



PARENT GUIDE

LESSON TWO: ASK

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LESSON TWO: ASK

OBJECTIVE: To help families see how to use their child's questions as a discipleship opportunity, and to see asking questions as important for families who follow Jesus.

FOCUS ON FOLLOWING JESUS

It's okay to have questions about the world – Jesus wants us to wonder and find answers in him. Your questions matter to God!

(Matthew 7:7 "Ask, and it will be given to you. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.")

GRIP ON THE GOSPEL

Jesus asked a lot of questions of his friends and followers. He asks us the same question – it's the most important question in the world – who do you say Jesus is?

(Matthew 16:15-16 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah. You are the Son of the living God.")

WHAT DO I DO?

- Read the [For Parents](#) article. Spend a few minutes thinking and praying.
- Read over the [Discipleship Lesson](#) and decide when you will do it with your family.
- Gather your family, a Bible and any supplies listed on the lesson sheet. Use the script provided to teach a [Discipleship Lesson](#) to your family, adapting as needed.
- Use the 5 mini-lessons as [Daily Bible Time](#) prompts through the week.
- Select one or more [Discipleship Activities](#) to incorporate into your week.



FOR PARENTS

Do you have kids with questions? Some kids seem to only know one word for certain stages of life – WHY!? We can get to the point of drowning it out or dismissing their questions. We know sometimes kids ask just to be defiant or contrary. Why do I have to wear nice clothes for church? Why do I have to go to visit grandma this weekend? Why do I have to eat peas? Sound familiar? These are fruitless questions that we may choose not to tolerate but we can sometimes get into a habit of dismissing all our kids' questions in the same way, and can, therefore, miss out on an opportunity to teach and disciple them.

When we have a question, we are acknowledging there is something we don't know. That humility is necessary for a disciple! If we think we know everything and have our life together, it will be impossible for us to learn from Jesus how to live like Jesus. So for this reason, questions should be encouraged! Our attitude towards questions will either make our children feel welcome to come to us, or they will find their answers another way.

So, how can you use your kids' questions to lead them to Jesus?

- 1. Go to God before Google:** If you are posed with a question, stop and pray about it. Have your kids see you pray and ask God for wisdom, discernment, and guidance! When your family is making a choice that might seem difficult, talk about how you are going to God with that decision and waiting on Him. In your inner, personal life make sure that you're doing this. If you are having a difficulty, parenting struggle, conflict with a co-worker or tough decision, do you google it? Ask people on Facebook for their opinion? Rant until you find someone who agrees with you? Read parenting blogs and books about how to get others on your side – or do you go to God first and pray for wisdom and understanding? Do you reach for answers on your phone and through social media – or to God? It's great to go to godly wise people for input and there is a time for that – but there is fruit in seeking out God ourselves, and we must not be reliant on another person's relationship with God, but rather cultivate our own!
- 2. Share your Questions with your Kids:** Sometimes as parents we hate admitting we don't know something. We fear that our kids will lose respect for us, or maybe doubt God's Word if somehow their parents don't have every answer. It's a tough thought pattern to get over. But imagine how much greater your influence and impact on your kids would be if they saw you admit a question you had, watched you work on finding the answer and then share what you have learned? We want to grow kids who are curious and passionate about learning who God is and what it means to follow Him. That means not being afraid to ask those questions ourselves, and model the humility of asking ourselves.

What if you don't know the answer? Sometimes parents are scared to even find out what questions their kids have because they are afraid of not knowing the answer. So what do you do if your kids jump in with 'how do we know the Bible is true' or 'why did God have to let Jesus die' or even 'why doesn't God just stop bad things from happening'?

- 1. "Great Question!":** The first thing is to remind your kids that asking questions is good. Jesus never turned away an honest question. Questions, and even doubts, show your kids are working out what they believe, and this is very healthy for their spiritual development. As some have



said – doubt isn't the enemy of faith, certainty is. Where there are questions, there is room still to discover truth. Encourage dialogue like this by praising good questions.

2. **Find out Why:** Jesus responded to many questions with a question of his own. Partially to find out what the people already knew, or to help them see what they already knew on the topic, and partially to teach. Find out why your child is asking the question; this will help you frame your answer! Did you hear a friend ask? Have you been thinking about something you heard at church? Did a circumstance in life make them begin to wonder something? Sometimes kids are looking for a quick response when we give a lengthy one, or we give a quick response when they have been working through complex ideas for a month.
3. **“I'll get back to you...”:** If you don't know where to start answering a question, remind your kids that questions often require research. Tell them you'll have to ask God for help in answering that one, read the Bible and maybe talk to other people or read some books. Tell your child that you will get back to them with an answer for that, and then make sure you follow through on that promise! They may not be as interested by the time you get to answering, but they will know that you heard them, and will see that answers are possible even to really tricky questions.
4. **Go to the Right Source:** Before you post the question to a Facebook group or email a pastor or friend – spend some time thinking about it and praying first. Then think about all the resources available to you. These are given to you by God – and it makes you a great parent to admit when you need the help of someone else to give the best answer possible.

You can do this! And you're not alone. Let's all work towards raising children who go to God for their answers, and ask the hard questions so their faith is built not just on trusting us, but trusting God's perfect Word.

Consider these Questions:

- What big question do your kids have?
- What big questions about God or the Christian life did you have as a child? Did you have anyone to talk to about them?
- What are your feelings about kids asking spiritual questions to their parents? Does it excite you, worry you? Do you feel up for the challenge or intimidated? Why?
- Who do you go to when you have a spiritual question or a parenting question? Who else could you bring into that circle of wisdom to give you Godly advice?
- What resources have you found helpful in answering kids' questions? How can you share that resource with other families?



DISCIPLESHIP LESSON

Instructions:

- Read or teach the text using your own words
- *Text in italics is a note to the adult leading*
- This icon  indicates a question you should ask
- This icon  tells you there is a Bible verse to read
- **Text inside a grey box is a tip or idea for you!**
- Text inside this box is a short activity or task

The lesson should take about **45 minutes** to complete

Supplies Needed:

- **Bible**
- A sheet of paper
- Something to write with for each family member

I Love Learning

Gather your family for the family Discipleship Lesson. Remind your family that this is something exciting to do together, to look at the Bible and Jesus and learn what it means to be a disciple!



Allow children to give an answer and encourage them with follow up questions if they aren't sure what to say. Do you wish there was a class all about dinosaurs? Princesses? Dogs? Computer games?



What do you wish we learned more about in school?

Those are great answers! School doesn't always teach us what we want to know, does it? (Share with your kids what some of your biggest interests were as a kid, and recognize some of their interests.)



So what do you do if you want to know about something and no one is teaching you about it?

(Take answers until someone says something like 'ask someone who knows' or 'look it up on YouTube or Google'.)



Encourage any honest question to be written down – but move along if children begin to get too silly.

Right! We have to ask some questions to find out our answers!

On one piece of paper – a large one if you have it, but ordinary printer paper will do – have everyone in the family write down any questions they have. Younger children can have someone write their question down for them. It could be a question about life, God, church, the Bible, or just about something in the world.

**Who asks more questions in a day – kids or grownups?**

(Probably the answer will be – kids. You could identify who asks the most questions in your family.)

Researchers decided to figure out who asks the most questions. They found that girls aged 5 ask more questions than anyone else – an average of 288 questions a day! Do you think you ask that many questions in a day? Do you know anyone who might?

Sometimes kids ask questions because they just want to talk, but usually it is because there is something they don't know. They wonder about stuff. They are curious. This is awesome!



This number comes from a British survey (Frazier, Gelman and Wellman, 2009). It found that mothers are asked a question every 2 minutes and 36 seconds. Sound right to you?

**But adults ask less. Why do you think that is?**

There is still stuff that adults don't know, believe it or not! Adults sometimes forget how fun it is to learn and be curious. And they don't always like to show that there is stuff they don't know.

Some people, both grown-ups and kids, get the strange idea that asking questions about God is bad! So they don't ask their really good questions. Some people think that having faith in God – being Christians – means that we stop asking 'why' or 'how' or wondering about what God is like. But that's not true at all!

**Who can think of a really, really smart person?**

(your children might identify a teacher or pastor, a celebrity, famous scientist like Einstein – maybe Jesus.)

The smartest people in the world will tell you that they got that way by asking questions. They wonder and they think! The smartest, most amazing person ever was Jesus – Jesus knew nearly EVERYTHING but guess what – he still asked questions!

Jesus asked people questions! Isn't that a crazy thought?



Older children might want to talk about what Jesus knew and what he didn't, and if he was God, why he didn't know everything. That's a great question for you to look into together this week!



People asked Jesus a lot of questions too – he didn't tell them to stop asking, he took the time to answer them!

(Read one or two verses if your children are short on attention and summarize the other questions instead of looking up each verse.)



Older children can look up some of these verses and find the question someone asked Jesus themselves. You may want to provide paper to write all the questions they find. Do they know other examples?



Matthew 19:25 (Who can be saved?)

Matthew 13:10 (Why do you tell stories when you speak to people?)

Matthew 18:21 (How many times do I have to forgive my brother?)

Mark 4: 37-38 (Don't you care if something bad happens to us?)

Luke 10:29 (Who is my neighbour?)

John 13:36 (Where are you going, Jesus?)

John 6:28 (What does God want from us?)

This list could have gone on for a very long time. If you went through the Gospels and counted, you would find that we have 183 questions that people asked Jesus! Jesus might have felt like some moms or older kids do when a little child in the house can't stop asking "why!". But never once do we see Jesus say, "Stop asking so many questions!!" Nope – here is what Jesus says instead:



Matthew 7:7

In this verse, Jesus is saying he wants us to be curious, to know that there are things we don't have and we don't know, and we should come and ask him about them!

Now, remember all those questions we wrote down at the beginning? You might think – if I have a question, how exactly is God going to answer me? If you were thinking that – GREAT QUESTION! People have wondered that for a long time, even people who lived in Bible times. They wanted answers!



God told Jeremiah, **"Call out to me. I will answer you. I will tell you great things you do not know. And unless I do, you wouldn't be able to find out about them"** (Jeremiah 33:3)



James wrote, **“If any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone and doesn’t find fault.”** (James 1:5)

If you know your Bible stories you might remember that in Bible times, prophets took messages of God to the people; sometimes God spoke to them in a loud voice, or sometimes angels visited people. But that didn’t happen everyday or to every person! Those were amazing, special, rare events, which is why they were written down. So it’s not likely that an angel is going to come and tell you the answer to your question.

But God has provided some things that are even better! God answers our questions in a few ways:



Can you think of how God answers us? (Take a few answers from the kids.)

1. **The Bible:** The more we read the Bible, the more we understand what is true in the world. Answers to many of our questions are found in the Bible, sometimes through stories of other people’s lives, and sometimes through what Jesus or writers of the New Testament taught. Jesus didn’t always answer people’s questions directly, sometimes he told a story that would make them figure out the answer and remember it better. All of the stories in the Bible really happened – but God made them happen so we could learn from them today!
2. **Smart People:** God has given lots of people wisdom and understanding. Sometimes these people are Bible teachers, artists, scientists or doctors. When we have a question about how the world works, sometimes we can go to someone who has spent time researching it and writing down what they found out – but we must always make sure we are trusting the Bible first! If what a really smart person says and what the Bible says don’t agree, we always trust the Bible because it is from God!



You can provide examples that are relevant to your children of times we might trust the Bible over a scientist or teacher. This may not be a relevant point for all families.



3. **Holy Spirit:** Jesus promised to send us a helper – the Holy Spirit –which is the presence of God here with us. The Holy Spirit talks inside of us, and helps us figure out our questions. Sometimes God’s Holy Spirit will even help us to ask the right question or to know where to go for answers. So this is how God sometimes talks directly to us! The Holy Spirit will always agree with God’s Word, the Bible!

When we are a family who follows Jesus, we won’t be afraid to ask questions and look for the answers! We can trust that even if we don’t find the answer right away, God will give it to us at the right time. When we are a family that follows Jesus, we will also consider the questions that Jesus asked us! That’s right – Jesus asks us questions – in the Bible we have 307 questions Jesus asked people!

Being a follower of Jesus means believing that Jesus is more than just a really smart guy – but that he is God and holds the answers to all our questions. God cares about our questions. Let’s be families who follow Jesus and explore some really great questions this week!

Close by praying together that God would help your family to be disciples in the way they ask and answer questions.



DAILY BIBLE TIME

Take a few minutes each day this week to spend some time together reading from God’s Word and discussing it together. Questions and verses are provided for you below. Use the Bible version your children are used to. NIV is a good one for very young children.

1	<p><u>James 1:5</u> <u>Matthew 7:8</u></p>	<p>When our family has everyday ordinary questions, where do we go for answers? <i>(Consider sport stats websites, game wikis, weather websites, Google, the library...)</i> Make a list of some questions you have right now as a family, maybe two each. Tell your children about a question you had about God at one time, and how you found the answer. Tell them as a family you are going to practice asking questions.</p> <p>What should we do if we have questions? What do today’s verses mean? Decide on questions about God, the Bible or Christianity you want the answer to as a family, and take some time this week to find an answer and talk about it together!</p>
2	<p><u>Proverbs 3:5</u></p> <p><u>Philippians 4:7</u></p>	<p>What does this verse mean? (What does it mean to lean on your own understanding?) Our verse this week encourages us to keep on asking. But it doesn’t mean we will always understand the answer. Sometimes we have to wait until we have more understanding to know an answer (example: your youngest child has to learn easy chores before they learn harder ones, like making a whole dinner or fixing a car!).</p> <p>Is it possible we will always understand everything in this life? Why do you think there are things that are too big for us to sometimes understand? Does that mean we shouldn’t ask the big hard questions? What do we do in the meantime before God answers us? How can we trust God?</p>
3	<p><u>1 Corinthians 14:15</u></p> <p><u>James 3:13</u></p>	<p>What does it mean to pray with our understanding, or worship God with our understanding? Is it worshipping God to think about Him and ask questions? When we get answers to our questions and learn lots of things, what does God want us to do with that knowledge? What does it mean to be humble? How can we help other people when we learn things from studying God’s Word? What have YOU learned from asking questions and looking for answers?</p>
4	<p><u>Mark 10:46-52</u></p>	<p>What question did Jesus ask Bartimaeus in this passage? If Jesus asked you this question – what would your answer be? (What would you like Jesus to do for you? Give you wisdom? Help you with something? Heal?) When we pray, Jesus wants to know – what can he do to help you? Sometimes people think they don’t need God’s help, but we do. God is happy when we ask for help! It’s okay to pray ‘help me to obey Daddy’ or ‘help me to sleep well and not be scared.’</p> <p>When people don’t ask God for help, what are they saying? How can we remember as a family to always ask God to help us in everything we do?</p>



5	<u>John 21:16</u>	<p>What did Jesus ask Simon in this verse? This might seem like a strange thing to ask! Jesus knows if we love him, right?</p> <p>Does Mommy/Daddy (Grandma/Grandpa, etc) love you? How do you know? How would you know if someone loves another person?</p> <p>What was Simon's answer? What did Jesus tell him to do? Feed my sheep means Jesus was asking him to think of other Jesus-followers like they were sheep, and to help them. They needed to be taken care of, loved and taught. Jesus asked this question three times in a row – so we know it was very important! He wanted Simon to see that when we love someone, we do things to show it. Jesus wanted to be sure Simon knew what he was supposed to do, and gave Simon a very important job.</p> <p>What is your answer – do you love Jesus?</p> <p>How do you show you love Jesus? What does Jesus want you to do?</p>
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DISCIPLESHIP ACTIVITIES

Use any of the following activities to extend the learning and disciple your child in everyday life.

- **Pray Together:** Pray that God would guide us as we ask questions and help us to put our faith in him always, even when the answers don't come to us easily yet.
- **Memorize:** Matthew 7:8 together as a family. Talk about this verse in daily life.
- **Missions:** Sometimes people have wrong ideas about Christianity and Jesus. How can we encourage them to ask us questions? How can we share with others what we know about Jesus?
- **Missions:** What questions do you have about life as a missionary or life in other countries? Does your denomination, church or family support a missionary who has a blog or prayer letters posted online? Consider looking for the answer to a single question to help your child become curious about world evangelism (for instance – what do missionaries in India eat for breakfast?).
- **Daily Life:**
 - Have some fun with questions, if you have a smart phone with SIRI, ALEXA, or something similar, look up some silly questions to ask it. Our assistive devices know some things. They can know lots of facts about the world, but they don't know everything. What don't they know?
 - Play with this website: www.en.akinator.com, which will guess a person or character you are thinking of in 20 questions. Cartoon characters kids know work well.
 - Make a treat for the family using a recipe, or boxed mix (such as brownies). Talk about whether the kids know how to make brownies from a box. How can we find out? (Ask someone who has made them before, read directions on the box by the people who made the mix.) Our lives are the same – God made us and he has instructions for us! Making brownies without knowing how would mean they won't turn out very well. What other times in life is it good to find directions?