

LEADER'S GUIDE

In the Beginning

Course Lecturer: D.A. Horton

If you have not already done so, it is important that you first review our [Leader's Packet](#) for specifics on how to open, facilitate, and close your group sessions.

This Leader's Guide walks you step by step through this lesson. Use as much of the suggested material as you find helpful. Some sections have more than one discussion question or idea so you can choose an option that fits your group. Feel free to add other ideas as well. You may also choose to extend this particular lesson to two or more sessions.

The Leader's Guide contains information that isn't covered in the Listening Guide so the group session adds value to those who have completed the Listening Guide.

Step by Step Through the Study

As you prepare for the session, you will find information you need to lead the discussion questions in this Leader's Guide.

Watch the introduction video for this course at [ODBU.org/discipleship-toolkit-series/](https://odbu.org/discipleship-toolkit-series/). You can also choose to download the transcript.

You can tailor this portion of your session to your group's interests and needs by selecting questions appropriate to your group.

Introduce the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by reading the “Introduction” of Lesson 1. “Do you know that God is the designer and sustainer of our world? He created something—the universe—out of nothing. Yet He exists outside of creation, time, and space.”

Ask if there are questions about the session or about preparation for the session.

Application Questions

1. What is one new thought you had as a result of watching the video?

Read Psalm 90:1–4 (NLT)

2. What are some thoughts come to your mind when you hear God being called “the uncaused first cause”? (discuss or write them down)

Further Study

Genesis 1:1 – “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”

- The Bible never tries to prove God’s existence because it is written from the viewpoint that God is the author of Scripture.
 - ◇ Some argue that the universe is eternal and created itself; however, we should reject this thought for a few reasons:
 - ◇ Space, time, energy, and matter are not eternal because they have a starting point.
 - ◇ Some argue the starting point or the cause of our universe is the “big bang”; however, we must counter their argument with asking the, what is the “cause” that initiated the “Big Bang”?
 - ◇ The Christian’s response is that God is the uncaused first cause whose demonstrated power was shown by creating something from nothing.
 - God is the uncaused first cause, the Creator of creation.
 - Since there is no one Hebrew word for “universe” the phrase “heavens and earth” describe all of creation (earth and beyond).
- 3. What are some evidences you’ve heard people use to support their claim that “God does not exist”?

4. Has there ever been a time in your life when you thought God did not exist?

Further Study

Psalm 90:2 – “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God”

- Psalm 90:1 – Helps us understand that this “Great God” is our protector. Those who know God (through Jesus Christ) can rely on God’s protection and provision for life.
 - Before creation was created, God already existed.
 - Psalm 90:3–4 says a thousand years to us is like a day to God (time has no restriction on God).
 - Romans 1:20 – Creation itself is a display of God’s eternal power
 - For Christians we believe every created thing has a beginning point. It was brought into existence through the work of someone else.
 - Illustration: Did the shoes you have on right now create themselves or did they have a designer who created them?
 - Application: As we look at the world and universe we live in we must ask ourselves who created and designed it.
5. Have you ever thought about God as being the designer of our universe?
6. Based off of what you see in creation, what thoughts do you have about God and His creativity?
7. Review the Scripture passages from this session and write down what each of these passages teaches you about God.
8. When did you first become aware of God? When are you most aware of God’s presence?
9. What do the Scripture passages for this session tell us about God’s role and our role in the world?
10. What practices do you incorporate into your life to remind you of God’s creation?
11. How can understanding God as your Creator change the way you view other parts of God’s creation (i.e., other people, the environment, etc.)?

Reflection

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Also emphasize that this part of the group session could be an important time for participants to minister to other members of the group. Not everyone “sees” the same emphases and something one person highlights may be an added insight to others in the group.

Close in Prayer

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Introduce the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by reading the “Introduction” of Lesson 2. “God said His name is I AM. Learn what this name says about the character and actions of God as well as how Jesus Christ could use the same name—I AM.”

Ask if there are questions about the session or about preparation for the session.

Application Questions

1. What is one new thought you had as a result of watching the video?

Read Exodus 3:13–14 (NLT)

2. What three words do you think describe God’s reputation? (be honest)

Further Study

God’s name reflects His nature

- Psalm 92:15— God is holy and everything He does is always right, just, and perfect.
- Psalm 115:3— God is all-powerful. He can do as He desires and everything He desires is always right, just, and perfect.

3. How do you feel when you hear the word *father*?
4. What thoughts come to mind when you hear that “God is all-powerful”?
5. How does God’s power relate to the struggles you have in life?

Further Study

God’s name reflects His actions

- Psalm 139:1-5 – informs us that God is intimately involved in the lives of His people.
- Romans 8:28 – He works all things in our lives for His glory and our good.
- D. A. mentioned that in his life he has been through some stuff he didn’t understand at the time, but now he realizes that because of those experiences, he can relate to people better who are going through similar situations. In other words, God is using D. A.’s previous painful experiences, to allow him to help others heal from their similar experiences.

6. Have you had any life experiences that you don't understand why you had to go through them?
7. Can you see how those experiences, once you've healed from them, could be used to help someone else out later in your life?

Further Study

Jesus shares the same nature and actions

- John 8:56—59 — Jesus declares He is “I AM”
 - ◊ Jesus said that Abraham rejoiced to see His day
 - ◊ The Pharisees said how can that be when you're not even fifty years old
 - ◊ Jesus said, “before Abraham was, I AM”
 - ◊ The wording Jesus used told the Pharisee's that Abraham had as a beginning point of life
 - ◊ While Jesus has no beginning point because He is “I AM”
- The response of this declaration was a desire to stone Jesus according to the Law in Leviticus 24:10—16

God's deliverance of Israel out of Egypt was a forecast of how Jesus wants to free us from our slavery to sin. God is not some great being that's removed from us. He's involved in our lives to the point He wants to save us from the wrath we're due and from sin's slavery through Jesus.

8. Review the Scripture passages from this session and write down what each of these passages teaches you about God.
9. How would you feel if you met God like Moses did in the burning bush?
10. Why are qualities like those listed in Psalm 92:15, 115:3, 139:1-5; and Romans 8:28 important for God to possess? What makes you feel uncomfortable about these characteristics of God?
11. If God is all-powerful and everything God desires is always right, just, and perfect why do you think there are pain and suffering present in the world?
12. If God was only all-powerful and not also a loving God, how do you think it would change God's relationship with people?

Reflection

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Also emphasize that this part of the group session could be an important time for participants to minister to other members of the group. Not everyone “sees” the same emphases and something one person highlights may be an added insight to others in the group.

Close in Prayer

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You Are Not Just Some “Thing”

Introduce the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by reading the “Introduction” of Lesson 3. “‘Why do I exist?’ ‘Nobody loves me!’” Do you ask yourself these questions? You are not a mistake. You are God’s masterpiece, and He loves you!”

Ask if there are questions about the session or about preparation for the session.

Application Questions

1. What is one new thought you had as a result of watching the video?

Read Psalm 139:13–14 (NLT)

2. What are three things about yourself you wish you could change? (discuss or write down your answer)

Further Study

Our being

- Jeremiah 38:16 — God created our soul (the immaterial part of our being).
- Genesis 1:26–27 — informs us that we’re created in God’s image. This simply means that God shared with us certain snapshots of Himself that He didn’t share with any other form of creation. In this process, God provided our soul with a body.
- Genesis 35:18 — informs us that in death, the body and the soul are separated. The body remains while the soul continues to live.

Our body – The human body is both beautiful and complex.

- Psalm 139:13–18 — tells us that each and every one of us was “fearfully and wonderfully made.”
 - ◊ Since God created each of us, He knows us intimately.
 - ◊ Before doctors could identify our heartbeat or gender, God had as already begun His working on us to create His masterpiece.
 - ◊ While we were still being formed, God had great plans for all of our lives.
- Psalm 139:19–24 highlights the psalmist David, informing us:
 - ◊ No matter what obstacles or enemies we face in life, we who know God can have peace

in the midst of the storm because we are known by Him and His plans for us can't be changed by those who oppose us.

- ◇ We should always ask God to continue to search us and know us, as we seek to know Him more.

3. After reading the Scriptures we've worked through, do you believe that God sees you as His masterpiece and not a mistake? (explain your answer)
4. Review the Scripture passages from this session and write down what each of these passages teaches you about God.
5. What makes you feel good in knowing that God is our creator? What makes you feel uncomfortable telling others about this characteristic of God?
6. Psalm 139:13–18 explores the intimate relationship between humans and God. How do you think the psalmist felt about being created by God?
7. How would you describe your relationship with God right now, after reading these Scripture passages?

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Introduce the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by reading the “Introduction” of Lesson 4. “Is it hard for you to be satisfied? Just as your body needs food and water, so your soul also searches for satisfaction. God has put in your heart the desire to search for Him.”

Ask if there are questions about the session or about preparation for the session.

Application Questions

1. What is one new thought you had as a result of watching the video?

Read Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NLT)

2. What has the search to find God looked like in your life? (discuss or write down your response)

Further Study

We're unique - By placing eternity in the hearts of every human, God once again shows how unique we are from every other form of creation.

- The first part of Ecclesiastes 3:11 informs us that God will make everything beautiful in time.
 - This truth points us back to our previous video, where we walked through the truth, we're God's masterpiece.
 - Ecclesiastes 3:1—8 highlights different seasons in life that all humans go through.
 - The reason God matters is because He is in control of all of life's events. If there was no God there would be no order.
 - God has designed for the events in our lives to cause us to search for Him – as we search for the meaning of our life.
3. What seasons of life mentioned in Ecclesiastes have you lived through?
 4. How have your life experiences effected your desire to know God?

Further Study

We're unsettled – Since God has placed eternity in our hearts, we have this desire to know if God exists or not. In addition, we have this natural desire to search for something “greater than us.”

- Nothing this world has to offer will provide us with complete satisfaction:
 - ◇ We eat – we're hungry again.
 - ◇ We seek pleasure – but it goes away (often times, we work hard to get pleasure and it only lasts for a moment).
 - ◇ We look for love – but relationships fall apart and people break our hearts.
 - ◇ Ultimately we're trying to fill an eternal desire with temporary things.
- God matters because He is eternal and only God can provide us with the satisfaction we desire:

Psalm 107:9 – Only God can satisfy the hunger of our soul.

Isaiah 58:11 – Only God can satisfy the thirst of our soul.

5. Review the Scripture passages from this session and write down what each of these passages teaches you about God.
6. When is it difficult to believe in God? In those difficult times what should we do? What insights do the Scripture passages here provide us for getting through these difficult times?
7. Write down a time when you felt close to God. How did you feel at that time?
8. Write down a time when you felt alone and didn't think God was with you. What helped you to get through that time? Where do you think God was during those times?

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What Does He Want From Me?

Introduce the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by reading the “Introduction” of Lesson 5. “God has done so much for you – but what does He want from YOU? God wants you to love Him with everything you have. How do you do that?”

Ask if there are questions about the session or about preparation for the session.

Application Questions

1. What is one new thought you had as a result of watching the video?

Read Deuteronomy 6:5 (NLT)

2. What do you think it means to love God perfectly? (discuss or write them down)

Further Study

The Great Commandment

- Deuteronomy 6:5 – God commands Israel to love Him with all their heart, soul, and strength.
 - ◇ God wants Israel to love Him with all their being.
 - ◇ He does not want them to treat Him like a false idol who gets attention only when the person wants something.
 - ◇ Israel knew that loving God with all they had meant they must obey all of God’s commandments – but they didn’t.
- Matthew 22:37–38 – Jesus now quotes from Deuteronomy 6:5 when someone asks Him what the “greatest commandment in the Law is.”
 - ◇ The greatest commandment in all of Scripture is for us to love God.
 - ◇ The love we are to have for God is a complete love – where we take our heart (emotions), mind (thoughts), and strength (actions) and surrender them to God.
 - ◇ We do this when we obey His commands.

3. What does it mean to “love God”?
4. What keeps you from loving God with your whole heart?

5. What are some things in your life you truly have a love for?

Further Study

The Great Commitment

- We'll know that we're obeying and loving God with all we've got if we are showing love those around us too.
- Matthew 22:39 – We're commanded to love our neighbor as our self.
 - ◊ We live this passage out when we consider the wrong that has been done to us and NOT doing it to others.
 - ◊ Matthew 7:12 – We're commanded to treat others the way we desire to be treated.
 - ◊ Even if they don't treat us well in return, we forgive them and stay obedient to God.
- God has blessed us with Jesus as the model of what this looks like and God the Holy Spirit to live in believers (Romans 8:9–13).
- God remains committed to us, so we can remain committed to living out His commandments.

6. In what ways do you want your brothers and sisters of the faith to be dedicated to you?
7. What are some practices you can put in your life, to show your commitment to your brothers and sisters in the faith?
8. Review the Scripture passages from this session and write down what each of these passages teaches you about God.
9. What are some ways that humans are supposed to be like God?
10. How is your relationship with God reflected in your relationships with people?
11. What makes you feel good about knowing God? What makes you feel uncomfortable telling others about God?
12. What do you like about reading God's Word? What do you dislike? What could you do to make your reading more enjoyable and helpful?
13. Obeying and loving God implies motion. When we're obeying God we're always growing closer to God, serving our neighbors in need, and loving the overlooked. Write down one way that you can begin making motion for God this week.

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Introduce the Lesson

Introduce the lesson by reading the “Introduction” of Lesson 6. “Is brokenness always a bad thing? How can anyone love you when you are broken? God can take your brokenness and make it beautiful.”

Ask if there are questions about the session or about preparation for the session.

Application Questions

1. What is one new thought you had as a result of watching the video?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17

2. Have you embraced Christ as your Savior and are you a new person through Him? (this may be a key opportunity to share the gospel and invite some of the youth to trust Jesus)

Further Study

How we became broken

- Sin is the one cause to our brokenness. Sin broke Adam and Eve’s relationship with God in Genesis 3.
 - Sin brought sin and death into our world (Romans 5:12).
 - We must admit we’re broken before God can fix us.
3. What “broken” parts in your life do you want God to make beautiful?

Further Study

How God makes our brokenness beautiful

- We realize we’re sinful and broken yet God sends someone to share with us the gospel.
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 – We put our trust in Christ and we’re new creatures. The mess of our old life becomes the message we use to reach others.
- 2 Corinthians 3:18 informs us that God is patient in working with us even when our flesh desires the pleasures we used to indulge in. As we grow in Christ, God takes us from one level in our walk to the next.

How God uses brokenness

- In order for crops to grow, the soil in which the seed is planted in has to be broken.
 - We refer to eating food as “breaking bread.”
 - In Matthew 13:1—23 Jesus tells the Parable of the Sower. In this story:
 - ◇ The seed is the Word of God
 - ◇ The soil is the condition of the person’s heart
 - ◇ Snatched away – those who hear the Word preached but don’t receive it
 - ◇ Stony places – people who respond superficially but then back away from God because of the cares of this life
 - ◇ Thorns – those respond superficially but then back away because of the paper chase
 - ◇ Good soil – the one who responds and understands the Word of God will bear fruit
4. What things do you sense God calling your to surrender to Him?
 5. What are some areas of brokenness you’ve surrendered to God before?
 6. How has God turned your brokenness into something beautiful?
 7. How is God, through you, using your brokenness to reach others?
 8. Review the Scripture passages from this session and write down what each of these passages teaches you about God.
 9. What happens when we sin? What makes sin seem good rather than bad?
 10. Why do you think people often want to do the things they are told not to do? What examples can you give? How can you overcome temptation?
 11. How does it make you feel to know that God loves you enough to wipe away and forgive your sin?
 12. How would you describe your relationship with God right now?

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