

BAC Small Group Leader Guide

This guide is designed to give helpful hints in preparing and leading your group in discussion.

NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS for leaders

GOAL

Create an environment where spiritual growth can happen through meaningful relationships and engaging in God's Word.

EXPECTATIONS & COVENANT

Discuss and sign the **group expectations and covenant sheet** this week. The leader(s) should hold onto the signed copy. You can do this after having everyone introduce themselves.

PREPARE

Remember to prepare nametags and refreshments for this week.

TOPICS & QUESTIONS

Your goal is **NOT to answer every question**. Pick a few to focus on and answer the others as time allows.

FORMAT

Refreshments and socializing (5–10 min)
Open in prayer (1–2 min)
Discussion (40–60 min)
Prayer (10–15 min)
Post-meeting hangout (optional)

ATTENDANCE

Remember to track your attendance by logging in at my.bedfordalliance.church.
Look for the email reminder about attendance after you meet.

* The discussion questions on the next pages are available to group members to pick up on Sunday mornings or on our website. Notes for the leaders will be **italicized and teal** in color.

SERMON THEME

Palm Sunday

SERMON TITLE

Overwhelmed With Sorrow

Sermon Summary

We don't have the power to control, but we always have the power to surrender.

Discussion Questions

Setting the Scene: After eating the Passover meal (the Last Supper) with his disciples, Jesus takes a few of his disciple (Peter, James, and John) to Gethsemane to pray.

Week of April 10

Discussion Questions

Read Matthew 26:36-46

³⁶Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." ³⁹Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

⁴⁰Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. ⁴¹"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." ⁴²He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

⁴³When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. ⁴⁵Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

1. In verse 36, notice Jesus' intentionality in seeking out solitude to spend time with the Father. What are some ways you intentionally set aside time to spend with God? What challenges/obstacles do you face in your prayer life?

People will commonly say they are "too busy." While this can be a legitimate concern, this issue more often lies in our priorities. Encourage people to be honest with their struggles here. Another major concern today is our technology usage (phones, Netflix, etc.). In a world where we are constantly "wired," taking time to pray in solitude feels foreign. We have to be intentional about getting away from technology if we want our prayer lives to thrive.

2. Verses 37 and 38 describe Jesus as "sorrowful and troubled" and "overwhelmed to the point of death." Knowing that Jesus is fully God, what are your reactions to this?

Many Christians emphasize the deity of Christ, and rightly so. But we often forget (or at least de-emphasize) the fact that he is also fully man. You may want to read Hebrews 2:17 here: "For this reason [Jesus] had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people."

Jesus took on every aspect of humanity so he could redeem every aspect of humanity.

Challenge your group to consider the humility and love it took for the God of the Universe to take on flesh and face the trials that we do.

3. Have you ever had a time when you were overwhelmed with stress and anxiety? How did you respond—did your trial bring you closer to God or drive you away from him?
4. What can we learn from Jesus' prayers in verses 39 and 42?

Jesus shows us what it means to surrender fully to God. He surrendered to the Father even when it was difficult and costly. As Pastor said, "God's will is rarely easy, but it is always good" (this leads into the next question).

5. Pastor Hinz said, "God's will is rarely easy, but it is always good." How have you seen this play out in your life? What promises/truths can we cling to during times of trial?

Examples of promises:

- *Romans 8:28: "In all things God works for the good of those who love him"*
- *Hebrews 13:5: "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you"*
- *Revelation 21–22: One day God will make all things right, and we will spend an eternity with him*

6. The basic beliefs of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD) are that going to church, being a "good" person, believing in God, and doing nice things for others means a happy and comfortable life. Have you found yourself believing this? Do you know others who believe this? How does MTD fall short of God's truth?

MTD is man-centered in its focus. God's Word tells us that we were created by God, for God, and for his glory. We exist to worship him and make much of him. What people miss is that our greatest satisfaction is found in God himself. When we pursue satisfaction for its own sake, we will never find it. But when we pursue God, we find the only One who can truly satisfy.

7. In verses 40 and 43, Jesus finds his disciples sleeping. The disciples had their chance to pray for strength but slept through it. Keep in mind that Peter later denies Jesus three times (Matt 26:69–75). What can we learn from this? In what ways do we miss opportunities to express our dependence on God?

How often do we do things or make decisions without taking time to ask for God's help? Let this passage serve as a challenge and reminder to us that we shouldn't squander opportunities to depend on God.

8. We only have the illusion of control. Unlike us, Jesus actually could have taken control during his crucifixion, but instead chose surrender. Have you thought about this aspect of the crucifixion? How does this change your views on surrender?
9. What are you trying to control in your life (relationships, health, finances, job, future, etc.) that God wants you to surrender?
10. Pastor Hinz said that surrender isn't just a one-time event; it's a daily choice. What are some practical ways we can surrender daily?

