

## Group Leader Guide Easter April 11-12, 2020

### Group Creed

We come together as a Group with the goal of Spiritual Formation; encouraging one another to become the same kind of person that Jesus is, so that we can live out every part of our lives inside of His Kingdom.

### // Message Summary

Happy Easter! Though it isn't the Easter celebration any of us envisioned, it is more important than ever to see and hold on to the hope of Jesus. Using the story of Jesus walking on water, found in **Matthew 14:22-33**, and their own personal stories, **Jim Burgen** and his wife, **Robin**, help us to see this week that even when life is seemingly out of control, God seems distant, and we don't know what to do, there is hope to be found in the promises of Jesus and His resurrection.

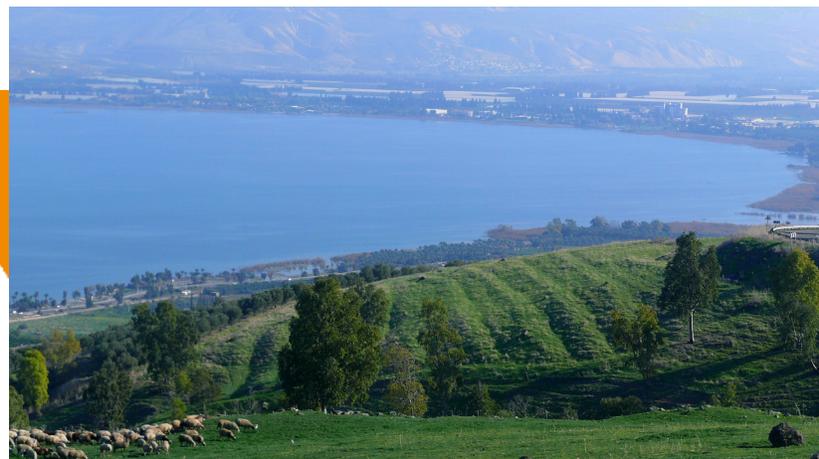
### // Biblical Background

**Sea of Galilee:** The Sea of Galilee is located in Northern Israel on the border with Syria. It is technically a freshwater lake, not a sea. It is 12 miles long from north to south and 8 miles wide at its widest point. The entire lake, including its entire shoreline, can be seen from anywhere on its shoreline. Violent, windy storms are known to appear suddenly from the east when the wind comes over the mountains and drops down onto the lake. The waves become extremely choppy, and a small fisherman's boat like the disciples were probably using becomes vulnerable. This was the case when the disciples were sailing across while Jesus was off in the mountains. To see a video of the type of waves that Jesus and Peter were walking on, which helps put into

perspective what they were dealing with, here are a couple YouTube links: [shorturl.at/BKMQX](https://shorturl.at/BKMQX), [shorturl.at/bNORV](https://shorturl.at/bNORV), and [shorturl.at/gortH](https://shorturl.at/gortH).

Other names found in the Bible for the Sea of Galilee include the Sea of Kinnereth (**Numbers 34:11, Joshua 12:3**), the Lake of Gennesaret (**Luke 5:1**), the Sea of Tiberius (**John 6:1, 21:1**), or simply "the lake" (**John 6:16**).

**Walking on Water:** While water miracles were relatively common in the Old Testament, which the disciples would have known of, only God Himself was ever said to walk on water (**Job 9:8, Psalm 77:19**). This helps us understand why the disciples immediately worshipped Jesus as the Son of God once they were all safe in the boat. They had just witnessed Jesus perform something only God could do!



The Sea of Galilee

## // Biblical Background

**Mary Magdalene:** The first recorded words of Jesus after His resurrection were to a woman named Mary Magdalene in **John 20:11-18**. **Luke 8:2** tells us that she had had seven demons possessing her at one point. However, after meeting Jesus and being healed, she had become His devoted follower. Other traditions identify her as the prostitute from the previous chapter who had washed Jesus' feet with her hair. While this is possible, there are also plenty of made up stories about her, including being romantically involved with Jesus, that have no Biblical truth behind them. She was simply, yet miraculously, a woman who had been changed by knowing Jesus, and to whom Jesus used to be the one to deliver the message of Jesus' resurrection to His closest followers!

## // In Preparation

This week, we are providing you with a short video on how to lead your group through communion. The video will explain how to do it and why we do it. Please watch the video and take communion together as a group the next time you meet. We are sad that we aren't able to do this as a church together this Easter. Fortunately, Jesus modeled a very simple process for us to follow, simple enough to even do over a Zoom call!

## // References

Keener, Craig S Ph.d. *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. InterVarsity Press, 2014.

Vander Laan, Ray. "Sea of Galilee Geography." *That the World May Know*, [www.thattheworldmayknow.com/sea-of-galilee-geography](http://www.thattheworldmayknow.com/sea-of-galilee-geography).



## Group Discussion Questions

### Easter

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#### // Bible References

John 1:38; John 20:15; Matthew 14:27-30

#### // Community Questions

1. What will be the first thing you do when the quarantine is lifted?
2. Who did you invite to watch Easter services? If they took you up on the offer, do you have any stories of their experience?

#### // Core Questions

1. What storm have you found your self in before or find your self in right now?
2. Did/does Jesus feel far away in the midst of that storm?
3. Do you feel like you got yourself into that storm based on something you did, or do you feel like you were doing everything right, and the storm still hit? Explain.
4. What resonated with you from Robin's story?
5. What do you do when you feel like God isn't listening to you?
6. Read **2 Corinthians 12:7-10**. What does Jesus say to us in the midst of our suffering, weaknesses, and struggles?
7. How can this group support you during your current storm?

#### // Challenge

It is impossible to go throughout this life alone. Fortunately, Jesus is always with us. However, He also created us to live in community with other people. And even though some of you may be in isolation right now, there are still ways to build and experience community. Community is more than just hanging out with other people. A large part of the community of the early Church was serving one another and the people around them. What is one way you can serve someone within your sphere of influence this week? Maybe it is going to the grocery store for an elderly neighbor or helping someone out financially who has lost their job (if you are able). Maybe it's just being a supportive, listening ear to someone going through a storm in their life. Be creative, and come up with and do something this week that is in service to someone other than yourself.