to be more open to the surprising ways of a gracious God?



5. Is there an invitation you sense God making through your conversation or reflections this week? Is there a next step you could take in how you engage, act, or relate to others?

**PRAY** | Ask God to bring you comfort *and* transformation through the workings of God's grace.

## Luke 4:14–30

14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. 15 He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,  
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked. 23 Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself!' And you will tell me, 'Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'" 24 "Truly I tell you," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. 25 I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. 26 Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. 27 And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian."

28 All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. 29 They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. 30 But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

# WEEK 3

## Luke 5:27–39

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had- curiosities, concerns, or delights.
- Read pages 61–69 in "[Luke: the New Testament for Everyone](#)," by N. T. Wright

**SPIRITUAL PRACTICE - RECALL** | Use this practice to open your small group time together. Leave 20–35 minutes for the practice. These are both very accessible practices. This guide will help you walk your group through the practice step by step.

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2. **Read the passage again:** As a group or individually, read the passage again. With curiosity, highlight or note on your paper what stood out to you and what you left out.
3. **Pair & Share:** Lead with curiosity. Have group members turn to the person next to them and share their rewritten stories. Invite them to notice what is similar and what is different. Ponder what stood out to each of you and what you left out. Perhaps invite pairs to share back their observations with the entire group.
4. **Pray:** Close the practice by thanking God for revealing himself and asking for attentiveness to the Holy Spirit as you continue with your study.

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation. Open with a check-in/getting-to-know-you question. Group opener options are available in the Appendix.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. Levi's encounter with Jesus results in a celebration. What role does celebration play in your life, especially your faith and relationship with God?
3. We see Levi's hospitality to Jesus in this passage, but also resistance to Jesus from others. Who do you identify with in this passage? Reflecting on that, what might Jesus' call to new life (repentance) look like for you?
4. The parable of the wineskins speaks to (among many things) God doing something *new* in Jesus. Practice celebrating your faith this way: Share three things you're grateful for in life. Reflect on these as gifts from God.
5. While respecting confidentiality, who is someone in your life who might benefit from encouragement or being celebrated at this time? How might you help them know God values them?

6. Is there an invitation you sense God making through your conversation or reflections this week? Is there a next step you could take in how you engage, act, or relate to others?

**PRAY** | Pray that you and others in your group can more freely celebrate the goodness of God. Pray that God meets you and others in a way that brings hope, healing, and restoration.

## Luke 5:27–39

27 After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. “Follow me,” Jesus said to him, 28 and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

29 Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. 30 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

31 Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” 33 They said to him, “John’s disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking.” 34 Jesus answered, “Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? 35 But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast.”

36 He told them this parable: “No one tears a piece out of a new garment to patch an old one. Otherwise, they will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. 37 And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. 38 No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. 39 And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for they say, ‘The old is better.’”

# WEEK 4

## Luke 6:17–26

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had- curiosities, concerns, or delights.
- Read pages 69–72 in "[Luke: the New Testament for Everyone](#)," by N. T. Wright

**SPIRITUAL PRACTICE - LECTIO DIVINA** | Use this practice this week and the next to open your small group time together. Leave 20-35 minutes for the practice. This guide will help you walk your group through the practice step by step.

1. **Introduction:** Lectio divina is a way that we pray the scriptures. Lectio Divina was the central practice in the church for the first 1500 years of its existence. At that time, few people were literate and few Bibles were available. Lectio divina offered a way of paying attention to scripture with an ear for hearing a word from God that you could take with you for the week.
2. **Explain the Process:** For this practice, we will all keep our Bibles closed, except the person who is reading. We will read through the passage a total of three times. Each time I will give you a slightly different instruction. The goal is to listen with our hearts to the scripture and for a word from God.
3. **Moment of Silence:** Invite your group to take a moment of silence before you begin to open themselves to the loving presence of Jesus and to hearing a word from God.
4. **First Reading:** Hear the Word. Read (or ask someone to read) the passage slowly. Invite your group to simply let the passage wash over them.
5. **Second Reading:** Hear the word that is addressed to you. Read (or ask someone to read) the passage a second time. Listen for God's particular word for you in this moment in time. Let the word or phrase pick you. There is no right or wrong answer. Just the word or phrase that feels important today. Leave a moment of silence after the second reading. Invite participants to repeat their word or phrase in silence. Then give a moment for members to share their word and only their word. Gently direct folks to use this time to share only their word.
6. **Third Reading:** Consider "How is my life touched?": Read (or ask someone to read) the passage a third time. This time, invite people to listen for the meaning that the passage has for you at this moment.. This is less about theological meaning and more about how the scripture brushes up against their life. Allow for a moment of silence after the last reading.
7. **Share and Pray:** Invite group members to share in one or two sentences what they heard from God. There is something powerful about sharing what we heard with others. Close your time by thanking God for speaking to you and praying for empowerment to respond.

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation. Open with a check-in/getting-to-know-you question. Group opener questions are available in the Appendix.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. After reading and listening to the Beatitudes of Jesus (6:20–27), what do they say to you about what Christian community could and should look like?
3. Do any of the blessings from this passage (6:20–23) speak to you personally? How do they bring comfort to you? Is there a way they inspire you to bless others?
4. Do any of the corresponding woes from this passage (6:24–27) speak to you personally? How do they challenge you? In light of God's grace, how might you respond faithfully to this challenge?

5. Is there an invitation you sense God making through your conversation or reflections this week? Is there a next step you could take in how you engage, act, or relate to others?

**PRAY** | Have a time of quiet reflection. Ask that God speak blessings and woes upon us, our communities, and our world so that all might flourish under God's care.

## **Luke 6:17–26**

17 He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, 18 who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, 19 and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

20 Looking at his disciples, he said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied.  
Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

22 Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.

23 "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

24 But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.

25 Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry.  
Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.

26 Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets."

# WEEK 5

## Luke 7:1–10

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had- curiosities, concerns, or delights.
- Read pages 78–81 in "[Luke: the New Testament for Everyone](#)," by N. T. Wright

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2. **Explain the Process:** For this practice, we will all keep our Bibles closed, except the person who is reading. We will read through the passage a total of three times. Each time I will give you a slightly different instruction. The goal is to listen with our hearts to the scripture and for a word from God.
3. **Moment of Silence:** Invite your group to take a moment of silence before you begin to open themselves to the loving presence of Jesus and to hearing a word from God.
4. **First Reading:** Hear the Word. Read (or ask someone to read) the passage slowly. Invite your group to simply let the passage wash over them.
5. **Second Reading:** Hear the word that is addressed to you. Read (or ask someone to read) the passage a second time. Listen for God's particular word for you in this moment in time. Let the word or phrase pick you. There is no right or wrong answer. Just the word or phrase that feels important today. Leave a moment of silence after the second reading. Invite participants to repeat their word or phrase in silence. Then give a moment for members to share their word and only their word. Gently direct folks to use this time to share only their word.
6. **Third Reading:** Consider "How is my life touched?": Read (or ask someone to read) the passage a third time. This time, invite people to listen for the meaning that the passage has for you at this moment.. This is less about theological meaning and more about how the scripture brushes up against their life. Allow for a moment of silence after the last reading.
7. **Share and Pray:** Invite group members to share in one or two sentences what they heard from God. There is something powerful about sharing what we heard with others. Close your time by thanking God for speaking to you and praying for empowerment to respond.

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation. Open with a check-in/getting-to-know-you question. Group opener questions are available in the Appendix.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. What is it like for you when you make requests to God for something in prayer? Would you say you boldly ask for things or are more cautious and careful? Share your typical process with the group.
3. In a rare response from Jesus in the gospels, he is surprised by the Centurioan's faith (7:9). What stands out to you in the Centurion's faith? How does this speak to you and the way you bring requests to God?
4. Even if God doesn't always answer our prayers the way we hope God would, what does this passage still say to you about how God views you and how you can pray?



5. Is there an invitation you sense God making through your conversation or reflections this week? Is there a next step you could take in how you engage, act, or relate to others?

**PRAY** | Ask God for more confidence in knowing God loves you, and that God is for us. Offer to God something that is on your heart right now. Trust that God hears you and will respond with what's best.

## Luke 7:1-10

1 When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum. 2 There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. 3 The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. 4 When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, 5 because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." 6 So Jesus went with them.

He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. 7 That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. 8 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

9 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." 10 Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

# WEEK 6

## Luke 8:41–48

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had- curiosities, concerns, or delights.
- Read pages 102–105 in "[Luke: the New Testament for Everyone](#)," by N. T. Wright

**SPIRITUAL PRACTICE - IGNATIAN CONTEMPLATION** | This is a spiritual practice that uses imaginative prayer through Scripture. Open your small group time together with this practice this week and the next. Leave 20–35 minutes for the practice. This practice will take slightly longer than previous ones. Give space for the Holy Spirit to show up. This guide will help you walk your group through the practice. Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with it before your group meets. Or if you prefer, use this [audio guide](#). With slight variations each time, you will be guided through this practice this week (and the next three).

1. **Introduction:** Ignatian Contemplation is simply praying with Scripture. It is a prayer form developed by Ignatius of Loyola in the 1500s. The prayer develops as the reader “steps into” the story with all their senses and imagination. Through the story, the living God meets and interacts with each listener personally and differently. That interaction of our spirit with God is prayer. The hardest part is relaxing and letting God be in control, rather than trying to force our response or reaction. You don't need to force anything to happen. Simply let the Spirit guide you. Let the story happen to you, within you, and around you.
2. **Explain the Process of the Prayer:**
  - We will begin by opening our hearts to God. Then we will read the story three times (you can read it yourself or ask a different person to read each time.)
  - Before each reading, I will tell you what to be aware of as you listen.
  - Following the last reading, we will have 5 minutes of silence. Allow the story to continue in your minds, hearts, and spirits in the silence. I will end with an Amen.
  - Then we will have time to share what the experience was like.
3. **Open your Hearts to Jesus:** Close your eyes, relax your body little, by little and invite Jesus to speak to you through this prayer. Breathe in the loving presence of Jesus and breathe out any distractions. Express what is in your mind and heart and let Jesus respond too.
4. **First Reading:** Listen to the story and allow an image of the scene to begin taking shape in your imagination. Engage all your senses. I will pause for 2–3 minutes after the reading to give time for the image to form. Consider:
  - What is the location?
  - Who is there?
  - What time of day is it?
  - What details do you see?
  - What can you hear, smell, feel, touch?
  - What is the mood, the atmosphere?

Read the passage slowly. Pause for 2–3 minutes, then continue with the second reading.

5. **Second Reading:** As I read a second time and pause for 2–3 minutes after the reading, notice more details and begin to feel yourself in that place, in the story.
  - Who or what are you (you may be an inanimate object, an animal, or part of the scenery; you may be a person or thing not specifically mentioned but that you sense as you hear it read.)
  - What are you doing, thinking, feeling or what is being done to you?
  - What are the emotions and undertones you notice?

Read the passage slowly. Pause for 2–3 minutes or maybe a little longer, then do the 3rd reading.

6. **Third Reading:** When I read the third time, experience the story as the person or object that you are in the story. When I finish reading, I will leave 4–5 minutes of silence. Let the story continue to unfold within you: in your imagination, heart, and body as the person/object that you are until you hear me say “Amen.”

Read the passage slowly - and then enter into silence for prayer. Allow 4–5 minutes for them to pray with the story. End the silence with “Amen.” When they are ready they can open their eyes. The group will wait in silence until everyone is ready.

7. **Share:** Invite each person to share what their experience of imaginative prayer was like, as well as who or what they were in the story and what happened for them. Name that there is no right or wrong experience. Some people might not experience much at all, or what they experience might seem strange or silly. Other people may have a very powerful experience. Invite the group to respond to each person's sharing with simple thank yous. Tell the group you will practice again in the next two weeks. These are called spiritual practices because often it takes practice for us to learn them and they are formational over time.
8. **Close with Prayer:** Close your time by thanking God for revealing himself.

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation. Open with a check-in/getting-to-know-you question. Group opener questions are available in the Appendix.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. Jesus' concern for others is evident in this passage in several ways. As we continue to explore the unfolding narrative of Luke's gospel, what do think Jesus' interactions with others tell us about who he is and what he cares about?
3. Likewise, how might Jesus' interactions with others help you relate to another person (or group of people) in your life differently? Try to name something about Jesus' actions or teachings that inspire you here.
4. Is there an invitation you sense God making through your conversation or reflections this week? Is there a next step you could take in how you engage, act, or relate to others?

**PRAY** | Pray for the Spirit of Jesus to inspire you towards boundary-breaking relationships and to experience God's grace in your life and others this week.

## Luke 8:41–48

41 Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house 42 because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. 43 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. 44 She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. 45 “Who touched me?” Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you. 46 But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.”

47 Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. 48 Then he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.”

# WEEK 7

## Luke 9:1–20

**(PRE-WORK) REFLECT** | Before your small group gathering, complete the following and reflect on the discussion questions. These will be the basis for your small group time.

- Listen to the Sermon on Highrock's [YouTube channel](#) and note any reactions you had- curiosities, concerns, or delights.
- Read pages 105–112 in "[Luke: the New Testament for Everyone](#)," by N. T. Wright

**SPIRITUAL PRACTICE - IGNATIAN CONTEMPLATION** | This is a spiritual practice that uses imaginative prayer through Scripture. Open your small group time together with this practice. Leave 20–35 minutes for the practice. Give space for the Holy Spirit to show up. This guide will help you walk your group through the practice. Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with it before your group meets. Or if you prefer, use this [audio guide](#). With slight variations each time, you will be guided through this practice this week (and the next three).

1. **Introduction:** Ignatian Contemplation is simply praying with Scripture. It is a prayer form developed by Ignatius of Loyola in the 1500s. The prayer develops as the reader “steps into” the story with all their senses and imagination. Through the story, the living God meets and interacts with each listener personally and differently. That interaction of our spirit with God is prayer. The hardest part is relaxing and letting God be in control, rather than trying to force our response or reaction. You don’t need to force anything to happen. Simply let the Spirit guide you. Let the story happen to you, within you, and around you.
2. **Explain the Process of the Prayer:**
  - We will begin by opening our hearts to God. Then we will read the story three times (you can read it yourself or ask a different person to read each time.)
  - Before each reading I will tell you what to be aware of as you listen.
  - Following the last reading, we will have 5 minutes of silence. Allow the story to continue in your minds, hearts, and spirits in the silence. I will end with an Amen.
  - Then we will have time to share what the experience was like.
3. **Open your Hearts to Jesus:** Close your eyes, relax your body little, by little and invite Jesus to speak to you through this prayer. Breathe in the loving presence of Jesus and breathe out any distractions. Express what is in your mind and heart and let Jesus respond too.
4. **First Reading:** Listen to the story and allow an image of the scene to begin taking shape in your imagination. Engage all your senses. I will pause for 2–3 minutes after the reading to give time for the image to form. Consider:
  - What is the location?
  - Who is there?
  - What time of day is it?
  - What details do you see?
  - What can you hear, smell, feel, touch?
  - What is the mood, the atmosphere?

Read the passage slowly. Pause for 2–3 minutes, then continue with the second reading.

5. **Second Reading:** As I read a second time and pause for 2–3 minutes after the reading, notice more details and begin to feel yourself in that place, in the story.
  - Who or what are you (you may be an inanimate object, an animal, or part of the scenery; you may be a person or thing not specifically mentioned but that you sense as you hear it read.)
  - What are you doing, thinking, feeling or what is being done to you?
  - What are the emotions and undertones you notice?

Read the passage slowly. Pause 2–3 minutes or maybe a little longer, then do the 3rd reading.

6. **Third Reading:** When I read the third time, experience the story as the person or object that you are in the story. When I finish reading, I will leave 4–5 minutes of silence. Let the story continue to unfold within you: in your imagination, heart, and body as the person/object that you are until you hear me say “Amen.”

Read the passage slowly - and then enter into silence for prayer. Allow 4–5 minutes for them to pray with the story. End the silence with “Amen.” When they are ready they can open their eyes. The group will wait in silence until everyone is ready.

7. **Share:** Invite each person to share what their experience of imaginative prayer was like, as well as who or what they were in the story and what happened for them. Name that there is no right or wrong experience. Some people might not experience much at all, or what they experience might seem strange or silly. Other people may have a very powerful experience. Invite the group to respond to each person’s sharing with simple thank yous. Tell the group you will practice again in the next two weeks. These are called spiritual practices because often it takes practice for us to learn them and they are formational over time.
8. **Close with Prayer:** Close your time by thanking God for revealing himself.

**RELATE** | Use these questions as a launching point for your small group conversation. Open with a check-in/getting-to-know-you question. Group opener questions are available in the Appendix.

1. What from the sermon or reading has brought up new questions or interesting points you would like to discuss?
2. In these passages we see Jesus sharing his vocation with others; God’s saving plan includes us. How does this make you feel? Is it more startling, puzzling, or exciting for you? Share your initial impressions with the group.
3. Jesus also invites others to radically trust God’s provision. How is this challenging and/or comforting to you? What would it look like for you to be more open to God’s provision in your life? Try to name one area where you could be more open to God’s provision.
4. Are there any other dynamics or relationships in this passage that you think are significant for how we understand Jesus and can relate to God?
5. Is there an invitation you sense God making through your conversation or reflections this week? Is there a next step you could take in how you engage, act, or relate to others?

**PRAY** | Pray to be part of the communal work of God in the world. Ask that God help you to be a source of encouragement to others this week and to find new hope through the gifts and unique abilities of those around you.

## Luke 9:1–20

1 When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, 2 and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. 3 He told them: “Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt. 4 Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. 5 If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.” 6 So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.

7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was going on. And he was perplexed because some were saying that John had been raised from the dead, 8 others that Elijah had appeared, and still others that one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life. 9 But Herod said, “I beheaded John. Who, then, is this I hear such things about?” And he tried to see him.

10 When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, 11 but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.

12 Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here.” 13 He replied, “You give them something to eat.” They answered, “We have only five loaves of bread and two fish—unless we go and buy food for all this crowd.” 14 (About five thousand men were there.)

But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." 15 The disciples did so, and everyone sat down. 16 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. 17 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

18 Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?" 19 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life." 20 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "God's Messiah."



# APPENDIX

Below are resources to look into if you are interested in diving deeper into some of the topics covered in this series. If you need resources that more specifically address your own experience, demographic, or faith journey, please reach out to a Highrock pastor or to [smallgroups@highrock.org](mailto:smallgroups@highrock.org) and we will be happy to help!

## PRAYER TOOLS

- [The Prayer of Examen: Tracking Our Moods](#)
- [Breath Prayer/Prayer of the Heart](#)
- [Divine/Fixed Hour Prayer](#)
- [SoulCare guide to Imaginative Prayer Spiritual Practice](#)
- [Imaginative Prayer/Ignatian Contemplation](#)
- [SoulCare guide to Recall & Paraphrase Spiritual Practice](#)
- [Lament](#)
- [Laughter and Prayer](#)
- [Palms Up, Palms Down](#)
- [Pray a Psalm in a Nature Setting](#)
- [Praying with your Body](#)
- [Welcoming Prayer](#)

## LUKE BIBLE STUDY TOOLS (Books, Podcasts, Videos, etc.)

- ["Luke: the New Testament for Everyone."](#) by N. T. Wright
- [Dr. Amy Peeler on Luke 1:46-55](#) (12 mins)
- [BibleProject videos: Luke 1-9](#) (8 mins)
- [BibleProject podcast series on Luke-Acts](#) (see episodes 1-4)
- [Blue Letter Bible](#)
- [Bible Gateway](#)
- [Dr. Justo González on Luke](#) (16 mins)

## "ICEBREAKER" QUESTIONS

- What was a small win from your week?
- Share a High/Low from your day or week.
- On a scale of 1-10, how are you doing coming into this meeting?
- If you were to describe yourself as a weather forecast today, what would you be? Example: sunny, partly cloudy, rainy with a chance of snow, etc.
- What song would be the theme track for the day you had?
- What is the season of Advent/Christmas usually like for you? Joyful, challenging, 'Is it spring yet'?

## GENERAL RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

- [Spiritual Practices](#)
- [Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Parenting & Kids—Understanding each other through Milestones](#)

## TIPS FOR GUIDING CONVERSATION

- Allow everyone space to share. It's ok to ask what people are thinking even if they don't volunteer to share right away. But always give people the option to decline to share. Example: "Hey, Fred, you've been a little quiet and I'm curious to know what you think. Would you like to share anything?"
- Remember there aren't necessarily "right" answers. Encourage participants to simply be curious about what came up for them or others without the pressure of feeling like they "should" have thought or felt anything in particular. Example: Instead of asking "What is this story supposed to be communicating?" ask "What did you notice?"

- Embrace the differences. Affirm that different people can come to different conclusions regarding the same thing. Example: "Interestingly, the text reminded Susie of ABC, while it reminded José of XYZ. Both can be present and true."
- Adapt to suit your group's needs. Sometimes conversation is free-flowing and sometimes it's easier to move through discussion questions one at a time. Do what feels suitable for your group, but don't feel pressured to answer/discuss every single question.
- Encourage curiosity by modeling curiosity. Asking someone "Tell me more about XYZ" can be a really simple but effective tool to go deeper in conversation.
- Don't be afraid of silence. It's natural to want to fill silences or pauses in a conversation. But don't be afraid to sit in silence with your group members. Sometimes thoughts just need time to percolate, so don't feel like you have to rush to another question if no one shares immediately.
- Refer back to the Conversation Covenant. This is the posture that we as Highrock hold as we gather in groups. When the conversation gets tough, you can always refer back to the Conversation Covenant to remind the group that everyone has agreed to abide by this covenant in small group meetings.