

Journey With Jesus this Winter @ Grace

From January 10-March 28, Grace Church is reading through the book of Luke together! Youth, young adults, and their families are invited to participate:

- *Use any Bible or online Bible to read two chapters individually or as a family each week by the date listed (e.g. read chapters 1-2 by Jan 10). If you miss a week, you can catch up, or just skip ahead!
- *Luke is all about Jesus' call to mission and service, so use the discussion and action guide to go deeper with a particular story each week and do some service or advocacy together as a family. Older elementary-age children or young adults may also enjoy these challenges.

Youth Family Discussion and Action Guide

Jan 10

Ch 1-2: Mary's Song About Justice

In these chapters, Jesus' birth is announced by an angel, and Jesus and John the Baptist are born, setting a stage for a new future in Israel and in the world.

Read: Luke 1:46-55. Mary sings this song of praise and of justice, called the "Magnificat," when she learns that she is going to be the mother of the Messiah. In some countries, such as India, Guatemala, and Argentina, the Magnificat has been banned from being read aloud for fear that it is too revolutionary ("he has brought down the mighty from their thrones!").

Discuss: Watch this YouTube video, "[How the Grinch Learned the Magnificat.](#)" How does Mary's song set the stage for what Jesus is going to be all about?

Act: Mary says that God has lifted up the lowly, and filled the hungry with good things. Can you think of someone in your life (a neighbor, a relative, a church member) who might need to feel lifted up? Could you make a card or note or drop off a gift? Or, can you think of someone who might be hungry? Bake some bread for a neighbor who's unemployed, or take shelf stable foods to ECHO.

Jan 17

Ch 3-4: Jesus' Mission to Free the Captives

In these chapters, Jesus gets baptized, tempted in the wilderness, does his first public teaching, and starts healing people!

Read: Luke 4:14-30. This is Jesus' first public sermon—in his hometown of Nazareth! Note that Jesus quotes the Old Testament, the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1-4) about good news for the poor, freedom for the captives, etc.

Discuss: Why do you think the people at the temple react so negatively to Jesus' sermon? Where does Jesus find the courage to say these things anyway?

Act: Jesus talks about God's mission of freedom for captives, letting the oppressed go free. As a family, talk about or research a group of people that are "captives" or "oppressed" in some way (examples might be people in prison, victims of human trafficking, Christians in certain nations, racial or ethnic minorities). Make a donation to a group that supports freedom for this group, or write letters to elected leaders or others who could help free those in bondage.

Jan 24

Ch 5-6: Jesus Offers Healing

In these chapters, Jesus calls some disciples to follow him, starts healing people, and offers a famous sermon.

Read: Luke 5:12-16 and Luke 6:6-11. Remember, to touch someone with leprosy (someone unclean!) or to “work” on the Sabbath (against the rules!) were both considered inappropriate.

Discuss: There are many factors at play in both of these healings: Sabbath laws, clean/unclean laws, people’s health, people knowing they’re cared about. What does Jesus prioritize and why? We don’t have the same Sabbath or “uncleanness” barriers today, but what are some of the things that get in the way of people’s healing and health today?

Act: How can you follow Jesus and be an agent of healing today? Think about both physical and mental health and choose one of the following, or come up with your own idea to promote health and healing: Reach out to a friend who may be depressed or anxious to offer support and love. Make or buy face masks and offer them to a homeless shelter or a neighbor. Or check out Kiva.org, where you can “loan” \$20 or more to someone in a developing country—choose a project related to health (clean water, nutrition, medical needs).

Jan 31

Ch 7-8: Jesus Attends to the Suffering

In these chapters, Jesus heals a lot more people, tells a few parables, and calms a storm as more and more people begin to follow him and take note of his remarkable ministry.

Read: Luke 8:40-56. Jairus, the synagogue leader, was a person of relative power and status in society, while the woman who was bleeding for 12 years can’t get help from doctors, isn’t even given a name, and largely seems forgotten by society.

Discuss: Why do you think Jesus stopped in the middle of an urgent and time-sensitive trip to heal Jairus’ daughter? How do you think Jairus felt as he waited? How do you think the woman felt as Jesus stopped and took time not only to heal her but also to hear her story?

Act: Most of us are like Jairus—we need help sometimes but usually have access to what we need to make it. But there are lots of people like this forgotten woman, suffering for years without the help, without people listening to their story, without recognition from society—immigrants, people of color, people living in poverty. Take some time this week to read or listen to their stories and hear their suffering (read a book or article – The Hate U Give or Dear Martin are great books about Black experience--watch a YouTube video, etc.) How will you respond to these stories?

Feb 7

Ch 9-10: Jesus Expands the Definition of “Neighbor”

In these chapters, Jesus sends his disciples out on mission, feeds and heals people, and begins to foretell his suffering and death.

Read: Luke 10:25-37. The Samaritans and Jews had a long history as enemies, so this story reminds everyone listening that our neighbors are not always the people we expect.

Discuss: If you were re-writing this story today, who would be the priest and the Levite that just walked by? Who would be the Samaritan who stopped to help? Who is your unexpected neighbor?

Act: Muslims are often portrayed as the enemies of Christians, but they are also our literal neighbors here in Springfield! Watch this [TED talk from a young Muslim](#) about how he understands his faith as a peaceful one. Or, as a way of building understanding and peace, text a Muslim friend and ask about their favorite traditions or stories from their faith.

Feb 14

Ch 11-12: Jesus Speaks Against Greed

In these chapters, Jesus teaches about prayer, and denounces hypocrisy and greed.

Read: Luke 11:13-21 (Bonus Luke 11:22-34). Jesus tells this story of a greedy man just before he reminds everyone “do not worry” for God will take care of them.

Discuss: What do you think it means to be “rich toward God”? How did greed distract this man from a relationship with his brother? How do possessions distract us from what’s important?

Act: Jesus knows that wealth and possessions can distract us from loving God and our neighbors. How could you simplify your life? Do you have clothes, books, or old toys you could donate to a charity, little free library, or a “Buy Nothing” group? Could you wait on getting something new and be satisfied with the things you already have?

Feb 21

Ch 13-14: Jesus Teaches about True Hospitality

In these chapters, Jesus teaches in parables and instructs the disciples and Pharisees alike on what true hospitality looks like.

Read: Luke 14:7-24. Notice that Jesus is at a Pharisee’s house when this teaching takes place—but even the religious leaders care more about their own honor than about welcoming others.

Discuss: If Jesus was talking to you today, who would he tell you to invite into your life or into your home (verse 12-13)? *When you give a party, do not invite _____ but invite _____ and you will be blessed.*

Act: How can we show hospitality during pandemic? Maybe it’s as simple as showing people in our neighborhood and our community we’re glad they’re around. Write cards (“In a hard year, it’s good to remember our blessings--we’re glad you’re our neighbor”) and put them on your neighbors’ doorsteps. Or send a supportive message to a group of people who aren’t always welcomed (a religious/ethnic minority group, a school club that supports people with differing abilities, etc.)

Feb 28

Ch 15-16: Jesus Shows How God Seeks the Lost

These chapters include the famous parables of the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son.

Read: Luke 15:1-10. Notice how much energy the shepherd spends trying to find the lost sheep when there are 99 perfectly good ones right there. Same thing with the woman—how much time she spends looking for one little coin that has been lost.

Discuss: Why do you think the one sheep wandered away, or got lost? Why would the shepherd care so much about one sheep? Why would one coin be so important to the woman?

Some people applied these parables to LGBTQ people. What if the sheep wandered away because the flock rejected it? What if a gay person left the church because the church judged them? In this story, God goes to extra lengths to show love to those who've wandered or been chased away.

Act: Don't let any LGBTQ people in your life think God doesn't love them. Follow @beloved_arise or @aqueersearchforfaith on Instagram, and share affirming messages of God's love for your queer friends to see. Or, think about how your school, youth group, church, or sports teams could be more welcoming and loving to LGBTQ people; talk to leaders about the changes you want to see.

Mar 7

Ch 17-18: Jesus Blesses the Children

Jesus teaches and heals, blesses children, and reminds another rich guy that attachment to riches can be a barrier to relationship with God.

Read: Luke 18:15-17.

Discuss: People have always wondered what it is about children that Jesus thinks is so beautiful. What are some possibilities about why the kingdom of God belongs to "such as these." What might it mean to receive the kingdom of God like a little child?

Act: This week, do something kind for younger children! Call your baby cousin on the phone, make special playtime for your younger sibling, or make a meal for one of the families in our church with a new baby—(contact Pastor Katie for details if you want to do this one!).

Mar 14

Ch 19-20: Jesus Grieves Violence and Injustice

In these chapters, Jesus enters Jerusalem like a king on a donkey, cries over the injustice he sees, and fields tough questions from religious leaders.

Read: Luke 19:41-48. As you approach the city of Jerusalem, which is set on a hill, you can see the whole thing from a distance.

Discuss: Why do you think Jesus cried when he saw Jerusalem? Have you ever stepped back from your community or country to see the whole thing all at once, and felt like mourning what it is? Why do you think the people buying and selling at the temple made him mad?

Act: Jesus reminds us that we can mourn violence and injustice, and also speak out forcefully against it, like he does at the Temple. What's something you want to speak out about? Will you say it on social media, write a letter to a newspaper, tell your church or your friends?

Mar 21

Ch 21-22: Jesus Declines to Use Violence

This can be a tough section to read. Jesus is not backing down from his teachings even as his life is in danger. He eats dinner with his friends, prays on the mount of olives, and is arrested.

Read: Luke 22: 47-53. Compare this to what Jesus says in Luke 6:27-31.

Discuss: Why do you think Jesus told the disciples not to fight back with the sword when Jesus was being arrested?

Author and pastor Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove calls this a core value of those who follow Jesus: that "we would rather die than kill." What do you think about this idea? Do you agree or disagree?

Act: There's lots of political division and even violence in our city and nation right now. Find a busy sidewalk or parking lot and write chalk messages of peace and forgiveness for people to find.

Mar 28

Ch 23-24: Jesus Brings New Life and Joy!

In Chapter 23, the darkest days are here, as Jesus is interrogated, sentenced to death, and executed on the cross. But then in Chapter 24 we get to celebrate -- Jesus rises and appears to his friends.

Read: Luke 24:13-49. When Jesus comes back, he is known to the disciples in the physical act of eating a meal together, touching his skin, watching him eat a piece of broiled fish.

Discuss: Why does the Bible make such a big deal about Jesus coming back in the body, not just in the spirit? Do you think humans will have bodies or just spirits when we are raised to eternal life? Why or why not? How does your answer impact the way we live now?

Act: Following Jesus is not JUST about doing hard work to love others! It's also a life of celebration and joy—and, part of that is living life in the body, eating and drinking and walking and moving. As you move into Easter time, do something that you enjoy: cook and eat, go for a walk or hike, create something with your hands! Jesus came to give us abundant life, in our spirits and in our bodies!

HAPPY EASTER!

Thanks for Journeying Along with Jesus this Winter at Grace!