



## Discovering Faith Series

### Weekly Sheets

In our mutual faith journey we will inevitably deal with times of doubt and uncertainty. These group discussions sheets explore the scriptures that remind us of how Jesus met the disciples in their times of doubt after the resurrection. In weekly groups you will have an opportunity to be encouraged by others in your times of uncertainty. This series is intended to accompany the spring sermon series 2022. Videos of these sermons can be found on the church website:

[www.haverhillumc.org](http://www.haverhillumc.org)

# Discovering Faith

## Week 1



### Gathering Questions

If you could ask God any question, what would you ask?

### Key Verse:

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." — *John 20:29*

### Scripture Reading — John 20:19-31

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!" 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." 24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "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." 26 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!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." 30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

### Group Discussion

1. What convinced the disciples that Jesus was alive?
2. The disciples had locked the doors because of fear. How does fear keep us from

belief?

3. Where might someone look for evidence of God, or Jesus?
4. Have you ever experienced a time of uncertainty in your faith?
5. What has helped you deal with doubts in your life?
6. What evidence would you want to see to provide proof that God is real?
7. The pastor talked about a time when the church became the visible presence of Jesus when his family struggled with faith. Has there been a time when Jesus has shown up in your life in unexpected ways, or through other people?
8. What does the key verse say about faith and doubt?

## Pray

- How might the group pray for you this week?
- Who else might need to be part of this group that you could pray about inviting?

# Discovering Faith

## Week 2



### Gathering Questions

Do you have a favorite scripture (ex: Psalm 23, John 3:16), or Bible character (Mary, David, Moses)? Share what you like about it.

### Key Verse:

*These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. — John 20:30*

### Scripture Reading — Luke 24: 13-35

13 Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15 As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16 but they were kept from recognizing him. 17 He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?” They stood still, their faces downcast. 18 One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” 19 “What things?” he asked. “About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. 20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.” 25 He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. 28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. 29 But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 32 They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" 33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." 35 Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

**Group Discussion:** (Consider the questions in each of the three main sections)

1) Jesus fulfills prophecy

- Why do you think it is important that significant parts of Jesus' life are foretold by the prophets hundreds of years before his arrival?

**Read Isaiah 53 as a group**

- How does this passage compare with your understanding of Jesus?

- Do any parts of Isaiah 53 surprise you or challenge your image of Jesus?

2) Jesus opens their understanding of scripture

- What has been your experience in reading the Bible?

- Have there been times when you felt that a particular section really applied to your life?

- Nicky Gumble talked about scripture as spiritual food. How might someone develop a hunger for reading the Bible?

3) The disciples recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread.

- What foods do you associate with special gatherings with your family or friends?

- How is communion a connection with Jesus?

- Have you encountered Jesus in communion?

- Do you think it is important for believers to spend time eating together?

What do you think the key verse is saying about faith and doubt?

**Pray**

- How might the group pray for you this week?
- Who else might need to be part of this group that you could pray about inviting?



# Discovering Faith

## Week 3



### Gathering Questions

Who is one person who has been a big influence in your faith life?

### Key Verse - Romans 8:26-27

The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

### Scripture Reading — John 20:11-18

11 Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. 13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." 14 At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. 15 He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). 17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

### Group Discussion:

- 1) What do you imagine would be your reaction to seeing the angels in the tomb?
- 2) Have you ever experienced God's presence during a time of grief?
- 3) Why do you think that Mary was not able to recognize Jesus?
- 4) Why do you think Jesus told Mary not to hold on to him?
- 5) If you have shared your experience of discovering faith with someone, what was the reaction?
- 6) Jesus sent Mary to share the good news with the disciples, who might Jesus be asking you to share the good news with?
- 7) What might the key verse encourage you in your faith?

8) How might the group support each other in sharing the good news?

### Pray

- How might the group pray for you this week?
- Who else might need to be part of this group that you could pray about inviting?

# Discovering Faith

## Week 4



### Gathering Questions

What do you think is a great meal to share with friends?

### Key Verse - 1 Corinthians 2:4

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

### Scripture Reading— John 21:1-14

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. 3 "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. 4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. 5 He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. 6 He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. 7 Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. 8 The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. 9 When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." 11 So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

### Group Discussion:

1) If you had to go a hundred yards across a lake, would you do it? Why?



- 2) Why did Peter jump overboard to swim to shore?
- 3) Why do you think that this meal was significant enough to be written about?
- 4) What kinds of miracles do people ask for?
- 5) Have you ever asked God for a miracle? What happened?
- 6) How does the key verse demonstrate that miracles can aid in our faith?

## Pray

- How might the group pray for you this week?
- Who else might need to be part of this group that you could pray about inviting?

# Discovering Faith

## Week 5



### Gathering Questions

What has been the best and worst part of your week?

### Key Verse - 1 John 4:17-19

This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us.

### Scripture Reading – John 21:15-19

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” 16 Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.” 17 The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. 18 Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” 19 Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

### Group Discussion:

- 1) Why do you think Jesus asks Peter about love? Why does he ask three times?
- 2) Have you ever had to work through a deep disagreement with a friend?
- 3) What is the hardest part about reconciling with friends?
- 4) What do you think it means that Jesus tells Peter to feed his sheep?
- 5) Why does Jesus tell Peter to “Follow him?” Is Jesus going some place or is he calling Peter to a lifestyle?
- 6) If Jesus were to ask you if you love him more than anyone else, what would you say?
- 7) How does the key verse relate to the passage you have read?

## Pray

- How might the group pray for you this week?
- Who else might need to be part of this group that you could pray about inviting?

# Discovering Faith

## Week 6



### Gathering Questions

Who has had the most influence in your faith life?

### Key Verse - John 14:26

The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

### Scripture Reading – Acts 1:1-11

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach <sup>2</sup> until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. <sup>3</sup> After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup> On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. <sup>5</sup> For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup> He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” <sup>9</sup> After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. <sup>10</sup> They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. <sup>11</sup> “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

### Group Discussion:

- 1) Jesus gave them convincing proofs that he was alive, what might convince you?
- 2) Why does Jesus make the disciples wait to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit?
- 3) How might the Spirit help you be a witness?
- 4) If Jerusalem represents the disciples hometown, Judea represents nearby towns,

Samaria represents people who have a different culture, and the Ends of the Earth represent people who are far away, who do you think Jesus might be sending you to share your witness?

- 5) What might be motivating the disciples to ask about the time when the Kingdom will come, or to stand around staring at the sky? Why doesn't Jesus give them date, time, or place for the completion of the kingdom?
- 6) What are they supposed to do instead?
- 7) How does the key verse relate to the passage you have read?

## Pray

- How might the group pray for you this week?
- Who else might need to be part of this group that you could pray about inviting?