



A 4-SESSION SERIES FROM THE GOSPELS ON

# EASTER

FROM OUR ANNUAL *TEACHING STRATEGY*

BY COY AND BROOKLYN LINDSEY



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## OVERVIEW



### STUFF FOR THIS SERIES

#### THIS SERIES

- ▶ [About This Series](#)
- ▶ [About the Author](#)

#### MULTIMEDIA

- ▶ [Graphics](#)
- ▶ [Teaching Videos](#)

#### COMMUNICATION

- ▶ [Monthly Email](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Plan](#)
- ▶ [Social Media Posts](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Checklist](#)

### STUFF FOR EACH SESSION

#### SESSION 1

- ▶ [Discussion Guide](#)
- ▶ [Video Script](#)

#### SESSION 2

- ▶ [Discussion Guide](#)
- ▶ [Video Script](#)

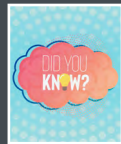
#### SESSION 3

- ▶ [Discussion Guide](#)
- ▶ [Video Script](#)

#### SESSION 4

- ▶ [Discussion Guide](#)
- ▶ [Video Script](#)

**GET  
ALIGNED!**



If your church is also using Grow Students and Grow Kids, this series aligns with the series *Break Trail* from Volume 5 of Grow Students and *Did You Know?* from Volume 5 of Grow Kids.

## ABOUT THIS SERIES

It happens every year: the grocery store shelves are stocked with chocolate, plastic eggs are filled with jelly beans, and otherwise normal people dress up in rabbit costumes. For Jesus-followers, there will likely also be ashes, fasting, sunrise services, passion plays, and more visitors at church than you've seen all year. But have you ever caught yourself wondering, "What's it all *for*?" Why spend so much effort every year to retell the same story and go through the same motions over and over again? Well, while it might be easy for us to lose sight of why the Easter story matters, Jesus never did. His birth, his life, his suffering, his death, and his resurrection all happened for one purpose: you. This Easter, God's message for you is that **Jesus understands your pain, models compassion for you, shows you the fullness of life, and welcomes your curiosity.**

## THIS SERIES AT A GLANCE

### SESSION 1

In this session, we'll see how, before his death, Jesus experienced not only physical pain, but betrayal, fear, and loss as well.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** Jesus understands our pain.
- **THE BIBLE:** Matthew 27:27–44; Philippians 3:4–14

### SESSION 2

In this session, we'll see how Jesus demonstrated love, kindness, and empathy to the men dying beside him.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** Jesus models compassion.
- **THE BIBLE:** Luke 23:32–34, 39–43; Philippians 2:5–8

### SESSION 3

In this session, we'll see how Jesus' resurrection isn't just a miracle that happened in the past, but is a miracle that continues giving us hope today.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** Jesus shows us the fullness of life.
- **THE BIBLE:** Luke 24:1–12, 36; Romans 6:8–11

### SESSION 4

In this session, we'll see how Jesus welcomed the doubts and questions of his disciples without condemnation.

- **THE BIG IDEA:** Jesus welcomes our curiosity.
- **THE BIBLE:** John 20:19–20, 24–29; Acts 4:19–20





## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Coy and Brooklyn Lindsey are parents, authors, and the founding pastors of Somos Church in Lakeland Florida. If you'd like to connect with them or learn more about their community, reach out @somoschurch IG or @somoschurchlakeland FB They would love to connect anytime.

**CONNECT WITH COY & BROOKLYN!**



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## SESSION 1

### DISCUSSION GUIDE



### THE BIBLE

Matthew 27:27–44; Philippians 3:4–14

### THE BIG IDEA

Jesus understands our pain.

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about?*

**NOW WHAT?** *What do we do about it?*

#### ACTIVITY | I Can Relate

*In five words or fewer, have everyone write down the description of an embarrassing moment they've had. Read the responses out loud and have people raise their hands if they can relate.*

#### QUESTIONS

- Name someone whose life seems impossible to relate to. What's so unrelatable about them?
- What makes you feel more connected to someone: sharing your struggles or sharing your wins? Why?

#### SAY . . .

For the next four sessions, we're talking about the death and resurrection of Jesus. Most of us don't know what it's like to die and then come back to life, but Jesus' story is actually more relatable than you might think.

**SO WHAT?** *Why does it matter?*

#### VIDEO | "For You," Session 1

*Play the video for this session.*

#### DISCUSSION

- Why do you think it's so important to acknowledge the pain Jesus experienced, rather than rushing to the end of the Easter story?
- Of all the ways Jesus suffered, which most resonates with you: his emotional, physical, or spiritual pain? Why?
- If you are enduring any type of pain right now, what is motivating you to persevere? What is discouraging you?
- Have you ever felt like God didn't notice or understand your pain? Why did you feel that way?
- What does Jesus' suffering reveal about the character of God?
- Jesus understands our pain, so how can we do a better job of trying to understand each other's pain too?

#### PRAYER

#### ACTIVITY | Book Study

*The book of John spends more time focusing on the story of Jesus' final hours, death, and resurrection than any other Gospel account. Make a plan this month to read through the book of John and share what you're learning with your group.*



# SESSION 1

## VIDEO SCRIPTS



### **THE BIBLE**

Matthew 27:27–44; Philippians 3:4–14

### **THE BIG IDEA**

Jesus understands our pain.

**HOST 1:** Hey, I'm \_\_\_\_.

**HOST 2:** And I'm \_\_\_\_\_. Welcome to the first session of For You, a new series that's going to lead us through Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and what happened afterward.

**HOST 1:** For many of us, Easter is reason for celebration — and it should be! It's the day we celebrate Jesus' miraculous resurrection from the dead! But the reality is that the beginning of the Easter story contains a great deal of pain. Because before Jesus could rise from the dead, he . . . well, he had to die.

**HOST 2:** So the Easter isn't only a story of celebration. It's a story that reveals pain and joy can exist simultaneously. Maybe you've seen that to be true in your own life.

**HOST 1:** If you've ever lost someone you loved, or endured deep pain, or experienced any sort of tragedy, you know the tension of feeling both joy and pain at the same time.

**HOST 2:** And you also know that, in those moments, sometimes the thing we need most is another person — someone beside us, who knows what we're going through.

**HOST 1:** Over the next few weeks we're going to lament the pain Jesus went through when he was here on earth, celebrate the ways Jesus was able to overcome it, and consider how his life and death help us experience life in a renewed way too.

**HOST 2:** On Easter Sunday, followers of Jesus everywhere will celebrate Jesus's resurrection — a moment when death was conquered and mankind's history pivoted toward new life. But before we get there, it's important to remember the pain that came first.

**HOST 1:** The Gospel of Matthew helps us know just how painful the days leading up to Jesus' resurrection were. If you know the story of Jesus, you might know he only ministered publicly for about three years. During that time, he gained a lot of attention for his teaching – both positive and negative. Although many people loved and followed Jesus, many religious and government figures were outraged at his claims to be the Messiah. So after three years of rising tensions, Jesus was betrayed by one of his closest followers, arrested, tried, taken before government officials, and sentenced to be executed.

**HOST 2:** Chapter 27 of Matthew tells us this: **"Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. 'Hail, king of the Jews!' they said. They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him."**

**HOST 1:** "As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. They came to a place called Golgotha (which means 'the place of the skull'). There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it."

**HOST 2:** "When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head they placed the written charge against him: **THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.**"

**HOST 1:** "Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, 'You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!'"

**HOST 2:** "In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. 'He saved others,' they said, 'but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, "I am the Son of God.'" In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him," Matthew 27:27–44 (NIV).

**HOST 1:** The abuse Jesus endured is overwhelming to think about. We cannot comprehend what it was like, but we do know that Jesus experienced massive amounts of pain – every kind imaginable.

**HOST 2: Jesus was physically in pain.** He was beaten with fists, whips, and other ancient weapons. Nails were driven through his hands and feet. When he hung on the cross, he couldn't breathe.

**HOST 1: Jesus felt the pain of being insulted.** People questioned Jesus' authenticity, gambled away his clothes to humiliate him, and mocked everything he had lived and fought for.

**HOST 2: Jesus felt the pain of being betrayed.** At the time of his sentencing and death, Jesus was abandoned by many people who had been close to him.

**HOST 1: Jesus felt the pain of seeing his loved ones in pain.** In the moments before Jesus took his last breath, he saw his own mother in the crowd, who was unable to do anything except watch with horror.

**HOST 2: Jesus felt the pain of being misunderstood.** Jesus was put to death by religious leaders, soldiers, and everyday people who saw him as a criminal, a blasphemer, or a violent rebel. But in reality, Jesus was God, on a mission to love and rescue them.

**HOST 1:** A lot of people mistakenly believe God to be something entirely "other" — a being completely from the human experience. That's why Jesus is so revolutionary. Jesus, who is God, reveals that God understands pain — and he understands it deeply.

**HOST 2:** And do you know what's even more incredible? If you were to ask Jesus why he endured what he endured, he'd tell you this: it was *for you*.

**HOST 1:** In the book of Philippians, an early leader of the Church, known as the apostle Paul, wrote a letter to some of the first Jesus-followers. He had this to say about the pain Jesus suffered: **"I want to know Christ — yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.**

**HOST 2: "Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus,"** Philippians 3:10–14 (NIV).

**HOST 1:** Paul said he wanted to know and experience the power of Jesus' resurrection. Remember, those closest to Jesus (even his own mother) couldn't understand the purpose of the pain he went through and didn't have any context for it until after the resurrection. It's probably why Paul wanted to know and experience the power of the resurrection and why he encouraged early followers to hold on — even through their own pain.

**HOST 2:** Paul said he wanted to experience the pain of Jesus' suffering too. Does that mean Paul just wanted to sit and think about Jesus' death until he felt sadder? No, probably not.

**HOST 1:** Paul was saying, as painful as it might be, he would put to death his old life in order to live his new life in Jesus. Jesus went through terrible pain and suffering, even to the point of death — but that pain led to something unimaginably beautiful.



**HOST 2:** This season is a reminder of so many things. One of those things is that God who understands when we're hurting. We follow a Savior who is right there with us when we're hurting because **Jesus understands our pain.**

**HOST 1:** So today, what kind of pain are you feeling?

**HOST 2: Maybe you're in the middle of physical pain.** Maybe you have an illness, injury, or disability that causes you pain, or maybe you've been hurt by someone in your life. Jesus knows what it's like to experience physical pain – even abuse.

**HOST 1: Or it could be you're in the midst of emotional pain.** If you've ever felt left out, forgotten, betrayed, or unwanted, Jesus has been there too. Sometimes people are cruel on purpose and sometimes life is just really difficult and complicated. Sometimes people we love are hurting and we feel like there's nothing we can do to fix it. No matter why you're hurting, Jesus knows what it's like to experience emotional pain too.

**HOST 2: Or maybe you're suffering from spiritual pain.** If you're struggling because of a sin that feels like it has control of your life, remember Jesus willingly took on the weight of your sin so you could have freedom and new life. You don't have to carry this burden alone.

**HOST 1:** Jesus felt the pain of all of it and was still willing to face death – for you. So when physical, emotional, or spiritual pain begs for you to believe that no one understands, remember this: **Jesus understands our pain.**

## SESSION 2

### DISCUSSION GUIDE



### THE BIBLE

Luke 23:32–34, 39–43;  
Philippians 2:5–8

### THE BIG IDEA

Jesus models compassion.

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about?*

**NOW WHAT?** *What do we do about it?*

#### STORY

*Tell a story about a time someone helped you when you were struggling – maybe a patient teacher from grade school or a co-worker who showed you the ropes when you were new. Invite others to share their own stories too.*

#### QUESTIONS

- **Have you ever been new, confused, or in need, but you couldn't find help? How did that feel?**
- **Have you ever seen someone struggling and wanted to look away? Why do we have that instinct?**

#### SAY . . .

We're going to continue following the story of Jesus' suffering and eventual death on the cross. But today's conversation is about how Jesus refused to look away when the people beside him were suffering too.

**SO WHAT?** *Why does it matter?*

#### VIDEO | "For You," Session 2

*Play the video for this session.*

#### DISCUSSION

- **When you hear the word "compassion," what is the first thing that comes to mind?**
- **When you're in an environment that lacks compassion, what kind of effect does it tend to have on you?**
- **Why do you think Jesus decided the man dying next to him was worthy of his compassion?**
- **In Philippians 2:5-8, do you think Paul's instruction to "have the same mindset as Jesus" is realistic? Why or why not?**
- **What are some things we might need to sacrifice in order to show compassion to people we don't think deserve it?**
- **When the compassion we give isn't noticed or reciprocated, what can we do to continue having "the same mindset as Jesus"?**

#### PRAYER

#### REFLECTION | Perspective Shift

*It's not easy to have compassion for people who have hurt others, but that's exactly what Jesus did. This week, identify someone you're struggling to have compassion for and consider their humanity. You don't have to excuse their behavior, but be curious about how their actions were impacted by their own painful circumstances and experiences.*



# SESSION 2

## VIDEO SCRIPTS



### **THE BIBLE**

Luke 23:32–34, 39–43;  
Philippians 2:5–8

### **THE BIG IDEA**

Jesus models compassion.

**HOST 1:** Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_.

**HOST 2:** And I'm \_\_\_\_\_. We're glad you're here for the second session of our Easter series, For You.

**HOST 1:** In this series, we're talking about Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and what happened afterward. During this season, there's often a rush to get to Easter Sunday – the big celebration! We'll get there, but not yet. For now, let's slow down and try to notice some of the things that happened before that big moment.

**HOST 2:** Sometimes we might struggle to sit with the tension of what happened before Jesus' resurrection. That's because what came before is really painful, and pain is uncomfortable.

**HOST 1:** When you really pay attention to what happened to Jesus on Good Friday (the day he was killed), you might feel a lot of things – like grief, or gratitude, or maybe even anger. You might wonder how this could have happened to Jesus. You might even begin to despise the people who did it to him.

**HOST 2:** I get it! It's normal to feel anger toward people who cause other people (or us) pain and suffering. We've all been there. But this is one of those "slow down and notice" moments.

**HOST 1:** When we think about the Easter story, the miracle we probably tend to focus on is Jesus' resurrection. But the truth is, there are a lot of miraculous things to notice if we pay attention. Like the moment we're going to talk about today, where Jesus had every reason to experience anger, hatred, and bitterness . . . but instead, he responded differently.

**HOST 2:** In this session, we're going to look at a specific moment that occurred just before Jesus's death. Most people who gathered to watch the execution that day – and yes, this execution was a public spectacle – most people saw who they believed to be three criminals, all deserving of death.

**HOST 1:** But Jesus showed us the men beside him were deserving of something else too. It says in Luke chapter 23: **"Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' And they divided up his clothes by casting lots."** Luke 23:32–34 (NIV).

**HOST 2:** The passage goes on to tell us, **"One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: 'Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other criminal rebuked him. 'Don't you fear God,' he said, 'since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.'"**

**HOST 1:** **"Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' Jesus answered him, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.'" Luke 23:39–43 (NIV).** Soon after, Jesus took his last breath.

**HOST 2:** Every moment leading to his excruciating death was full of ridicule, insult, and abuse. Jesus had every reason to retaliate, seek revenge, or spew hatred against his attackers. But he modeled compassion instead.

**HOST 1:** Compassion is simply the ability to share in someone's suffering and express concern. Jesus had the ability to do this for the men beside him from a unique perspective because he was a man hanging on a cross too. Jesus didn't let his own pain keep him from showing someone else compassion.

**HOST 2:** While Jesus was in his last moments, he chose to spend a few of his final breaths communicating hope, mercy, and love to one of the men dying alongside him.

**HOST 1:** This unnamed man was resigned to his fate. He knew he had made mistakes and believed he deserved death for his crimes. He didn't even ask Jesus to give him anything — he just asked that Jesus would remember him.

**HOST 2:** Jesus would have had every right to focus on himself in that moment. But instead, he chose compassion. He invited a suffering, desperate, convicted criminal to join him in his kingdom, where there would be no more suffering.

**HOST 1:** Jesus used his final moments to do something miraculous: model compassion. **Jesus modeled compassion in the moment — and in eternity too.** Jesus offered peace and forgiveness in the moment, but that promise extended into eternity too.

**HOST 2:** Jesus modeled compassion when it was difficult. Jesus' concern for a dying person in his last moments of life is revealing. Even in this painful, broken place, Jesus still chose to show love to someone who didn't deserve it.



**HOST 1:** Jesus models compassion for us too. Even when we are at our worst and most painful places, Jesus shows us how to be in them and still show concern for those around us.

**HOST 2:** Most people want to be the kind of people who show concern for others. We want to be compassionate and value the people around us. But what complicates things is our own pain, our own wounds, and how those things make us feel about the people we interact with.

**HOST 1:** Maybe you've been hurt by someone in your life one too many times and it's difficult to feel compassion because of the way you've been treated.

**HOST 2:** Or you've noticed someone doing harm to others or causing an injustice that seems to warrant whatever consequences they are facing.

**HOST 1:** It could be that you've noticed someone's lifestyle and how it's negatively affecting their own future, so you've kind of given up on them.

**HOST 2:** But Paul, one of the leaders in the early Church, had this to say about what Jesus did and how we could potentially do the same: **"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!"** Philippians 2:5–8 (NIV).

**HOST 1:** Jesus could have come to earth in a display of power and authority and let everyone know exactly who he was. But he didn't. Instead, Jesus chose humility and humanity.

**HOST 2:** He modeled sacrifice over selfishness and compassion over revenge. In his life and death, Jesus consistently chose us over himself. Even when he was most in need of compassion, his concern was showing compassion to us.

**HOST 1:** When Jesus looked at the man dying alongside him, he didn't shame him. He didn't reject him. He didn't tell him it was too late. He welcomed and embraced him with compassion.

**HOST 2:** Like that criminal, you and I have done a lot of things that break God's heart. But just like that man discovered, Jesus looks at us with compassion, even when we're not sure we deserve it, and even when we have nothing to offer him in return.

**HOST 2:** Like Paul described, the compassion we've received from Jesus should transform us. It should move us to extend that same compassion love of Jesus to others, even when we're not sure they deserve it.

**HOST 1:** But how? Let's look at three words we've to describe Jesus today and see what they might look like for us today.

**HOST 2:** First, there's **humility**. If we want to be like Jesus, how can we intentionally try to see the world through the eyes of others – even someone that has hurt us, hurt others, or is hurting themselves? This kind of humility won't (and shouldn't) always lead us to excuse their behavior, but it may allow us to see them as human.

**HOST 1:** Pride may tell us we would do things differently if we were in their shoes, but how much differently would we see people if we could be humble enough to acknowledge that we have no idea what the world feels like in their shoes?

**HOST 2:** Second, **sacrifice**. What might we be asked to sacrifice in order to show compassion to those we don't think deserve it? Maybe we'd have to sacrifice the power we feel over them. Maybe we'd have to sacrifice the feeling of better, more worthy, or more right.

**HOST 1:** But to be clear, Jesus does not tell us to sacrifice our safety or dignity and call it compassion. If you have suffered abuse, Jesus isn't asking you to sacrifice your own well-being in order to protect or enable your abuser. Jesus loves you too much for that.

**HOST 2:** And third, **compassion**. Jesus invites us to look beyond our desire to control other people or fix their bad behavior. That's not our job. He invites us to look beyond what they've done so we can truly see *them* – wounded, hurting, valuable people, in need of compassion.

**HOST 1:** Again, compassion is not forgetting the pain someone has caused or not holding them accountable for their actions. It's choosing to still see them as human – a person deserving of our love and understanding.

**HOST 2:** Compassion isn't always natural or easy – that's why Jesus' example is so powerful. When we see or experience pain, we can look to him. We can receive his compassion when we need it and we can extend it to others when they need it too. Because **Jesus modeled compassion**.

## SESSION 3

### DISCUSSION GUIDE



### THE BIBLE

Luke 24:1–12, 36; Romans 6:8–11

### THE BIG IDEA

Jesus shows us the fullness of life.

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about?*

**NOW WHAT?** *What do we do about it?*

#### QUESTIONS

- Who would you trust to throw you a surprise party you would actually enjoy? Why them?
- Have you ever gone into a situation thinking it was going to be awful, but something wonderful happened instead? Tell us about it!

#### STORY

*Talk about a time you made a plan that fell apart, but the end result was better than your original plan. Invite others to share their own stories too.*

#### SAY . . .

I wonder if that's how Jesus' followers felt following Jesus' resurrection. They had big ideas about how Jesus' story was going to unfold, but they didn't see his death coming — or what happened afterward. Let's see how Jesus continues to surprise us with more than what we've expected.

**SO WHAT?** *Why does it matter?*

#### VIDEO | "For You," Session 3

*Play the video for this session.*

#### DISCUSSION

- Has something really good ever happened to you as a result of a really painful circumstance? Tell us about it.
- What makes situations like those so complicated or confusing? What have you learned from them?
- What do you think it must have been like for the women in Luke 24 to see Jesus alive after they buried him?
- Re-read Romans 6:8-11. What do you think it means to be "alive in God"?
- Have you ever struggled to believe God could really heal or restore a particular area of your life? If so, why?
- What's one area of your life where you want to experience God's fullness of life? What can we do help?

#### PRAYER

#### REFLECTION | Restoration Needed

*We can't experience Jesus' restoration until we identify what's been broken. So what's one thing in your life that feels broken and in need of restoration? This week, be honest with God about what's broken. If you're comfortable, ask someone in your group to pray about it with you.*



# SESSION 3

## VIDEO SCRIPTS



### **THE BIBLE**

Luke 24:1–12, 36; Romans 6:8–11

### **THE BIG IDEA**

Jesus shows us the fullness of life..

**HOST 1:** Hi, I'm \_\_\_\_.

**HOST 2:** And I'm \_\_\_\_.

**HOST 1:** Welcome to the third session of our series, For You.

**HOST 2:** In this series so far, we've been reflecting on the darkest moments leading up to Easter Sunday. We've talked about what Jesus' betrayal, arrest, and death reveal about Jesus' heart toward others, and toward us as well.

**HOST 1:** As we approach Easter, we might be eager to look past the pain found in Jesus' story so we can focus on the joy of the resurrection. All of that pain feels more palatable in hindsight, doesn't it? But imagine being there and experiencing things as they were happening. For the people who loved and followed Jesus, it had to feel like an incredibly disappointing and disjointed story.

**HOST 2:** With all of that pain still in mind, we're going to look at the high moment of Easter today, Jesus' resurrection, and consider how the point of Jesus's death was so much bigger than anyone expected. We'll discover, together, where to look when life appears to lack purpose or seems like it doesn't make sense. Because Jesus' journey to death and back can show us a different way to experience life.

**HOST 1:** Where we pick up today, Jesus' body is being taken down from the cross and prepared for burial, while his close friends and family mourn their loss. Imagine how empty and pointless life must have felt for Jesus' mother, Mary, and Jesus' followers as they experienced the tragic, violent loss of someone they loved — someone they believed was there to change everything about the world in which they lived.



**HOST 2:** In Jewish culture, it was customary when someone died to visit their tomb on the third day. During that visit, friends and family would cover their loved one's body with oils and spices to honor the dead and to limit the odor a dead body would give off.

**HOST 1:** Three women who had been close followers and friends of Jesus were the ones who got up early on that third day to go and treat the body of Jesus. All things considered, these women expected to go to Jesus's tomb and find him . . . well, *dead*.

**HOST 2:** This was a sad, somber, and overall hopeless situation. As far as they knew, all that was left to do was grieve and mourn what had been lost.

**HOST 1:** Luke described the scene this way, **"On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: "The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again." Then they remembered his words."**

**HOST 2:** **"When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened,"** Luke 24:1–12 (NIV).

**HOST 1:** This was a turn in the story that no one expected. No one anticipated that Jesus' body would be missing. The appearance of strangers (or angels) saying that it was going to be okay and that Jesus was alive must have left them even more stunned. Nothing seemed to make sense. The grief they were feeling rolled into a whole new layer of hesitancy and questions.

**HOST 2:** Can you envision the shock these women must have experienced? Because this announcement does not make sense. They saw Jesus die. They saw his broken body. They knew he had been buried.

**HOST 1:** When they started thinking through all the things Jesus had said that once seemed so cryptic, things began to make sense for the first time. Jesus really *was* alive — and this shouldn't have been a surprise. Jesus had been hinting at these things for a long time.

**HOST 2:** The women ran to the rest of the disciples to tell them Jesus was alive! But of course, the others found it hard to believe. Even Peter, who was usually the first to get excited, had to go to the tomb to see for himself. Peter saw the empty tomb, but he still didn't believe it. Luke told us Peter walked away, in awe, wondering what was going on.

**HOST 1:** Can you blame Jesus' followers for their hesitation? They had hoped for Jesus to bring wholeness – not the broken feeling they were experiencing. They had hoped for the peace, the shalom, that was described to them by the prophets, but instead felt more disconnected than ever.

**HOST 2:** *Shalom* is a word you may have heard before, likely as a greeting. The word is most commonly used as a salutation at parties or events, but by definition it means "peace."

**HOST 1:** We often associate peace with a lack of problems or disturbances, but what if, instead, we saw peace as the possibility for disjointed things to come together, or the reconnection of things that have been broken apart? What if peace isn't about things staying the same, but about broken things being made whole again?

**HOST 2:** Look at how Jesus greeted his disciples when he saw them for the first time as a group after his resurrection: **"While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you,'"** Luke 24:36 (NIV).

**HOST 1:** In this specific word for *hello*, Jesus was saying *shalom*. He was communicating a message of peace. He was inviting them to a fullness only possible by believing in him.

**HOST 2:** The peace his followers thought was gone forever when he died was actually back and better than they could've imagined. What the women at the tomb, Peter, and the rest didn't know then that we can know now is that Jesus was raised from the dead for us.

**HOST 1:** Jesus's death and resurrection was for me and for you. The empty spaces in our hearts, those dead things in our lives, the places where brokenness or failure show up in our lives and claim us for dead – Jesus can resurrect them all and exchange them for life.

**HOST 2:** The apostle Paul put it like this: **"Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus,"** Romans 6:8–11 (NIV).

**HOST 1:** Sin is another word you may have heard before that comes with its own baggage or interpretations. But we don't have to overcomplicate sin here. To keep it simple, the word "sin" represents the mistakes we make and the pain we cause.

**HOST 2:** Sin can kill our dreams, our potential, and our relationships with God and others. You might have made decisions (intentionally or unintentionally) that have cost you something. The brokenness caused by sin is the opposite of the fullness God desires for us.

**HOST 1:** But Jesus returned to reconnect the relationships that had no chance to be reconciled up to this point. He returned to repair the disjointed and the discouraged. He came to be our shalom, the completeness or fullness of life.

**HOST 2:** Jesus rose from the dead on the third day and greeted his disciples with shalom — and he offers us the same fullness of life. He came back from death to defeat sin and to show us a new, restored way of living is possible with him. He did all of this for me and you.

**HOST 1:** We can experience Jesus's resurrection in our lives, in our habits, in our relationships, in our past pains, and in the circumstances we can't seem to get out of. Nothing is impossible with a Savior who can conquer death.

**HOST 2:** Death was impossible to overcome, until Jesus changed the story. Now he invites us to reconnect to God in a way that we couldn't connect before, and to experience peace in this life we could only have dreamt of before.

**HOST 2:** So when Jesus says "hello," remember, he comes with peace — the kind that leads to a full life. And he comes having already taken care of everything that we couldn't take care of on our own. Jesus did all of this for you. **Jesus shows us the fullness of life.**

## SESSION 4

### DISCUSSION GUIDE



### THE BIBLE

John 20:19–20, 24–29;  
Acts 4:19–20

### THE BIG IDEA

Jesus welcomes our curiosity.

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about?*

**NOW WHAT?** *What do we do about it?*

#### POLL

If we were talking 25 years ago, which of the following facts would you have had the hardest time believing?

- We discovered water on Mars.
- We can video call each other with a handheld device.
- Cars can drive themselves now.
- You can shop for groceries while laying in bed.

#### QUESTIONS

- **What are some of the qualities that allow humans to discover and invent so many amazing things?**
- **What role do you think curiosity plays in invention and discovery?**

#### SAY . . .

Curiosity is sometimes discouraged in churches and faith communities. So how did Jesus react when, after his resurrection, he faced some pretty big questions from his closest followers?

**SO WHAT?** *Why does it matter?*

#### VIDEO | "For You," Session 4

*Play the video for this session.*

#### DISCUSSION

- **When it comes to matters of faith, do you think it's true that "there's no such thing as a dumb question"? Why or why not?**
- **If you were familiar with Thomas before today, what did you know about him? Has your perspective changed at all after today's conversation?**
- **What are some unhelpful ways Christians tend to react to each other's doubts or questions about God? What would a better response look like?**
- **When it comes to God, or the Bible, or church, or your beliefs, what are you most curious about right now?**
- **Where do you feel safest talking about your questions?**
- **What can our group do to become a safer place for each other's questions to be heard?**

#### PRAYER

#### RESPONSE | No Dumb Questions

*It might not feel like it sometimes, but you probably have many of the same doubts or questions that others do – but saying them out loud can be difficult. Take some time this week to write those questions down. Then share them with your group (or just a few trusted members of the group) next time you meet.*





# SESSION 4

## VIDEO SCRIPTS



### THE BIBLE

John 20:19–20, 24–29; Acts 4:19–20

### THE BIG IDEA

Jesus welcomes our curiosity.

**HOST 1:** Hey, I'm \_\_\_\_.

**HOST 2:** And I'm \_\_\_\_\_. Today we're in the final session of our series, For You. We've been talking about the Easter story and, since we already covered Jesus' resurrection in the last session, you might be wondering why we're still here.

**HOST 1:** Well, that's because the story isn't quite over yet. See, in the last session, we saw how Jesus' closest friends and followers first heard the news of Jesus' miraculous resurrection from the dead. But here's the thing — although they were *told* Jesus was back, some of them hadn't actually seen proof of Jesus' resurrection yet. An empty tomb, after all, could mean a lot of things.

**HOST 2:** Looking at the situation from their perspective, we can see why Jesus's disciples might have some trust issues. After three years of following Jesus, their hero was killed in a public execution. Everything they had worked toward during this time seemed to suddenly disappear.

**HOST 1:** I'm sure the disciples wanted to believe Jesus was back, but it makes sense that they still found it difficult to keep their questions and doubts at bay.

**HOST 2:** For Jesus's friends and followers, losing him was terrible. He had been their spiritual leader, their friend, and their teacher. But then he was gone and nothing seemed to make sense. They probably had a lot of questions. They probably wondered things like, "Who's going to lead us now?"

**HOST 1:** Or, "Was everything Jesus said about God a lie? Or a mistake?"

**HOST 2:** Or, "Now what do we do?" The disciples were disappointed, grieving, and terrified — after all, the people who killed Jesus might want to kill them too. So let's see what happened next.

**HOST 1:** "On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord," John 20:19–20 (NIV).

**HOST 2:** Jesus began to satiate their curiosity by getting to the point. Internally they were probably full of conflicted thoughts and feelings. Externally they could have felt pressure from everyone they had told that Jesus was the Messiah. Instead of answering their questions, Jesus offered them peace and his presence.

**HOST 1:** This was a beautiful moment between Jesus and his disciples, but not all of Jesus's core group of followers was there in this moment. One, in particular, was absent — his name was Thomas. John chapter 20 tells us what his initial response was to his friends' story of a resurrection:

**HOST 2:** "Now Thomas (also known as Didymus) one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord!' But he replied, 'Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.'"

**HOST 1:** "A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then Jesus said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.'"

**HOST 2:** "Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!' Then Jesus said to him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed,'" John 20:24–29 (NIV).

**HOST 1:** All of the disciples were having a hard time with Jesus' death and rumored resurrection, but Thomas seemed to be struggling more than the rest. Thomas wasn't with the rest of the disciples when Jesus showed up, so he missed the big moment. When everyone began to tell Thomas what had happened, he was still hesitant to believe.

**HOST 2:** So when Thomas got his moment with Jesus, he was curious, but hesitant. He probably didn't want to get his hopes up. Thomas had invested so much of his life and so much hope into following Jesus. Imagine how much more it would hurt to be convinced that a miracle had happened, only to find out it was all a lie?

**HOST 1:** So Thomas, out of curiosity, asks Jesus if he could touch the wounds that Jesus received on the cross.

**HOST 2:** Crucifixion was a brutal, extremely violent, and inhumane act. But unfortunately, it was also a form of execution that was common enough that a person like Thomas would understand how it worked.

**HOST 1:** Thomas needed to see Jesus' wounds so he could believe the truth. It's likely this was Thomas' response because maybe he felt betrayed. This was a leader who Thomas thought would bring hope, peace, and change to the entire world, but in a moment that dream died with Jesus. What if Jesus had been a fraud the entire time?

**HOST 2:** Or he may have felt. If Jesus was gone, what was Thomas supposed to do next? He had built his whole life around this man and his message. Now what?

**HOST 1:** Maybe he felt foolish. Thomas probably felt like he had bet his life on the wrong leader. Maybe he thought back to all of the miracles he saw Jesus perform and wondered if they were all just elaborate illusions or magic tricks.

**HOST 2:** And he definitely felt devastated. Jesus was not just Thomas' leader. Jesus was Thomas's friend. They spent all day, every day, together for years and it was over way too soon.

**HOST 1:** When everything Thomas had hoped about Jesus was shown to be true, Thomas realized without question that Jesus can be trusted. Jesus didn't shame him for his hesitation. He didn't condemn him for his questions. Jesus welcomed Thomas' curiosity and he welcomes ours too.

**HOST 1:** Later in the disciples' story, two of Jesus' closest friends and followers, Peter and John, had the chance to tell a group of people about all Jesus had done. Some religious leaders and powerful figures didn't like the seemingly rebellious nature of their message, so they put Peter and John on trial.

**HOST 2:** This is what happened: **"But Peter and John replied, 'Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard,'"** Acts 4:19–20 (NIV).

**HOST 1:** Curiosity is a strong desire to learn or know something. It helps us to take a closer look and can even solidify things we believe.

**HOST 2:** Jesus used the questioning of Thomas to help him learn something important about God, and it's this: God isn't afraid of our questions. In fact, God welcomes our curiosity.

**HOST 1:** The philosopher Simone Weil once said that people can "never wrestle with God enough" if we are doing so out of a "pure regard for truth." That's because when we search for truth, we will inevitably find Jesus, because Jesus is the source of that truth. In the pursuit of truth, you won't get very far before falling into Jesus' arms.

**HOST 2:** Peter and John were once just like Thomas: afraid, doubting if Jesus was who he said he was, and questioning the words of those who claimed Jesus was alive again.

**HOST 1:** But when they pursued the truth through their curiosity, they discovered something so amazing that even in the face of accusations and potential consequences, they still had to share what they had found.

**HOST 2:** Curiosity is not only tolerated with Jesus, but it's an essential element to help us grow. Jesus shows us curiosity is welcome. So what should we do about our curiosity?

**HOST 1:** First of all, we should be honest about it. Thomas didn't hide his hesitations and questions from Jesus. He didn't fake his trust. He asked Jesus to give him the evidence he needed in order to trust him better, and Jesus did. You can be honest with God about your doubts.

**HOST 2:** You can remember what God has already done. If you're struggling to trust, reflect on how God has been proven trustworthy in the past. Look at your life, the lives of people you know and trust, and the lives of the people whose stories are told in Scripture. God has been trustworthy in the past and will continue to be trustworthy.

**HOST 1:** Finally, God invites you to practice trusting. If you're struggling to trust God right now, start where you are. Even if you can't say, "God, I trust you," maybe you can say, "God, I'm trying to trust you," or, "God, please help me trust you."

**HOST 2:** The stories we've explored in this series (the ones surrounding Jesus's life, death, and resurrection) are full of ups and downs — pain found alongside joy. I'm guessing the same is true for your story. I know it's true for mine.

**HOST 1:** But the up-and-down nature of our lives, our circumstances, our faith, and our doubts never surprise God. Like Jesus demonstrated with his friend Thomas, when we have questions, Jesus offers us his hands.

**HOST 2:** So no matter what questions, hesitations, or doubts you have today, don't forget, **Jesus welcomes our curiosity.** The Easter story (the whole Easter story) is for you — and so is Jesus.



# MARKETING

## CHECKLIST



### BEFORE THE SERIES

#### ✓ TO DO

	Customize your <b>Group Leader Hub</b> web pages for this series.
	Customize and send the <b>Group Leader Email</b> for this series. Then text them a link to the email.
	Review the <b>suggested Social Media Posts and Captions</b> for this series.
	<p>Post the <b>Title Graphic</b> on social media with this caption:</p> <p>We're starting a new series this week about Good Friday, Easter, and what happened afterward. It's called For You and we hope to see you there!</p>

### AFTER SESSION 1

#### ✓ TO DO

	Post a short clip from the Teaching Video for Session 1 on social media.
	<p>Post the <b>Big Idea Graphic</b> for Session 1 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In session one of For You, we talked about the very real suffering Jesus experienced leading up to his death – physical, emotional, and spiritual pain.</p>
	Customize and send the <b>Group Leader Email</b> for this series. Then text them a link to the email.



*AFTER SESSION 2*

✓ **TO DO**

	Post a short clip from the Teaching Video for Session 2 on social media.
	<p>Post the <b>Big Idea Graphic</b> for Session 2 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In session two of For You, we considered the moment Jesus showed compassion to the man dying beside him and wondered how we might be more Jesus-like.</p>
	Customize and send the <b>Group Leader Email</b> for this series. Then text them a link to the email.

*AFTER SESSION 3*

✓ **TO DO**

	Post a short clip from the Teaching Video for Session 3 on social media.
	<p>Post the <b>Big Idea Graphic</b> for Session 3 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In session three of For You, we saw how Jesus' resurrection was more than a one-time event. Even today, Jesus' plans continue to be better than we imagined.</p>
	Customize and send the <b>Group Leader Email</b> for this series. Then text them a link to the email.

*AFTER SESSION 4*

✓ **TO DO**

	Post a short clip from the Teaching Video for Session 4 on social media.
	<p>Post the <b>Big Idea Graphic</b> for Session 4 on social media with this caption:</p> <p>In session four of For You, we saw how Jesus responded to the questions and skepticism of his friend Thomas – and it wasn't with anger.</p>
	Get ready for the next series!

# SOCIAL MEDIA

## POSTS & CAPTIONS



Need some help deciding what to post on social media before and during this series? Here's our suggestion: each session, share the media we've provided in your Graphics and Videos folder using the captions below.



### BEFORE THE SERIES

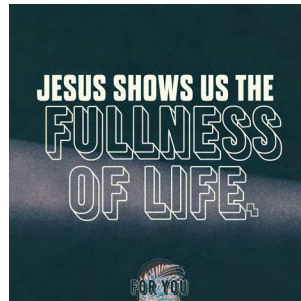
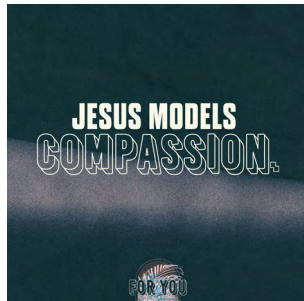
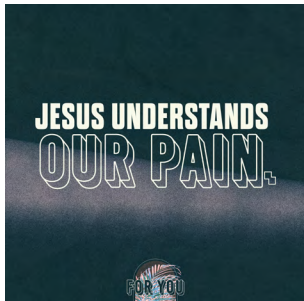
We're starting a new series this week about Good Friday, Easter, and what happened afterward. It's called For You and we hope to see you there!

### AFTER SESSION 1

### AFTER SESSION 2

### AFTER SESSION 3

### AFTER SESSION 4



### **BIG IDEA (SESSION 1)**

In session one of For You, we talked about the very real suffering Jesus experienced leading up to his death — physical, emotional, and spiritual pain.

### **BIG IDEA (SESSION 2)**

In session two of For You, we considered the moment Jesus showed compassion to the man dying beside him and wondered how we might be more Jesus-like.

### **BIG IDEA (SESSION 3)**

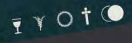
In session three of For You, we saw how Jesus' resurrection was more than a one-time event. Even today, Jesus' plans continue to be better than we imagined.

### **BIG IDEA (SESSION 4)**

In session four of For You, we saw how Jesus responded to the questions and skepticism of his friend Thomas — and it wasn't with anger.

WHAT WE'RE TEACHING

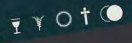
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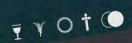
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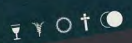
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WHAT WE'RE TEACHING

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