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.

PARABLES

THREE EPISODES | PRAXIS SERIES 2

BIG IDEA

The gospels are saturated with parables, stories that Jesus shared that had hidden meaning. These stories were written in a familiar context that the original audience would understand, but that does not mean they are irrelevant for us today.

Through this three-part series we discover what we can learn from the unforgiving servant, the unprepared bridesmaids, and the unwise stewards. We trust that you will wrap up this series aware not only of the gifts you've been given, but the value in using them wisely!

PARABLES

EPISODE 1 | THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

BIG IDEA

Forgiven people forgive people.

KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant: Matthew 18:21-35

Matthew 18:33: "And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?"

Video Quote – Brody Jespersen: "The connection Jesus was trying to make was that as children of God ***all*** our sins have been forgiven by faith in Jesus Christ. So when someone sins against us, we should forgive from the heart no matter what the offense or how often it has happened. Because we have been forgiven ***everything***."

Colossians 1:13-14: For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.

Video Quote – Brody Jespersen: "Forgiveness is giving up your right to get even, or to get revenge. It's turning the person, and the situation, over to God who is Just."

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **Have you ever gotten even with someone? Tell us about it**
  - Have you ever gone back and forth with friends doing practical jokes or pranks? Tell us about it.
  - Why do you think we feel the need to seek revenge on those who have done us wrong?

- **How does knowing that God has forgiven all your sins, motivate you to forgive others?**
    - Does the fact that you are unconditionally forgiven shape how you extend forgiveness to others? Why or why not?
    - What obstacles stand in your way for seeking, or receiving forgiveness?
- **How would people extending unconditional forgiveness shape our community?**
    - Imagine if your current community was quick to forgive one another, what would be different?
    - How does giving and receiving forgiveness change a person? Imagine if that change were community wide, what would be different about that community?

DISCUSS

- **What about forgiveness brings freedom?**
- **Have you ever forgiven someone, then felt unforgiveness rising in you? Share how this felt? What did you do in response?**
- **If able, share an experience you have had with the control unforgiveness can bring (*think of feelings of fear, anger, hatred).***
- **Is there a relationship in your life that requires forgiveness? How has it/does it impact you? If you are the wrong doer, what is stopping you from apologizing, from seeking forgiveness? If you have been wronged, what is stopping you from approaching them?**

NEXT STEPS

Spend time in prayer focused on forgiveness. If your group is comfortable to share their situation and pray aloud, do so. If not, encourage the kids to ask God if there is anyone they need to apologize to, or anyone they need receive forgiveness from.

PARABLES

EPISODE 2 | THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

BIG IDEA

God calls us to be good stewards of what He's given us. God has given you gifts, and abilities, and resources, and He wants you to use them!

KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

The Parable of Talents: Matthew 25:14-30

Matthew 25:21: The master was full of praise. "Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!"

Video Quote – Brody Jespersen: "But God has given you special talents, abilities and sensitivities and resources that he wants you to use to build up the people around you and to fulfil his purposes."

Video Quote – Brody Jespersen: "I want you to know that you don't have to change who you are to use the giftings that God has given you. He's wired you a certain way and he delights when you participate in his purposes. He's given you gifts, so use them.

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **Share a time when you were tempted to waste money, time or something else. How did it go?**
  - What do you waste your time and/or money on? How does it feel?
  - Do you find you intentionally waste (*time, money, resources*) or does it happen absent mindedly, accidently?
- **Describe one way you think God has gifted you. If you're not sure maybe someone near you can share a gift they see in you.**
  - Do you know your spiritual gifts? If so, share. If not, what do you think they might be?
  - What is the difference between being talented at something and having a spiritual gift?

- **What do you want to try doing to see if it's an area of gifting?**
  - Imagine if your current community was quick to forgive one another, what would be different?
  - How does giving and receiving forgiveness change a person? Imagine if that change were community wide, what would be different about that community?

DISCUSS

- **How would you define stewardship?**
- **What do you think is the purpose of spiritual gifts?**
- **Why is it important for followers of Jesus to know their gifts?**
- **How can we determine whether we are using our gifting for their God given purpose?**
- **Has comparison ever stolen or distorted how you view your own gifts and talents? Why are we so quick to compare our gifts to others?**

NEXT STEPS

Unsure of your spiritual gifts? Grab a device and take a youth spiritual gifts test. *We recommend this test:* https://spiritualgiftstest.com/tests/

What is one way you can use your gifts this week to bless others?

PARABLES

EPISODE 3 | READY OR NOT, HERE HE COMES

BIG IDEA

Christ is coming back, and He calls us to be ready. Preparation involves examining our hearts and truly living for Christ.

KEY TERMS & SCRIPTURE

The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids: Matthew 25:1-13

Matthew 18:33: "And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?"

Video Quote – Brody Jespersen: "Being a Christian means actively pursuing a pure heart, and just like most good things in life, it requires effort. If you've only committed your life to Jesus in the formal sense, and haven't actually invited him into your heart to make changes, you're not ready."

Video Quote – Brody Jespersen: "The bible tells us that if we live alert to what God is saying, with a sense of wonder and belief, then we will be filled with light. This is the key to preparedness. It's not so much about following the rules, as it is letting God transform us into the kind of person whose behaviour naturally follows a righteous lifestyle.

SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- **What is something that you've done that you weren't prepared for?**
  - What were the consequences of your lack of preparation? How did you feel?
  - Is it more often ignorance (*thinking we do not need to prepare*) or unawareness it was necessary that contributes to this problem? Give examples of each in your life.
- **Why is it so easy to go through the motions of Christianity?**
  - What do you believe are the motions of Christianity?
  - How can we ensure we do not fall into the motions of Christianity and stay there?

- **What does it mean to make your faith your own?**
    - Is there someone or something who has had a huge influence on your faith? How can we ensure our faith isn't only grounded in these things?
    - How can we determine what we believe because WE genuinely believe it, versus believing something only because it's what we've always been told?

DISCUSS

- **Would you greet Jesus as a friend or a stranger? How would He greet you?**
- **Do you really know Jesus, or are you just following Him? What is the difference?**
- **Do you think it is easier to treat Christianity as simply following a set of spelt out rules rather than truly knowing and reflecting Jesus? How so?**
- **An important part of preparing for Christ's return is examining the current state of our hearts. What does your heart look like? Are you holding onto pride, greed, unforgiveness, etc., what do you need to let go of in order to be receptive to God's work?**

NEXT STEPS

What is one thing you can so this week to live in anticipation of Christ's return? How can you have an active faith life?