PRAXiS



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HOW TO USE

This discussion guide is designed for you, leaders, to guide your group through this Praxis video series. This series is structured as a conversation based around engaging questions intended to promote thought-provoking discussion throughout each episode. When these questions pop up on the screen, hit pause and turn the question to the group. **Each episode includes the following:**

BIG IDEA

We highlight the big idea behind the episode, emphasizing key scriptures or quotes, to give you and your group an idea of what will be covered in the video. Feel free to share this before pressing play, or after to summarize what was taught into a concise thought.

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

If the video question does not invite participation, use these questions to promote further interest. These questions are simply reworded to present the idea in a different way. We invite you to be creative and present the questions in a way that engages your group.

DISCUSS

The video questions are created to encourage conversation and to allow the formation of thoughts and ideas – inviting participants to wrestle with and begin sharing their beliefs and experiences. This is just the beginning. The discussion questions exist to go deeper and to invite more intimate and transformational conversation.

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CONTEXT

IN A CHURCH OR LARGE GROUP SETTING

This guide is designed to be used by a leader, so begin by identifying those leaders and getting a guide into each of their hands. If you are watching the episodes with more than 20 people, we would advise identifying multiple leaders and having them focus on a section of the group. When the video questions arise, have them turn to their "small group" and discuss the questions openly. Time dependent, ask each smaller group to share with the larger group what was shared. This invites more people to share without the intimidation of a large group setting. Whether you keep these groups consistent from week to week, or you mix it up, remaining the same for the discussion portion of each episode will allow for greater depth and increased transparency.

IN A SMALL GROUP SETTING

Every leader in the room should have one of these guides prior to beginning the video. It can be helpful to identify one leader as the facilitator, and others as helpers. The facilitator can guide the video question time, with helpers stepping in as needed based on the direction of conversation. Come discussion time, gathering into small groups where one or two leaders oversee a small group can invite quieter participants to engage and allow for greater depth of conversation.

AS AN INDIVIDUAL

While this discussion guide is designed with group participation in mind, the content is something we believe is valuable for every individual. We advise watching these episodes with a pen in hand and paper before you. Have your Bible handy and get ready to pause the video. You get to take this at your pace! When Scripture is referenced, open your Bible and read along – when questions are asked, hit pause and write out your answer. If questions arise in your mind that you are unable to answer, write them down to ask later.

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GET READY

Take a breath, the pressure is off. We are not asking you to teach, or to have the answer to every question. Your role is to guide, facilitate, but most importantly to **listen** and **invite**.

Invite questions. Invite conversation.

This discussion guide was created to provide direction for the conversation, but not to limit or harness the group. During the video, listen to what the participants say. Do not feel the need to answer the question yourself. Be comfortable with silence. Give it fifteen seconds before you use a supporting question. Let them think.

"When will I know when to press play again?" Trust me, you'll know. Conversation will end, or you may even have to re-focus the group if they go down a rabbit trail. If a valuable question or topic is sparked during the video, write it down and say you will return as a group to it during the discussion time.

When it comes time for discussion, follow the pace of the group. Let them naturally guide the conversation around what content stuck out from the video, or what questions were sparked for them. You are not confined to the questions in this guide. Pick the ones that stand out to you or add your own. This time will look different for each group and that's intentional.

Listen and Invite.

THE BIBLE

FIVE EPISODES | PRAXIS SERIES 9

BIG IDEA

One of the reasons so many of us don't read our Bibles regularly comes from a misunderstanding of what the Scriptures are. We see the Bible as an ancient rule book with a whole bunch of disconnected information about God, rather than a whole grand story that showcases who God is.

Our desire is that we would be captivated by the grand story of Scripture, which would lead us to the place where we want to read it, know it, and discover the truth within it.

THE BIBLE

EPISODE 1 | SET UP

BIG IDEA

The Bible tells one profound story. All the writings, which are written in different genres, from history, to poetry, to eyewitness accounts, to personal letters and narrative ALL point in the same direction. They are all about the same characters, working to accomplish the same mission and goal.

KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

Inerrant: Bible is without error, meaning what it says is true, and the way it was supposed to be written.

Inspired: God helped to write the Bible. God did not physically write the words in the Bible, but we believe that He led the authors by His Spirit to write and record the things that they wrote.

Characters: God is our great protagonist – or the hero of the story, the one who we are all cheering for. Our antagonist – or the bad guy – is Satan, or the devil, the great adversary to God Himself, who will spend the entire narrative trying to destroy the relationship between God and mankind permanently.

Central Plot: God's endless, tireless, faithful pursuit of relationship with His most special creation – us.

2 Timothy 3:14-17: But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. **You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood**, and they have **given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus.** All Scripture is **inspired** by God and is **useful** to **teach** us what is **true** and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It **corrects us** when we are wrong and **teaches us to do what is right**. God uses it to **prepare** and **equip** his people to do every good work.

2 Peter 1:12-21

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **How about you? What has been your understanding of the Bible? What is it? How do you describe it to others?**
  - If a non-believer were to ask you what the Bible is, what would you say?
  - What do you believe the Bible is all about?
- **What are some of the stories in the Old Testament that you feel point towards Jesus?**
  - Is there a specific story in the Old Testament that stands out to you? How has it impacted you?
  - What is our relationship with the Old Testament to be? How are we to interpret and follow what we discover?
- **Do you see the Bible as relevant or important? Why or why not?**
  - Do you believe the Bible is still relevant today? Why or why not?
  - If someone were to say to you, "the Bible is just an old book, it is not relevant today" – how would you reply?

DISCUSS

- **How did this episode influence your view on, and relationship with, the Bible?**
- **What is your relationship with the Bible? How frequently, and why, do you read it?**
- **Have you ever experienced falling more in love with Jesus through the Scriptures? Is there a specific story or verse that stands out to you as shaping your view of God?**
- **According to 2 Timothy 3:14-17 what is Scripture and why is it important?**
- **Read 2 Peter 1:12-21. What stands out to you about what Peter says about Scripture? What questions arise for you?**

NEXT STEPS

What is one way you can be more intentional about spending time in your Bible? (*for example, verse a day on the Bible app, using audio Bible during day to day tasks, setting a specific time to read, starting a plan, etc.)*

THE BIBLE

EPISODE 2 | INTRODUCTION & CONFLICT

BIG IDEA

Our origin story (**creation**), our grand conflict (**the fall**), and our desperate need (**because we are broken and separated**) for things to be made right once again.

KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:1-5: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

Genesis 1:26-31: I heard a loud shout from the throne saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will love with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever."

Genesis 3: The details of the conflict, the Fall of humanity.

Romans 5:12: When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. Still, everyone died—from the time of Adam to the time of Moses—even those who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. Now Adam is a symbol, a contrast to Christ, who was yet to come.

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **Why does the creation story matter?**
  - What does the creation story teach us about God?
  - What does it mean to you, that you bear the image of God? How does this impact the way you live?
- **Do you find it easy to own up to your mistakes, or do you often find yourself looking for a way out?**
  - How does pride influence your decision to confess or not?
  - Satan often uses shame and guilt to try and make us blame other people, experiences, or our family background to justify our sin. Would a greater understanding of God's amazing grace and forgiveness through Jesus help you to own your own weaknesses and bring them before God?

DISCUSS

- **How did this episode influence your view on, and relationship with, the Bible?**
- **Read Genesis 3:1-11. What stands out to you about the serpent? What stands out to you about Adam and Eve's behaviour?**
- **Why would God make the garden, put mankind in it, and give them that freedom to begin with? Why not just take away their ability to choose anything but Him?**
- **How does the sin of Adam and Even impact us today?**
- **Has there ever been a time in your life where you felt God evidently pursuing you? Seeking to restore relationship amidst the brokenness? What was it like, how did you feel?**

NEXT STEPS

What area of your life are you fighting for independence and control – choosing self, instead of God? What is one thing you can do this week to choose God's way instead?

THE BIBLE

EPISODE 3 | RISING TENSION

BIG IDEA

The series of obstacles the protagonist must overcome. Each obstacle is usually more difficult, with higher stakes than the previous one.

KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

Video quote - Brody Jespersen: "When it comes to the grand story of the Bible, what we have spanning from Genesis 4 all the way to the end of the Old Testament in Malachi 4 is the rising tension of the story. The obstacles that the protagonist (God) must overcome increase in difficulty and hold higher stakes than the previous ones. The gap that separates humanity and God continues to widen."

Video quote - Brody Jespersen: "The story of Moses is vivid and detailed. And the brokenness of man is powerfully on display: From Pharaoh's unwillingness to release the Israelites, to the people's immediate complaining about their living conditions after their ultimate liberation! We see on display humanity in its purest form – the journey from joy and elation to anger and frustration that all of us can absolutely relate to. Which is a theme we will find all throughout the bible. It's real people, who go through real situations, and act in real ways – just like most of us would act. Making it so easy to find ourselves within it!"

Biblical stories highlighted: Genesis 6 (Brokenness of the world); Genesis 6-8 (The flood and Noah's ark); Genesis 37-45 (Joseph); Exodus (Moses and the Israelites); Leviticus (sacrificial system).

Video quote - Brody Jespersen: "Mankind was broken, really broken. After the clean start over again in the flood, humanity quickly became just as they were before - broken. The attempted solution - the temple sacrificial system, proved to be only temporary, and would not finally and fully satisfy the need for justice, but pointed towards something, someone, who would one day make things finally right again."

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **Have you ever felt like God was different in the Old Testament versus the New Testament?**
  - What role does the arrival of the character of Jesus play in this?
  - When you compare the Old and New Testament, what stands out to you about God in each?
- **Have you ever thought about the Old Testament as leading up to, and foreshadowing the story of Jesus Christ?**
  - Does the Old Testament feel disconnected from the story of Jesus? Why or why not?
- **How can God's pattern of revealing Himself in the Old Testament, encourage us in seasons when we feel as though God is silent?**
  - Have you ever gone through a season where you felt God was silent? How did you feel?

DISCUSS

- **How did this episode influence your view on, and relationship with, the Bible?**
- **Reflecting on what Brody taught, and your knowledge of the Old Testament, are there any specific stories that stand out to you as reflecting the rising tension between God and man best? Why do they stand out?**
- **Where do you see the brokenness of mankind on display today? What evidence is there of our constant desire for control and elevating self?**
- **How can we encourage ourselves, and/or others, when we feel God is silent? When the struggles are too difficult? The wait to long? What can we do and say?**

NEXT STEPS

What tension exists between you and God currently? Think deeper than your sinful state and reflect on specific struggles. Pray for one another in this area.

THE BIBLE

EPISODE 4 | CLIMAX

BIG IDEA

Jesus is everything.

KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

John 1:1-9: In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

John 1:14: So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

God was here, His mission was clear, He is going to set things right, once and for all.

John 1:30-31: He is the one I was talking about when I said, 'A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.' I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel."

To Israel… to the people whom God chose to be a blessing to the entire world… John is saying: "Jesus is here to save us completely, so people of Israel pay attention!"

1 Corinthians 15:55-57: Oh death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **What does God's mission of reconciliation teach us about His character?**
  - How would you define reconciliation?
  - Why does it matter that God is always about reconciliation?
- **What is it about Jesus that helps you "get it"? Does this help you continue following Jesus in seasons of doubt?**
  - The disciples chose to follow Jesus, even though at times things were difficult to comprehend – why have you chosen to follow Jesus?
  - When faced with doubt in Jesus – what story, thoughts, songs, etc. come to mind that help you trust in Him?

DISCUSS

- **How did this episode influence your view on, and relationship with, the Bible?**
- **Is there a specific story in the gospels about Jesus that stands out to you as significant? How has it impacted your view of Jesus?**
- **If someone were to ask you "why did Jesus have to die?" What would you say? Why would you choose the words you do?**
- **How is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the climax of the grand story of Scripture?**
- **Read John 6:66-69. What power is there in Peter's statement "to whom would we go?" What is he implying here and what can we learn from this?**

NEXT STEPS

Spend time in prayer thanking Jesus for who He is, what He has done, and what He continues to do in your lives.

THE BIBLE

EPISODE 5 | RESOLUTION & ELLIPSES

BIG IDEA

The story is still being written, and our lives play a part in the pages to come.

KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

Acts: Documents the story of the early church and it's powerful and profound movement after Jesus left earth.

Epistles: Letters that were written by the apostles, often sent to early churches that they established or had influence within.

Revelation: Simply put, we have John getting a behind the scenes view of the spiritual realm. Effectively, God pulls back the curtain for John to see what's happening in the background – the spiritual realities that are taking place, behind the curtain of our physical realities, and also the physical realities that will take place in the future.

Revelation 21:1-4: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.

2 Peter 3:3-12: Addresses those who are struggling with delay in Jesus' return. These are two things Peter said should stand out to us as instruction and direction in how to live out our faith:

1. We should be living lives that reflect holiness and godliness to the best of our ability.
2. Hurry along God's kingdom by being active participants in God's kingdom here on earth right now.

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **What draws you into a story? What keep your attention, or emotionally engages you?**
  - What types of stories do you like most? Why?
  - Why do we so often become emotionally engaged with stories? Whether books, movies, or someone's' life story?
- **If Jesus were to return tomorrow, how would that change the way you share the gospel and participate in what God is doing?**
  - Why should Jesus imminent return create a sense of urgency in your heart to share the gospel?
  - How are you currently participating in what God is doing? Where are you serving or engaging?

DISCUSS

- **How did this episode influence your view on, and relationship with, the Bible?**
- **How has your view on the Bible changed throughout this series?**
- **What does it look like for you to re-engage with God's word?**
- **What is our role in God's ongoing grand story? What lies, fears, or hesitations hold you back from actively participating in what He has for you?**
- **How can you actively engage in hurrying along God's Kingdom? What passion, skill and/or gifting do you have that you could use for Jesus?**

NEXT STEPS

What is your next step as far as being part of the story? If it is saying "yes" to Jesus for the first time and allowing yourself to step into this story, talk with one of your leaders! If it's re-engaging, what is one thing you can do to go deeper with Jesus?