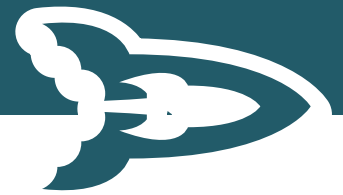




ABOVE

CONNECT GUIDE





Group Leaders,

We are thankful that you chose to come to Crossings this summer. We know that Connect time is an important time for your group to spend together. With that in mind, we have created Connect curriculum that you can use at your leisure with what best fits your group. Connect is a time created to give you, as the leader, an opportunity to learn and grow your group and help the camp connection continue after you return home. We believe this time can be used in many ways.

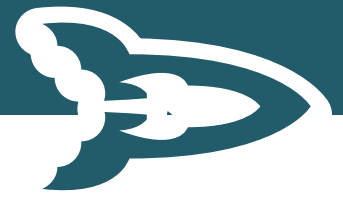
Four ways we believe this time can grow your group.

1. Leading your group through TAWG. What a great opportunity to teach your group about how to spend time alone with God each day.
2. Build relationships in your group. Team building activities are a great way to help students learn about one another and work together. This breaks down boundaries and distractions from home that prevent students from truly having deep relationships with others. And let's be honest, they need one another and their leaders.
3. Recap what you are learning at camp and let students talk and support one another. Use Connect time as a safe place to debrief Bible study as a group.
4. Play! Another way you can use Connect time is for students to play. Bring games if you want, play something that doesn't need any supplies, and just use the time to have fun together. Natural conversations will happen here strengthening relationships that will make an impact, both student to student relationships and adult to student relationships.

Most importantly, we want this time to be used for your group to have what they need. As the group leader, take some time to pray about the best way to use this time. We'd love to hear how your time was spent and how it benefited your group upon returning home.

What you will find included are questions to discuss from the morning's Large and Small groups and guided questions for spending time in prayer together.





## DAY ONE: WHY FOLLOW JESUS? (JOHN 1:1-10)

### LARGE GROUP SUMMARY:

- Large Group Main Theme: Why Follow Jesus? (John 1:1-10)
- Large Group Main Points:
  - **God exists. (John 1:1)**
  - **God made everything. (John 1:2-3)**
  - **Jesus is God. (John 1:10)**
  - **Jesus Offers Life to All Who Believe. (John 1:12)**

### SMALL GROUP REVIEW:

*What does Jesus say about himself?*

Jesus is God.

In Small Group, the question was asked, “Why is it important that Jesus is God?” A mere man couldn’t bear the weight of God’s infinite wrath. Only Jesus Christ, who is fully God, could bring a perfect sacrifice to satisfy God’s wrath and grant us righteousness.

The same question can be asked of Jesus’ humanity.

Ask: Why is it important that Jesus was a man?

Answer: Jesus became a man so that he could die to save us. In his humanity, Jesus identifies with us and suffered in our place.

Ask: What are some ways the Bible shows that Jesus is God?

Answer: Throughout the Gospel, Jesus performs miracles no man could accomplish (countless healings, feeding of the five thousand, walking on water, etc.) These all point to Christ’s divinity.

Jesus is the light.

Ask: How can we reflect the light of Jesus?

Answer: We reflect the light of Jesus by living like him and obeying his commands. We want to be “salt and light” in the world, and we do that by loving God and loving others.

Ask: If Jesus is described as the light, what is the darkness?

Answer: The darkness is sin and death. Jesus is holiness and life.

During your TAWG, you studied Psalm 43.

Ask: Why does the psalmist ask God to send his “light” and “truth” in Psalm 43?

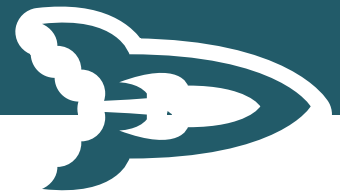
Answer: Darkness was closing in around him. He had enemies who wanted him destroyed. God’s infinite light, truth, and power were the only things that can save him from the darkness of those enemies.

Ask: In Psalm 43:3, what was the response of the psalmist after God sends his light?

Answer: His response was to worship and praise God for saving him. He goes to God’s altar to sacrifice and worship in his presence.

Ask: Why can we have the same hope as the psalmist in Psalm 43:5?

Answer: We can have hope because we have also been given salvation from the darkness. No life is going to be free from pain and struggle, but we can have hope that God will sustain us. He is our salvation and our God.



## ***What does that teach us?***

We either receive Jesus or reject him.

Ask: How is the statement “We either receive Jesus or reject him” counter-cultural to what some believe today?

Answer: Many people don’t believe that it’s that black or white. People may believe that there are many ways to God, not just through Jesus. But we reject that idea. There is one way, and that is through receiving Jesus.

Ask: How was Jesus’ rejection a part of God’s plan?

Answer: In God’s perfect plan, he orchestrated every step of Jesus’ life. Jesus had to be rejected because he had to die. Without his rejection, there would have not been a crucifixion. And without his death, there would be no forgiveness of sins.

We can be rescued.

Ask: What are wrong reasons that people think will earn them salvation?

Answer: People think that doing more good things than bad things can save them. They think that by going to church God will see how good they are and will save them. They may think that God will save everyone, so they don’t really need to do anything special.

Ask: What actually brings salvation?

Answer: Faith in Jesus Christ brings salvation. We could never earn our salvation. God gives it to us only because he loves us.

Ask: Another way the Bible describes our rescue is by calling it “an adoption.” In what ways does God adopt us?

Answer: God brings us into a new relationship with him. We were strangers, but he brought us in. We can call him “Father.”

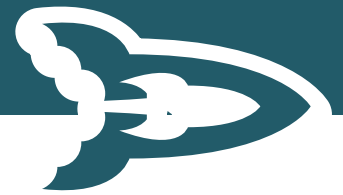
### Quote:

*Life in Christ can be illustrated by adoption. When a child is adopted, the significance is not a piece of paper he can place in a file folder. The real meaning of adoption is that he is brought into relationship with a family that is now his own. His existence is tied up with these new family members. They sleep in the same house. They sit and eat meals together. They exchange gifts at Christmas. They cry together when Grandma dies. They pass the flu to one another. Adoption is not an exchange; it’s a new relationship. It’s the beginning of new life. Life in Christ is not an exchange; it’s being drawn into an eternal relationship with Jesus Christ.[1]*

**Prayer Time:** Open to a blank page in your Bible Study Booklet. Spend some time writing a prayer to God. It doesn’t have to be fancy or perfect, God just wants to hear from you.

- “God, you and you alone bring salvation. There is nothing I can do to deserve that. Thank you for that free gift.”
- “This week, I pray that you would help me see the glory and beauty of Jesus in new and amazing ways.”
- “Father, I need the guiding of your light in these areas:\_\_\_\_\_. Help me to follow your path.”

[1] Matt Carter and Josh Wredberg, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in John*, (7).



## DAY TWO: HE IS GOOD (JOHN 10:7-15)

### LARGE GROUP SUMMARY:

- Large Group Main Theme: **He is Good. (John 10:7-15)**
- Large Group Main Points:
  - **Jesus is the door. (John 10:7-10)**
  - **Jesus is the Good Shepherd. John 10:11-15)**
  - **Jesus is our Protection and our Life.**

### SMALL GROUP REVIEW:

#### *What does Jesus say about himself?*

He is the good shepherd.

Ask: How is Jesus different from the thieves and the robbers?

Answer: The thieves and robbers don't care about the sheep; they are only concerned with what's best for themselves. Jesus is the opposite. His only concerns are with the sheep. John 10 says that the Good Shepherd would even lay his life down for the sheep. He does this because he loves the sheep, not because he wants to destroy the sheep.

Ask: What human shepherds are in our life?

Answer: We all have several influences, or "shepherds," in our lives. Parents, teachers, friends, pastors, etc.

Ask: In what ways do those human shepherds fail?

Answer: Those human shepherds will all fail, sooner or later, because they are all human. Either intentionally or unintentionally, they may treat you in a way that the Good Shepherd never would. Does this mean we should never listen to them? No, but we always must remember that no shepherd will be perfect like Jesus, and he should always be the one we look to ultimately.

#### *What does that teach us?*

We are sheep, and we need a shepherd.

Ask: Why do sheep need a shepherd?

Answer: Sheep need a shepherd because they are helpless. They have predators looking at them like easy meals. The shepherds keep the sheep safe.

Ask: Why do we need a shepherd?

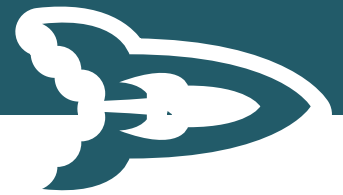
Answer: Life is hard. There are people looking to tear us down. Sin tempts us and causes us to stumble. But we need a shepherd who can protect us from sin and pick us up when we stumble.

We need Jesus to be our shepherd.

During your TAWG, you studied Isaiah 53, which describes our need for a shepherd, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6).

Ask: What is "the path" that God wants us to follow?

Answer: He lays out the path we should follow in the Bible. It's a path of obedience to him and his Word. It's a path of fighting sin and pursuing holiness.



Ask: How does God keep us on the path?

Answer: He shows us the path that we should follow in the Scriptures. The Spirit also nudges us back along the path by convicting us of sin. God also puts people in our lives that help us to pursue the holy path.

Ask: Why can it be a struggle for us to stay on the path that God has set for us?

Answer: The main struggle for us is sin. Sin lures us away from God and towards unrighteousness. Maybe at some point in your life, you tried to be on two paths at the same time: the righteousness path and the sin path. And maybe for a while you made it look like you were only on the “church” path, but sooner or later the sin path will draw you completely away from the righteousness path, because there can be no unrighteousness near God.

We can have Jesus as our shepherd.

Ask: Why does Jesus want to be our shepherd?

Answer: He wants to be our shepherd because he loves us. Even though we are dirty, smelly, and disobedient sheep, he still loves us and desires us to be in his fold. He offers us protection only by his grace and mercy.

Ask: As Jesus’ sheep, we are saved from things and to things. What are they?

Answer: We are saved from sin and unrighteousness. We are saved to peace, hope, and joy.

Quote:

*The Christian life is not simply being saved from something. We’re also saved to something. We’re not just protected from the destruction of sin. We’re given the joy of walking with Jesus. That doesn’t mean we constantly frolic in the meadow, where life is easy. Jesus doesn’t promise us a trouble-free life. He promises us joy that is bigger and lasts longer than our troubles. Even when we feel like armies are encamped around us, Jesus will spread out a banquet table for us in the sight of those enemies. If you think Christianity is primarily about obeying rules, you’re wrong. Christianity is about joy. God made us to enjoy him and his world. The first humans were only given one rule, and that rule was intended to protect their joy. God is not a cosmic bully, arbitrarily enforcing rules to make us miserable. God is infinitely happy, and he gives us rules to protect happiness, not prevent it.[1]*

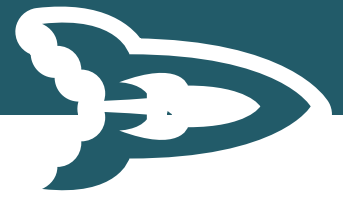
Ask: What does life look like for Jesus’ sheep?

Answer: It’s a life of joy under the watchful eye of the Good Shepherd. He cares for a us and protects us. His sheep are obedient to him, not because he is an abusive shepherd who beats his sheep, but because he loves them, and they love him. John describes this as “life and life abundantly.”

**Prayer Time**: Open to a blank page in your Bible Study Booklet. Spend some time writing a prayer to God.

- “God, I am your sheep, you are my shepherd, and you call me by name. Thank you for protecting me and giving me life.”
- “Lord, other shepherds in my life have failed me, but I trust that you will never fail me.”
- “Help me fight the sin that is leading me astray from your path. Help me to remember that your path is the best path.”

[1] Matt Carter and Josh Wredberg, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in John*, (217).



## DAY THREE: HE IS TRUTH (JOHN 14:1-6)

### LARGE GROUP SUMMARY:

- Large Group Main Theme: **He is Truth (John 14:1-6)**
- Large Group Main Points:
  - **There is a God, and there is a Way to know him.**
  - **There is More Than This World.**
  - **History is Not Just Heading Somewhere, but to Someone.**

### SMALL GROUP REVIEW:

Everything that we have been learning and studying about Jesus this week has been building a foundation for us. On the first day of Large Group, we learned that Jesus is God and that he was with God in the beginning (John 1). Yesterday, we learned that Jesus is the Good Shepherd and that he loves his sheep. And now, we are learning about what Jesus means when he calls himself “the way, the truth, and the life.” But remember, none of it matters without, first and foremost, Jesus also being God.

#### Quote:

*C.S. Lewis famously said, “I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. ... Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God.[1]”*

He is God, and that is why what Jesus says is important, and we should listen to what he has to say.

### ***What does Jesus say about himself?***

He is the way.

Ask: Why do you think that Jesus says he is “the way” instead of saying he is “a way”?

Answer: Because he is the only way to salvation and eternal life. There are no other gods that can offer this.

Ask: How does the idea that Jesus is the only way contradict what our culture says?

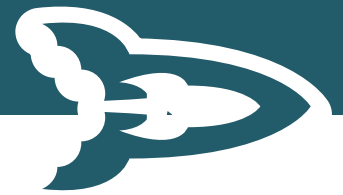
Answer: We may hear that there are many ways to God and that each person can find what works for them. Why do we think that this is wrong? Because that’s not what Jesus says. He makes it clear that he is the way, the only way. Anyone who tries to claim another way is in direct conflict with what Jesus says.

He is the truth.

Ask: Does it make you uncomfortable to hear that Jesus is the only way and truth? Why or why not?

Answer: It may make us uncomfortable because it goes against what much of the world says today. We all have loved ones that aren’t following the truth of God’s Word and are rejecting the way that Jesus has created.

He is the life.



Ask: Why would there be no hope if Jesus was not the life?

Answer: Our hope is fully firmly rooted in the resurrection of Jesus. If Jesus was not the life, then the resurrection would not have happened, and sin and death would not have been defeated. There would be no hope for our own resurrection during the final days.

**What does that teach us?**

These truths comfort us.

Ask: How can the disciples be comforted?

Answer: Jesus says in verse 1, “Believe in God; believe also in me.” Having faith in God brings comfort and joy. For those that have a relationship with Jesus, you can trust that your eternity is secure.

Ask: How do these truths free us?

Answer: Jesus never makes a promise that he won’t keep. He has promised to be faithful to us and to not abandon us. “Remember what Jesus promises: You do not need to rely on yourself, for he is the way. You do not need to live in uncertainty, for he is the truth. You do not need to fear death, for he is the life.”[2]

Ask: One of the Large Group main points was “**There is More Than This World.**” What does that mean that?

Answer: It means that after our finite lives on earth are over, we will be spending eternity somewhere. Our time on earth is limited. Jesus told his disciples that he was going to heaven to prepare a place for them. He does the same for all believers. Unfortunately, for unbelievers their eternity will be spent away from God in Hell.

Ask: How does that change how we live?

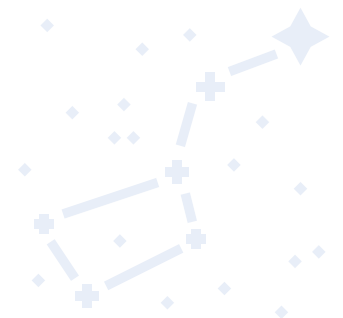
Answer: For believers, it should be a source of hope. We know that whatever bad things happen on Earth, we will be spending eternity with Jesus. It should also burden believers for unbelievers. We should share the Gospel with those that don’t know Jesus, because we want them to spend eternity with us in Heaven.

**Prayer Time**: Open to a blank page in your Bible Study Booklet. Spend some time writing a prayer to God.

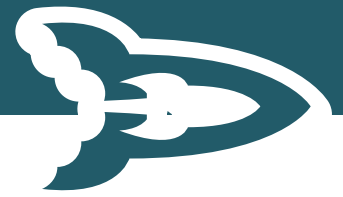
- “God, I pray for those in my life who do not know that you are the way, the truth, and the life. Please save these people: \_\_\_\_\_.”
- “Father, thank you for revealing yourself in Jesus. Thank you for the truth of your Word. Thank for you for teaching me \_\_\_\_\_ this week.”
- “God, help me hope to be found in you and you alone. Help me to remember that this world is not my home.”

[1] C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (55-56).

[2] Matt Carter and Josh Wredberg, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in John*, (295).







## DAY FOUR: HE IS BEAUTIFUL/WORTHY OF WORSHIP (JOHN 12:1-8)

### LARGE GROUP SUMMARY:

- Large Group Main Theme: **He is Beautiful/Worthy of Worship (John 12:1-8)**
- Large Group Main Points:
  - **The Beauty of Jesus's Remarkable Love (John 12:1-2)**
  - **The Beauty of Jesus's Infinite Wisdom**
  - **The Beauty of Jesus's Personal Invitation**

### SMALL GROUP REVIEW:

#### *What does Jesus say about himself?*

Worship pleases Jesus.

Ask: What is worship and why is it important?

Answer: Worship is an act of praise to God. It's telling God that he is the most valuable thing in our lives. It an outpouring of our love to him. John Piper puts it this way, "The inner essence of worship is to know God truly and then respond from the heart to that knowledge by valuing God, treasuring God, prizing God, enjoying God, being satisfied with God above all earthly things. And then that deep, restful, joyful satisfaction in God overflows in demonstrable acts of praise from the lips and demonstrable acts of love in serving others for the sake of Christ." [1]

Not only is it important because God commands us to, but it's also important because it shows our love for God and what he has done for us.

Ask: What are the ways the church worships today?

Answer: Our Sunday morning services are full of worship. The main thing we think of when it comes to worship is singing. But we also worship God by reading the Word, praying the Word, and preaching the Word when our church meets. We don't just worship when we're at church. We can worship by treating others with the love that Jesus showed us.

Jesus is worth it, no matter the cost.

Ask: How did Mary show that Jesus was worth it?

Answer: Mary sacrificed something extremely expensive literally at Jesus' feet. This showed Mary's love for Jesus and what he had done for her. If we think back to Piper's explanation of worship, Mary valued, treasured, and prized Jesus in her heart; her act was an overflow from the joy she felt from her Lord.

Ask: Why was Jesus worth it to Mary? Hint: Remember your TAWG from today.

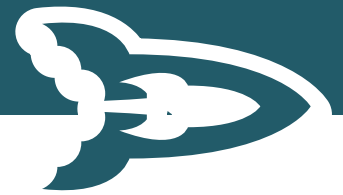
Answer: In your TAWG, you looked at the story of Jesus raising Mary's brother Lazarus from the dead. Mary was grateful Jesus did this for her family. She loved Jesus.

#### *What does that teach us?*

Jesus doesn't want our self-centered acts.

Ask: What are some self-centered acts of worship?

Answer: We can worship Jesus with our mouths, but our hearts can be focused on ourselves. Maybe you think that by worshiping people will see how "godly" you are. Or maybe by serving at church people will like you more. But Mary didn't do what she did to get something in return. Her act was totally sacrificial. We should strive to be like Mary.



Quote:

*Judas serves as a warning. He looked and spoke the part of a disciple. He could have supported his suggestion to give the money to the poor with hundreds of Old Testament verses. However, his motive was self-centered. He was only concerned about what he could get from Jesus. Judas looks good on the outside. Externally he seems moral, but money and possessions are more important to him than Jesus. What did he do when faced with the decision to give up his stuff or give up Jesus? Stuff wins. Sorry, Jesus. Mary, on the other hand, viewed possessions as an opportunity to bless Jesus. How do you view possessions?[2]*

We have reason to worship.

Ask: In what ways are our reasons to worship like Mary’s? How are they different?

Answer: Like Mary, Jesus has done so much for us. But unlike Mary, we have the benefit of being on the other side of the cross. We have a full account of Jesus death and resurrection. Because we know that Jesus died and rose again, in some ways we have more to worship God for than Mary did. But our motivation to worship is the same as Mary’s: love for Jesus.

Ask: Are there wrong motivations to worship Jesus? What are they?

Answer: This goes along with the point about self-centered acts of worship. Our motivation to worship should always be rooted in our love for God. We should not want to worship because it gives us an emotional response or feels good.

Mary’s gift points forward to Jesus’s gift: salvation.

Ask: How does this story point towards the cross?

Answer: Not only does Jesus tell his disciples that he will be leaving them, but also the gift that Mary gave was commonly used for burial purposes. She was anointing Jesus before he died. The sacrificial gift that Mary gives points forward to the great and terrible sacrificial gift that Jesus gave us. His sacrifice was of infinitely more value and cost than Mary’s.

**Prayer Time:** Open to a blank page in your Bible Study Booklet. Spend some time writing a prayer to God.

- “God, I know that these things are getting in the way of my worship to you: \_\_\_\_\_. Help me to toss them aside and worship you with a genuine heart.”
- “Lord, I don’t have a bottle of perfume like Mary, but I do have this: \_\_\_\_\_. I want to sacrifice that to you.”
- “Father, help me to love you like Mary loved you. Remove any Judas-like tendencies from my heart.”

[1] John Piper, “Ask Pastor John: What is Worship?”, <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-worship>.

[2] Matt Carter and Josh Wredberg, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in John*, (243).

