

Come and See

SESSION

1

Gathering Around God's Word

(15–20 minutes)

Welcome

Begin on time by welcoming the group to the study. Ideally this should be the second time the group has been together. During the orientation meeting the previous week, group participants met to preview the material, discuss expectations of the study, and receive the assignment for the week. In case group participants who were not present at the orientation meeting arrive at the first session, be prepared to summarize as briefly as possible what they can expect from the study and what the study will expect from them.

Prayer

Establish a particular ritual of praying together at the start of the study. Keep in mind that the text of this study—the Bible—is a rich source of meaningful prayers. When appropriate, make use of other Bible translations when praying the Scriptures. Consider using some of Jesus' own prayers as recorded in John's Gospel: 11:41-42; 12:27; 17:11, 25-26.

Invitation From Scripture

When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." —John 1:38-39

Questions for Reflection

- How would you describe the image of Jesus you see in this week's readings from John?
- How would you answer Jesus' question "What are you looking for?"

Viewing the Video: Session 1, Part 1

The video component in the series has two parts, and both are central to the group's study. In Part 1, a montage of images accompanies a dramatic reading of a passage from the week's assigned Scriptures. This video segment is designed to invite reflection and discussion of specific scenes in John's Gospel. The purpose of this video is to make available to the group a rich, visual, and aural experience of Scripture. The recommended procedure for using this video is as follows: (1) **Silence:** Group members should clear their minds in anticipation of receiving a new insight from a fresh hearing of God's Word. (2) **Listening:** Group members should pay attention to the images and listen carefully to the narrative—that is, experience the story unfold. (3) **Discussion:** Thoughtful discussion should follow careful listening. Use the following set of questions for guiding the group's responses.

John 1:35-51

- What feelings did the images evoke for you?
- How did the art you viewed “interpret” the Scripture you heard?
- What new insight(s) into the passage did the video provide?

Encountering God's Word in the Text

(20–25 minutes)

The readings this week introduce us to the Jesus in John's Gospel and to the kind of life Jesus offers those who choose to follow him. Call attention to the instructions under the Day 2 assignment on page 14 of the participant book. As a total group, talk about the differences among all four Gospel writers' introductions of Jesus. Then listen to what persons wrote down as their summary of John 1:1-18.

Next, in groups of three or four, discuss the following questions:

- How does the Prologue in John prepare the reader for how John will tell the rest of the Jesus story?
- In reading the accounts of John the Baptizer in each of the Gospels, what does each writer seem to claim as essential features of the Baptizer?

Come and See

- What unique contribution to our understanding of Jesus does John the Baptizer make?
- Why do you think there is no mention in John of Jesus' baptism?

Listen to John 2:1-11 read aloud in the total group. Then ask:

- In this story, what elements appeal to the senses of smell, taste, touch, sound, and sight? What insights, if any, into the meaning of the narrative does attention to sensory details provide?
- If a sign is “a deed by means of which Jesus shows his true identity” (see page 21 in the participant book), then what do the actions of Jesus in John 1 and 2—calling followers, changing water into wine at a wedding, driving out money changers from the Temple—reveal about Jesus' identity?

❖ **In this week's readings, what did you “see” in Jesus? How did Jesus reveal God's glory? How do you understand Jesus as “the Word made flesh”?**

Examining God's Word in Context

(15–20 minutes)

In the Gospel of John, Jesus' words “come and see” suggest something more than a place on a map. The destination of a journey with Jesus cannot be understood ahead of time but can only be experienced along the way.

Viewing the Video: Session 1, Part 2

The focus in this section is on viewing Part 2 of the video. This video features two conversations: The first one involves biblical scholar Jaime Clark-Soles, and the second one takes place among a small group. Both conversations center around some portion of the week's readings in John and address a particular topic that emerges from them. One feature of each of the Part 2 video segments is an emphasis on a key “question” in the text and an “invitation” or declaration that Jesus provides in response to that question. The idea is that the question asked in John expresses a question believers still ask today, in some way or another, seeking to understand who Jesus is and what kind of life he offers those who choose to follow him. Each pair of conversations is designed to prompt further discussion in your

weekly study group. **Both conversations run back-to-back and are meant to be viewed without pausing between them.**

Prepare to View Video

Note the context of the question directed toward Jesus in John 1:38, “Where are you staying?” and Jesus’ invitation in John 1:39, “Come and see.” Have group members locate the two verses in their Bibles before starting the video.

Discuss After Viewing Video

The experience of viewing this video segment is designed to place the week’s readings in John in two contexts: (1) that of a scholar offering his or her insight into the texts and (2) that of a small group of people sharing their thoughts about the texts. On their own, the presentations may prompt sufficient discussion by the group. Simply following up the two conversations on the video with questions such as “What insight from scholar(s) or the small group caught your attention and why?” or “How did the conversation(s) inform your understanding of the week’s reading?” may be enough to start and sustain a discussion. In addition, consider using the following questions for further discussion:

- Imagine yourself being addressed by Jesus with the question “What are you seeking?” What would your response be?
- In what way is Jesus’ invitation to “come and see” an invitation to trust and a call to action? What kind of trust? What kind of action?
- When Jesus asked the two disciples, “What are you looking for?” they responded by asking, “Where are you staying?” What do you think they were expecting in response to their question?

Going Forth With God’s Word: An Invitation to Discipleship

(10–15 minutes)

Like the first disciples, we are invited to “come and see”—to venture on a journey with Jesus and our Christian community. In pairs, discuss the following questions:

- What did you discover when you responded to Jesus’ invitation to “come and see”?

- What signs have you seen in your life? How would you describe your own call to discipleship?

Call attention to the “For Reflection” section on page 23 in the participant book. Ask pairs to share responses to the questions.

If time permits, conclude this section of the group meeting by inviting persons to share their thoughts about the information printed in the participant book on page 24 under “For Further Reflection.”

Closing and Prayer

Turn to Session 2, and review the focus of the lesson and the assignments for the week ahead. Establish a pattern of inviting prayer concerns and praying together at this time.