

# lentenSMALL groups

ST. LUKE'S UMC

## SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

MARCH 10, 2019

THE SKEPTIC

OPENING | 20 MIN

### I. Welcome

*For this first meeting of your Lenten Small Group, you may want to take a moment and have everyone share their name (if your group has new people in it). Your host packet also has a list of ice breakers to help your group connect.*

A. Invite each group member to share what they might hope to gain from this Lenten Group experience.

B. What do your Lenten practices tend to look like? Do you give something up? Add a spiritual practice? Perhaps this is your first time engaging in Lent- what might you like to try?

### II. Group Values:

It's important that every group agrees on the values they want to have in their group.

*Review the following values: openness, growth, authenticity, confidentiality, presence & empathy.*

### III. Spiritual Practices:

Each week, we will invite your group to try a different spiritual practice together. This week's practice is **silence**.

"Be still and know ... " (Psalm 46:10). Before Jesus gave us the Lord's prayer, he said "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." (MT 6:6). This prayer of silence was practiced by the Desert Mothers and Fathers as early as the third century AD and is now practiced as Contemplative Prayer or Centering Prayer. **Today:** Simply surrender to God's presence as you sit quietly for 5 minutes listening for God's whisper. **This week:** Consider spending some time sitting alone in a darkened, silent room, listening to God in the silence and darkness. How are silence and darkness conducive to repentance?

**Before you begin your time of discussion, spend 5 minutes in silence together as a group. You can close the silence with a prayer or by simply saying "Amen".**

*For more information on these spiritual practices, please contact Rev. Regina Proctor ([proctorr@stlukesumc.com](mailto:proctorr@stlukesumc.com)).*

### GROUP DISCUSSION | 40 MIN

*It is not essential to cover all of these questions. Conversation and exploration are more highly valued.*

*Read aloud this week's Scripture text:  
John 1: 43-51*

A. What one idea stood out from Sunday's sermon that has caused you to think?

B. Doubt and skepticism play an important role in this week's Scripture. **What role have doubt and skepticism played in your faith journey?**

C. Nathanael's encounter with Jesus helps him move from skepticism to belief. **Think of a time you have had an experience that has moved you in a similar way and share this with your group.**

D. Philip invited Nathanael to "come and see" the truth about who Jesus was. **Who has come alongside you to help you know Jesus better? Who might God be nudging you to pay more attention to or engage with in a new way? How might you respond to this nudge over the next couple of weeks?**

E. Discipleship requires us to *give something up*- for example: Nathanael had to give up his preconceived notions of Jesus' hometown. **What might you need to let go of in order to follow Jesus in a new way this season?**

### WRAP-UP/ANNOUNCEMENTS | 15 min

#### I. Announcements

A. **Next Meeting Reminder:** Confirm again your next group meeting. This is the first week of our "Chance Encounters" series which will run through April 14.

Each week's sermons and guides will be posted on St. Luke's website the following Monday by the end of the workday.

Over →

B. **Serving Together:** It is our hope that your group will serve together during Lent. Please refer to the serving sheet in your host packet and the Sign Up Genius for serving opportunities!

## SPACE FOR PRAYER REQUESTS/ NOTES & IDEAS



**St. Luke's**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
— OPEN FOR YOU —

### II. Prayer Requests

A. Share prayer requests and have someone write them down to share with the group. Hosts can invite someone to close in prayer.

Questions or Comments:  
Contact: Mindie Moore,  
Director of Groups and Young Adults  
[moorem@stlukesumc.com](mailto:moorem@stlukesumc.com) or 317-846-3404