

# READ ME FIRST

## Introduction to *Peacemaking with Jesus: A Global Discipleship Guide* for Leaders

NOTE: There are many ideas below; feel free to summarize these points in your own words with your group members or leaders if you are training others; they can read the details and comment or ask questions as you go along.

### What is the purpose of the Guide?

- The purpose of this material is not to process a series of topics but to *help students grow in Christlikeness*. The title “Peacemaking with Jesus” implies being a peacemaker *as we live in union with Jesus* and become like him.
- One way to help students grow in Christlikeness is to regularly ask, *How would you like to grow as a disciple of Jesus after this discussion?*

### How can I create a safe and transformative space?

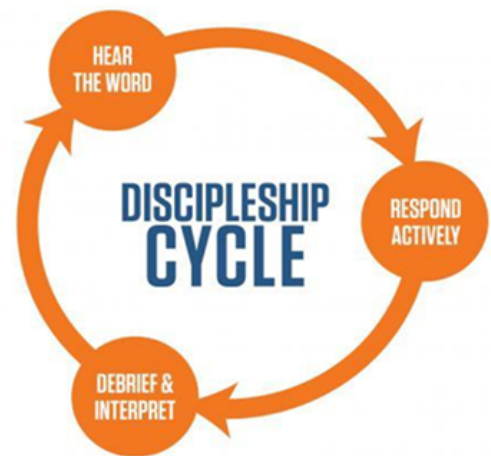
- The Holy Spirit is the one who makes us like Jesus, so *prayer for the Spirit* to accomplish this work is important. Encourage staff and group leaders to pray regularly that group members would, by the Spirit, be rooted and grounded in Jesus’ love (Eph 3:16-19).
- Craft a space that is welcoming by offering snacks and asking interesting questions as you get started. You may think of other creative ideas!
- Each chapter comes with a thematically relevant opening question, which you can text your students in the week, or few days, before your gathering. Opening questions are designed to engage students with the topic before they arrive at the gathering so that the content has a deeper impact.
- Each group should provide *love, support and accountability*. Suggested guidelines:
  - It is critical that others feel safe to share (or not share), so explain that everything shared in the group is confidential.
  - If you tend to talk easily, hold back a bit, notice who hasn’t spoken and express a desire to know their thoughts. If you are more hesitant to speak, venture out anyway!
  - Questions are welcome and encouraged; no question is inappropriate, but *the text* will be the basis for answering questions
  - Be aware of cultural dynamics in the ways the members communicate, e.g. directly or indirectly; invite others to clarify if what they’ve said isn’t clear
  - Though cultures regard time differently, aim to end at the specified time, allowing members to leave if they need to. But, if more conversation seems needed, invite all who can or want to stay.
- A good Scripture study must be aware of *context*; the cultural context of the students and the cultural and literary context of the bible passage you are studying.
  - Contextualizing for your members means *adapting the study* to your group by replacing or explaining difficult English, simplifying complex ideas, and realizing the different learning styles (by seeing or by hearing or by doing) of your members.

Remember that the richest bible studies are those that have many different cultures and nationalities represented!

- Contextualizing the Bible means that any text you study together has a context that needs to be understood. The *cultural context* for Jesus is Palestinian—for example, Jewish, patriarchal, rural, under Roman authority, and awaiting deliverance by God. The *literary context* is the passages and settings that come before and after your text—paying attention to these aids understanding and prevents wrong *interpretations* and inappropriate *applications*. Regularly ask, “How would this text apply in your own community/country?”

### What do we hope students will experience?

- *Obedience* to the Lord and experiencing him through this obedience (the Discipleship Cycle) is critical, so be sure to explain the *D-Cycle* in the first meeting; and save enough time for the debrief each week. (If D cycles are new to you, go [here](#) to get more help).
- Each study invites members to *memorize a Scripture* related to that study’s theme. Storing up God’s word in our heart (Ps 119:11) is a good practice. Not all members will do this consistently, but don’t give up; continue to model it yourself, and gently encourage others to continue trying.
- The Guide makes *service* done together a critically important part of discipleship, and the group will need help and encouragement to follow through; it is a great way to explain how D-cycles work as we respond to the Spirit by taking a risk.
- Through this Guide’s deep immersion in the story of Jesus--his responses and practices toward people--members will go and do likewise. That’s why the “Put yourself in the story” questions are so critical. Pray that Jesus or the main character of each study comes alive for people.
- Leading a study is a skill that most disciples should have, and will serve students when they return to their countries; so consider asking different students to lead the group for one week.
- *Critical thinking* is a Western concept that we believe will serve students well, under the leading of the Spirit. These studies should help develop critical thinking, which is the ability to ask questions, find truth, and be open to new insights.
- *Emotional intelligence* is another helpful concept. It is the ability to manage both your own emotions and understand the emotions of people around you. The questions asking students to imagine themselves in the stories should help with this.



### What help is available to lead?

- *There are facilitator's notes at the end of each study.* When you deliver (email/print) the study to or for the students, delete these notes. They are for *your* use in preparation and while you lead. Notes are not provided for each question but for specific questions where further information would be helpful.