

Lenten Small
Group Study Guide
North Indy

The Questions Jesus Asked

WHERE ARE YOUR ACCUSERS?



CONNECT (15 MIN)

WEEK 3: MAR 12 - MAR 18

WELCOME

- Spend the first few minutes visiting and catching up.
- Take attendance. Who's missing?

PRAY

The Welcoming Prayer

Sit comfortably with your feet flat on the floor, hands in your laps, and close your eyes. Take a moment to sink into your body. (Pause) Now, check in with your body. Take your time. Notice pain or tension, pressure or tightness.

Begin with your head, your jaw. (Pause) Your neck, shoulders, arms. (Pause) Your torso, hips, and thighs. (Pause) Now to your legs and feet and toes. (Pause)

Linger where you felt tension. Focus on it. (Pause) Try to name it. Is it anxiety? Nervousness? Worry? Apprehension? Burden? Sorrow? (Pause)

Welcome the Divine to sit with you, feeling what you feel. Then welcome what you feel, whether it's fear or sorrow, anger or tension. Welcome it. (Pause) Now in the presence of the Divine, let go by saying:

- I let go of my desire for safety and security. (Pause)
- I let go of my desire for approval and affection. (Pause)
- I let go of my desire for control and influence. (Pause)
- I let go of my desire to change any situation, person, or even myself. (Pause)
- I open myself to the love and presence of God and God's actions within.

Amen.

CULTIVATE (35 MIN)

READ THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

John 8:1-11

John 8:1-11 (NLT)

Jesus returned to the Mount of Olives, but early the next morning he was back again at the Temple. A crowd soon gathered, and he sat down and taught them. As he was speaking, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd.

"Teacher," they said to Jesus, "this woman was caught in the act of adultery. The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?"

They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger. They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, "All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!" Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust.

When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman.

Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, "Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?"

"No, Lord," she said. And Jesus said, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."

GROUP VALUES: It's important that you agree on the values you want to have in your group, such as openness, authenticity, and confidentiality. Honoring these values together creates a safe and healthy group environment.

DISCUSS

Recall Rob's illustration of the girl on the bus who was taunted to tears. When have you heard enough negative voices that you became torn down to the point of insecurity and deep pain?

Two levels of Accusation:

1. Accusation for things we don't deserve. Accusers condemn because of other agendas - perhaps to feel better about themselves, or for revenge, or perhaps because of deep prejudice.
 - When have you faced accusations you don't deserve? Hearing words like "You're unworthy, You're a failure, You haven't done enough, You're ugly, You'll never amount to anything." How did you feel?
 - Rob also made the point about distinguishing between critics and prophets. How do you do that?
2. Accusation for things we do deserve. The woman in the story had committed moral failure. And she was paraded in front of the entire village.
 - When have you faced accusations you do deserve?
 - Were your behaviors called out by a person(s) who wanted to help you, or wanted to embarrass or humiliate you?

Jesus said, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Remember, Jesus doesn't mean you have to be sinless to judge, but Jesus doesn't let those who judge get away from their own judgement. Otherwise, we can be faultfinders but never improve ourselves.

- Have you ever spotted faults in others that are actually faults you have yourself?
- If that's true, what helps you not be a faultfinder?

One by one, all the accusers left. Jesus says to the woman, "Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?" She says, "No one." Jesus says, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."

What Jesus says about you holds greater authority than what your accusers say. Whether you deserved the accusations you received or not, will you accept Jesus' word, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more?"

What helps you experience Jesus' truth? (Sometimes we need others. Robert Downey Jr needed Mel Gibson.)

Finally, share how you felt about receiving the rock with "no accusers" on it. Explain.

CHANGE THE WORLD (5 MIN)

Freedom School (Impact = Equitable Education)

CDF Freedom School© is a 6-week summer program designed to increase literacy, self-esteem, socio-emotional skills, and a love of learning for children in elementary school. Freedom School helps children discover their potential and greatness, utilizing books and curricula that celebrate the cultures and contributions of people of color. 81% of scholars who participate in Freedom School avoid summer learning loss.

Sign up to volunteer or donate at <https://stlukesumc.com/freedomschool>

CLOSE (5 MIN)

- Ask for any prayer requests
- Prayer idea: Dear God, Thank you for this group of friends as we share Lent together. May we draw close to each other and close to you. In Jesus' name, Amen.