

Acts 10

Small Group Discussion Guides

Read Acts 10:1-44 and reflect on the story. There is such a beauty that shines forth from this passage. I've shared my faith with lots of people but never had this kind of response. I wish witnessing and church growth were this easy!

1. Have you ever been in an uncomfortable situation, where you felt like a fish out of water, and yet you knew you needed to be there in order for you to be “salt and light” to others? Peter had to overcome a lot of things in order to feel comfortable going to and speaking with Cornelius and his household.
2. Looking at all the detrimental effects religion has had on the world, you can see why people would be turned off by religion, including Christianity. From your experience, do people view Christianity as a religion or a relationship with God?
3. Why do you believe in Jesus? What if someone did find the bones of Jesus would that make any difference to your faith?
4. Read this post from # poemsfortheresistance. It's written by a 20 year old who has a following of people in their 20s.

I just want to remind you that god made people called them good and then drowned them in a flood, that your god made mistakes, hardened hearts, gambled with Satan, killed his son, struck down followers, and made rules for slavery and yet you say his judgment is sound. (Another person in the same age range responded: I guess his ways are higher than our ways.)

How do you drink Jesus's blood and spill your neighbor's? How do you baptize repentant and drown naysayers? When did whiplash get holy? When did abuse get trendy? I've never been good at memorizing things but I don't remember that beatitude: Blessed are the warmongers for they shall find prayers and thoughts. And blessed are the pro-lifers for they shall find kettles and pots. And blessed are the Christians who wave flags and throw stones for they will find heaven underneath others' bones.

And I'm pretty sure the god of floods and horsemen loves imitation so don't worry too much you're in fine company. But if you decide one day to try for decency remember this: god may send floods but you can build boats, and dismantle pews and use the wood for something that will actually save lives.

How would you respond to this person and others of the Gen Z generation? What is her real beef, is it with Christianity or with followers of Christianity who have corrupted the faith with politics, nationalism, and moralism?

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5. What do you dislike most about the Church, your "religion," and/or Christians? Said in a different way, what in your faith needs to be "lost?" What in your practice of the faith needs to be lost because it treats Christianity as a religion and not a relationship with God?
6. Finish this sentence: I wish the Church/Christians were more _____.
7. Share a positive experience you've had with the Church.
8. Share your worst experience with the Church or Christian people.
9. Have you ever found or belonged to a church that shared all these qualities:
 - The Gospel was preached.
 - The Church was alive and God was actively moving in it, changing lives.
 - New believers were patiently disciplined.
 - The Church was diverse and people's differences didn't seem to matter at all.
 - The church brought people together rather than dividing them.

Of these qualities pick one that you think the Church in the US is weakest? What needs to be strengthened?

10. Do you have a present tense relationship with God? Do you tend to speak about God's work in your life in the past tense, "Here's what he did," or present tense, "Here's what God is doing n my life now?" Has God spoken to you recently and if so how did he speak to you and what did God say?
11. Read this passage: *"Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."* 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Do you believe the Church today is as good at reaching the LBGTQ+ community as Paul was? If not, what do we need to do differently? Is the problem the church and what the Bible teaches or is the problem society which says the LBGTQ+ doesn't need Jesus because they don't need to change? Christianity is the one that needs to change!

12. Should the Church change the teachings of the Bible or perhaps tone down certain teachings, or perhaps avoid them altogether in order to reach the current culture?
13. Pastor Richard listed 5 ways religion and a relationship with God are different. Are there others ways they differ?
14. If you could build your own church, what would it look like?