



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

FOLLOWING IS FISHING

Dave · Weekend of August 22 and 23, 2026

SCRIPTURES

MATTHEW 4:18-20 · MATTHEW 11:28-30 · LUKE 18:35-43 · JOHN 13:1-17 · JOHN 9:25

THE MESSAGE

Peter was standing in that water because he had already been told he was not good enough. In his world the boys who made the cut went on to study under a rabbi, and the ones who did not went back to the family business, which is exactly where Jesus found him, holding a net. Then Jesus walked up to that man and said the words every kid in Israel wanted to hear and Peter never got, come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. He handed Peter a new identity before Peter had done one thing to earn it, and then spent three years making it true. That same declaration is being made over the people sitting in your group this week. Notice what Jesus attached it to. Following Him was never going to be only about behaving well and showing up on the weekend, it was going to be about fishing, which is why Peter and Andrew did not put down a hobby, they dropped the nets they fed their families with. The weekend ended with a way to actually do that, five practices simple enough that anybody in your group can start one this week. Pray, listen, eat, serve, share.

BEFORE YOU START

There are two conversations available tonight and you get to pick which one your group has. The easy one stays on the mission, everybody agrees we should tell people about Jesus, and nobody says a

name out loud. The better one starts where the message started, with Peter being told he did not have what it takes, because most of the people in your room are carrying a version of that and it is the actual reason they have never invited anyone to anything. Handle the identity piece first and the mission piece gets much easier.

Do not let anybody leave without a name.

The homework from the stage was specific, pick one letter and pick one person. A group can talk about being a net for a full hour and walk out having committed to nothing, so protect the last ten minutes, go around the circle, and have every person say the name of somebody they are going to bless and the one thing they are going to do. Write the names down and ask about them next week.

You are not going to get through all eight questions, and you are not supposed to. You choose which ones fit your group, and you choose the order you take them in. Spend your time where the conversation is actually alive rather than trying to cover everything.

ICEBREAKER

The first night Dave stayed at his future wife's house he got thirsty, opened the wrong side of the fridge in the middle of the night, and found plastic baggies full of frozen chicken heads. Her dad was a falconer. *What is the strangest thing you have ever discovered about somebody else's family?*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Five here, and three more in Go Deeper. Take whichever ones fit your group, in whatever order you want.

1

MATTHEW 4:18-20

Peter was in the water because he had been cut. Not smart enough, not qualified, sent back to the boat, and Jesus walked up to that exact guy and declared a new identity over him before he had done anything to earn it. *Where has somebody told you that you do not have what it takes, and how much are you still living like they were right?*

Everything else tonight rests on this one, so give it room and do not accept general answers. Go first with something specific that still stings a little.

2

MATTHEW 11:28-30

Following a rabbi meant memorizing his words and living the way he lived, and there was a saying for it, “*may you be covered in the dust of your rabbi.*” The idea was to walk so closely behind him that his dust ended up on you. A rabbi’s teaching was called his yoke, which is what Jesus means when He says take my yoke upon you and learn from me. *Which part of your life have you kept off to the side, out of the dust, where Jesus is welcome to teach but not to decide?*

3

One person with a pole is how you fish when it is a hobby. When fishing is how you feed your family, you gather a crew and you throw a net. “A lot of churches focus on fishing with a pole,” and the invitation this weekend was for the church to be a human net thrown out into the places we live and work and play. Be honest about where your faith actually sits right now. *Is it something you do on the weekend, or is it something that shows up at work/school?*

4

LUKE 18:35-43

BLESS is five practices pulled from the way Jesus lived. Begin with prayer, listen to their story, eat, serve, and then share. When He heard a blind man calling from the roadside He stopped, got down low, and asked what the man wanted, which is close to the question a missions team asked a village in India, where the answer nobody expected was a mailbox. *Which of the five comes most naturally to you, and which one do you quietly avoid?*

5

JOHN 9:25

When the religious experts cornered the healed man with questions he could not answer, his whole testimony was one sentence, “*one thing I do know, I was blind but now I see.*” You have a version of that. I was anxious and I found peace. I was lost and I got found. My marriage was dying and God brought it back. *What is your one sentence, and who in your life has never heard it?*

GO DEEPER

Three more, for groups that move quickly or want to push further. The first one is built for the people at your table who love to dig into the text itself.

GD1

MARK 1:16-20 · MATTHEW 11:28-30

Sit with what “follow me” actually cost a first century disciple. A student left home, attached himself to one teacher, memorized his words, and copied the way he ate, prayed, argued, and rested, because the goal was imitation rather than information. Read the calling of the fishermen and the yoke passage back to back with that in mind, where Jesus sets His own teaching against a load that crushes people and calls His easy and light. *What changes about the invitation once you see that Jesus was not recruiting the students who had proven themselves, He was choosing the ones everyone else had passed over?*

GD2

LUKE 5:1-11 · MATTHEW 13:47-50 · JOHN 21:1-14

Follow the fishing thread through the Gospels and watch what it teaches. In Luke 5 the nets tear and Peter falls down and asks Jesus to leave, because the size of the catch shows him who he is standing next to. In Matthew 13 the kingdom is a net that drags in every kind of fish and the sorting belongs to God rather than to us. In John 21 the risen Jesus is on the beach cooking breakfast for the man who denied Him, and He feeds him before He sends him back out. *Taken together, what does that say about who does the catching, and about what happens to the people who fail at it?*

GD3

The homework was one letter and one person. Name who you are going to bless, name which of the five you are starting with, and then say what the very next step actually is, whether that is sending a text this week, having them over for dinner, or giving up a Saturday to help them move.

Write down every name. That list becomes what your group prays through for the rest of the fall, and it is the reason somebody ends up sitting next to their neighbor at a weekend service in October.

CLOSE YOUR GROUP IN PRAYER

Every campus declared this together on the weekend: “I declare, with God’s help and the power of the Holy Spirit, I am enough to follow Jesus in His mission to bless people and help them take their next step with God.”

Pray over the names your group just said, out loud and one at a time. Then pray for whoever in the room still does not believe the first half of that declaration, that they are enough, because Jesus settled that question about Peter before Peter ever caught anything.