



Trust Issues With God

Leader's Guide





Dear brave leader of this Bible study,

I call you brave because you have decided to gather your friends together to have these honest conversations and to study a lot of the Bible. You will find out pretty early in your own workbook lessons that you don't have to have the answers for everything. You just need to be the leader to ask the questions. The conversations will lead themselves. The amount of Bible will continually lead you into the truth. So lead the conversations! What a gift you are giving to your friends, because they are going to want to talk this stuff through.

This is a 4-week study. Four days of home work which culminates with a 15-minute video teaching by me. The video teaching is not a rehash of the home work. It is new thoughts building on what was learned in the home work.

It is your option to have everyone watch the video before you all gather together or to watch it together and then have the conversations. You can decide if you want more time for conversation together or to allow the video to guide you into the conversation. I truly believe the lessons and the questions provided give you all plenty to talk about. I also truly believe that the talking about this together will be the best part of the Bible study.

You may hear some heartbreaking unfair stories. In response you may want to give an immediate answer to soothe the tension that the story brings. Or summarize some hope with a platitude. Or shame yourself inside your head because you don't know what to say. I ask you to allow space for the story to be heard by everyone. To allow all of you to feel the emotions (remember all emotions move us towards God). In that awkward and beautiful space, be surprised at what is shared or learned together.

You will have so many awkward and beautiful moments to share together. Probably some tears of laughter too.

There are probably too many questions for your set time together. Choose the questions

you want first. Keep the others just in case you have more time. You have plenty here to just lead by asking the questions and providing space for the answers.

What a gift you are giving your friends. Thank you.

Brenda!



WEEK 1

THE BRAVE DECISIONS THAT DEFINE YOU

The daily lessons ended with a fun and icebreaker question. Ask your group, If you were one of those walking across on dry ground with walls of water on each side of you, would you have touched the water?

Do you lean towards trust or suspicion?

Share about a time when God made sense to you. Please do not share what happened to lose that. What we are highlighting here in our stories is God's track record of faithfulness.

What did you believe about God when God no longer made sense to you?

Was there a time in your life when you believed that it was God's job to make your life easier?

Why do we seek authoritarian personalities when we want to know certainty?

What does vulnerability have to do with trust?

What are the rituals that have grown your faith?

What are the differences between love and trust?

What deep thing was revealed in your soul this past week?

What is one thing you have hope for about this series?



WEEK 2

WHEN YOUR PAIN LEADS YOU TO ISOLATE

What is the first verb in the Bible? (Answer: created) What does this say about this Larger Story God?

When you studied that God is a God who always says “yes,” what were your struggling thoughts? (Reference: “God is a God who says yes. But this doesn’t always look like my expectations.”)

With the benefit of hindsight, what passionate prayers are you glad that God answered in another way?

What is your favorite attribute of *hesed love*?

How has God been revealed to you in the process of not giving up?

Why do you stop reading the Bible when that unfair thing happens?

Share about a time that you felt like that animal at the edge of the herd, about that time you believed it was easier for you to not try with people anymore and to stay “safe” in your loneliness.

How does loneliness lead to distrust?

What deep thing was revealed in your soul this past week?



WEEK 3

FINDING GOD IN THE OVERWHELM

How do you handle your life when you are overwhelmed?

Have you ever been so angry that you scared yourself? Share what you want of that story.

How have you had a transactional relationship with God? (This is a question from the study. This will be a "me, too" moment when everyone will feel seen and understand new layers of depth of how others do this too.)

Do you find yourself becoming irrationally angry at yourself, at others, or at God?

Have you seen bitterness grow in your life? Has anyone else told you that they are worried about the bitterness that is growing in your life?

How is a love that has to wait still love?

Do you feel comfortable praying to God, "I will not let you go until you bless me?"

To wrestle with God means you will have to feel grief. There are days that you won't have the bandwidth to feel grief. How have you made space in your life to sit in the grief?

What thoughts do you have when you picture this Larger Story God as a God who stoops?

Have you ever dared to look past the scary claws that your assumptions make of God and looked into the face of God and knew he cares more than you do? Tell us about that experience.

What deep thing was revealed in your soul this past week?



WEEK 4

ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK

Who in your life is closest to 100% in living their life of faith?

What are the characteristics of trustworthy people?

What voices of shame do you hear that tell you that you are not good enough in your faith?

How can you apply this definition of patience to your everyday life: "Patience is a middle point of not becoming reckless and not becoming overly emotionally engaged. Patience allows you to stick with it so you don't give up. Patience is willing to suffer and stick with something."

What are all these curvy and up-and-down lines writing in your life? What is this Larger Story God writing?

How can you explain that "trusting God is not a straight line?"

What self-sabotaging decisions do you need to make so you can live out that God's compassion is larger than your sinfulness?

Tell us about a time you were stuck but discovered that you were actually growing?

What was your favorite discovery about hope?

What deep thing was revealed in your soul this past week?