

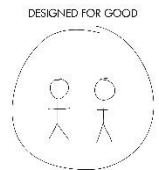
## Small Group Invitation to Faith Outline

1. **Prepare the group at the end of the Bible Study:** We don't just want to talk about the Bible, we want to live it out. If you have been following Jesus for a while, I would like us to consider responding by ... If you are new to the faith, I would like to give you an opportunity to take a step. First, let me share what it means to be a Christian, and then see how we each may want to respond.
2. **Share the Big Story diagram.**
3. **Give time to respond:** It's important for you to interact with God about this. Let's take a moment of silence and you ask God if he is inviting you to follow him. (20 seconds of silence) Let's each share how we are feeling or how we want to respond today.
4. **Thank each person for sharing and ask them for a follow up conversation.**

## BIG STORY DIAGRAM WORLD

### 1: DESIGNED FOR GOOD

In Genesis we see that God created the world to be a perfect place. He created us for right relationship with him, with each other, and with creation. Things were perfect!



### WORLD 2: DAMAGED BY EVIL

We all long for that kind of right relationship with each other. But we thought we could do better. Instead of placing God at the center of our lives, we put our own selfish desires at the center. And as a result, everything fell apart (reference World 2). We broke our relationship with God, with each other, and with all creation. Today we live in a broken, messed-up world. We have war, famine, child abuse, teen suicide, drug addiction, and so on. *Transition: Fortunately, God didn't leave us in this mess.*



### WORLD 3: RESTORED FOR BETTER

God relocated into our world in the person of Jesus. Jesus took all of our brokenness onto himself. By dying on the cross and rising again, he broke the power of our broken world. If we're willing to let God take his place at the center again, and if we are willing to trust Jesus with our lives, we can be restored to a right relationship with God. *Transition: But that's not the end of the story.*



### WORLD 4: SENT TO HEAL

Once we choose to follow Jesus, he sends us into the world to bring his love, power, justice wherever we go. We get to live and declare this good new.



## INVITATION

But, we have to make a decision. Will we live with ourselves at the center of the story or will we let God become the center of our story? In order to get to the 4th circle we have to trust Jesus with our brokenness. Why? If we are at the center of the story, we will try to heal the world using our own selfishness, which is not very effective. What would it take for you to trust Jesus with your life?

First, this means accepting that through his cross and resurrection, we can be different people and receive a change of heart both now and for eternity. And that means making him the center of your life and following his leadership for you. Are you ready to do that?

Second, we join in his mission on campus and in the world to live and share his good news. That might mean telling a friend about Jesus. Are you ready to do that?

## INVITATION TO FAITH CASE STUDY

April, a 3rd year staff, led her leadership team in making small group invitation to faith. April used our worksheet with her student leaders. Just as she anticipated, her students were nervous.

- Imagine that you are April, and you are doing the same thing with your leadership team. What sorts of objections do you think your leaders might voice? What are some possible ways to respond to those objections? **Discuss in 2's or 3's.**

## RESUME THE CASE STUDY

Some staff would hear the students' concerns and conclude that invitations to faith do not work in our context. April's students did have real fears that needed to be worked through. But that did not stop April from training them well. She cast some vision: "Many people are ready to become followers of Jesus...but they don't, because we never ask." She let them know that every student leader needed to do an invitation to faith sometime this semester in small group, and that she would help coach them, so they weren't in it alone. "The win is you taking a risk of faith. We don't know how our faithfulness may help someone later on down the road. God is in charge of response-- we are just in charge of asking. Let's just focus on doing our part to the best of our ability."

From there April helped calm their fears by giving her leaders the Page 1 Outline. She gave them permission to reword it and make it sound like them, but also making sure that they didn't avoid the gospel or the call to faith. Then she had them practice in groups. She floated from group to group, helping her students role play what they would do if their groups responded in various ways: if they respond yes, if they don't seem to respond at all, and if they freak out.

- When someone says "Yes" to following Jesus: "I'm so excited for you! I truly believe that this is the best decision that you'll ever make. I'd love to grab coffee with you this week to talk more about what this decision has meant for you. (We have told our leaders that we don't count decisions or conversions until we have met with them 1-on-1 to confirm that the new believer really wants to follow Jesus.)"
- If no one responded at all: "That's totally okay-- I'm just really excited that we were able to do this as a group. If any of you have more questions about Jesus or if you just have other questions, I would love to talk with you. Please let me know."
- If someone has a strong emotional outburst: "Taking steps of faith can be very personal. Kelsey is obviously having an intense moment right now. We want to create space for her to keep processing. Let's wrap up, and let her have a private moment. Kelsey, if you want to talk about what you are feeling, I'm here for you. Feel free to have a few moments by yourself."

We had the student leaders practice each response, just like it is written. Now they were ready.

So, what did God do?

- All 12 student leaders faithfully did the invitation to faith!
- They had positive response in 5 groups,
- They had no apparent response in 7.
- Overall, they had 19 students come to faith in those 5 groups, which is amazing.

They even had another student, Emmi, who wasn't a small group leader, decide that she could invite a friend to follow Jesus. So she got coffee with two friends and talked about where they were at with Jesus. During their discussion they brought all their questions and she closed with an invitation to faith right there. They both said yes to Jesus.

## SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE How to Help Non-Christians Move Through the 5 Thresholds During Your SG Meetings

	Set up	Discussion Question	Application
distrust→ trust	Spiritual growth happens best with friends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are Christians in your life whom you trust? What is it that you trust about them?</li> <li>• How can you grow as a trust-builder?</li> </ul>	Talk with a Christian friend about your spiritual background and ask about theirs.
indifferent→ curious	We want to be a community that practices curiosity...curiosity about each other, and about faith. What helps you practice curiosity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What about Jesus or Christianity makes you curious?</li> <li>• What about Jesus's life and teachings would you like to explore?</li> </ul>	Ask a Christian friend to look at a story from Jesus' life with you.
closed→ open	Faith needs to be personal, not just theoretical. It is crucial for each of us to experience God personally. This happens as we open real areas of our lives to God.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What inspires you about getting closer to God? Do you feel any concerns or barriers toward inviting God more deeply into your life?</li> </ul>	Pray and ask God to help with a specific need in your life.
wandering→ seeking	Being a seeker means you are intentionally looking for answers from Jesus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is one important question you need God to answer before you are willing to trust him with your life?</li> <li>• What would it take for you to give Jesus "a 2-week trial run?"</li> </ul>	<p>Let's do it! Jesus gets the next 2 weeks!</p> <p>--- Pray with a Christian and tell Jesus what your top question is. Ask him to build trust with you.</p> <p>---Commit to praying to Jesus daily for 10 min with a Christian friend</p> <p>---Commit to reading scripture</p>
seeker→ follower	Everyone has a choice. You can live your life filled with the love of God. Or you can live your life without being filled with God's love.	<p>-What might change if you opened your soul to receive God's love for you?</p> <p>-What is holding you back from accepting Jesus as the leader and savior of your life today?</p>	<p>I want to invite you to consider accepting Jesus as the leader and savior of your life.</p> <p>Pray with me right now and open your soul to God and be filled with His Spirit and love</p>
follower→ witness	God and all of heaven rejoices when one person repents. Heaven is throwing a party over you today! As believers we want to celebrate with you. Let's spend the next 3 weeks helping you grow as a witness.	<p>-Who do you want to tell about your decision to follow Jesus?</p> <p>-What do you think about sharing your story with others?</p>	<p>Go out with some friends and celebrate your new relationship with Jesus.</p> <p>Pray with me now for God to highlight a few friends with whom to share your story. Share your experience of God's love with these friends.</p>