



grow groups



# Week 1: The Gospel

## A Narrow Chapter vs. The Full Story

### GOAL:

Expand our vision of the gospel beyond the borders of our personal experience with Jesus.

### CHECKLIST

- Prepare for the meeting by praying for yourself and your group (feel free to use the prayer below) and reading through this Leader's Guide.
- Watch this week's teaching video together.
- Facilitate a conversation about the "Full Story" of the gospel.
- Watch the video that gives instructions for this week's Practice Assignment.
- Close with a time of gospel-focused prayer
- Take attendance in Planning Center, including guests/new members.

### PREPARING THROUGH PRAYER:

*Almighty God, I praise you today as our Creator, Father, and Rescuer. When I think about the Full Story of the gospel, I am overwhelmed by your goodness, your faithfulness, your beauty, your grace, and your love. Thank you that through Jesus, not only are my sins forgiven and my eternity secured, but I have been rescued from the "dominion of darkness" and brought into a new kingdom, where I am adopted into your family, blessed with your Holy Spirit, promised your abiding presence, included in the restoration work you're doing in the world, and assured of your everlasting faithfulness. May my eyes be opened more each day to your breathtaking grace and to the awe-inspiring story of what you are doing in the world. In your holy name I pray, Amen.*

---

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25*

## CONNECT, COORDINATE, AND PRAY (10-15 minutes)

*Spend the first portion of your time together connecting relationally in whatever way works best for your group. Discuss any details you need to coordinate and spend a few minutes praying together. This might also be a good time to ask people to share anything that the Holy Spirit showed them through this week's Growth Guide readings.*

## Watch the Teaching Video (15 minutes)

*(Before you play the video, spend a brief moment explaining that during this series, part of the teaching will be delivered by video)*

### Video Instructions (at VRBC)

1. Turn on the TV and make sure you're on the Roku input (turn the Roku on if needed)
2. Click on the Youtube app
3. On the left side, scroll down to "Library"
4. Select the "This is My Story" playlist and click on the Intro/Teaching video

### Video Instructions (at Home)

1. Open the Youtube app on your TV
2. Search "vrbcgrowgroups" (all one word)
3. You should see the VRBC logo with the title "Grow Groups." Select this option
4. Under "Playlists," select "This is My Story" and then click on the Intro/Teaching video

## DISCUSS (20-30 minutes)

- What was the main point of the story about the Kraus family?

**Leader's Note:** *The main point of the story about the Kraus family is that it's possible to focus so much on the personal part of a story that you miss the overall narrative. When Mr. Kraus told his grandson that World War II was when "our family had some difficulties and we had to move to the United States for a few years," what he was saying was completely true. But, it left out the bigger picture!*

*In the same way, when we think of the gospel mainly in terms of what it means for us personally, we can miss the bigger picture of who God is and what he's doing in the world. The fact that Jesus' death on the cross makes it possible for our sins to be forgiven and for us to spend eternity with him is unbelievably amazing, and something to be celebrated throughout eternity! But it's also part of a much larger story all about our Holy God and what he's doing in the world.*

---

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25*

---

## WEEK 1

---

- What were the 6 C's that John used to talk about the "Full Story" of the Gospel? Which of these C's do you not think about as often as the others? Which of them are you interested in learning more about?

**Leader's Note:** *The 6 C's John used were:*

- **CREATION:** *God created the universe and everything in it. ("In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" Genesis 1:1)*
- **CRASH:** *When Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, sin entered the world, and the entire created order has been suffering the consequences ever since. ("Cursed is the ground because of you...dust you are and to dust you will return" Genesis 3:17-19)*
- **COVENANT:** *God promised to make Abraham into a great nation and to bless all the people of the earth through him. (Genesis 12:1-3)*
- **CHRIST:** *Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17) and inaugurated a new covenant through his death and resurrection. (Luke 22:20)*
- **CHURCH:** *Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we have been adopted into God's family (Romans 8:15) and are now part of the Body of Christ (Colossians 1:18, 1 Corinthians 12:12). As part of his body, we have received the Holy Spirit, (Acts 2:38) we do the "good works which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10) and we serve as "Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." (2 Corinthians 5:20)*
- **COMING:** *One day, Jesus will physically return to earth and the dead in Christ will be raised to new life. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, 1 Corinthians 15) Jesus will restore all things (Revelation 21:5) and we will live with him in a new heaven and a new earth. (2 Peter 3:13)*

*Depending on the interests of your group and the time you have available, feel free to dive deeper into any of these sections and the associated passages.*

- John said that reflecting on the "full story" of the gospel adds significance and meaning to the "narrow chapter" of our personal experience with Jesus. Why do you think this might be the case? Read Galatians 2:20, Colossians 3:1-3, and Matthew 16:24-25. What do these passages say about the connection between our own stories and God's big story? What could we miss out on if we focus only on our narrow chapter?

**Leader's Note:** *Before even jumping into this question, it's important to note that this is a big shift for us, especially those of us who grew up in the United States!*

*Many cultures around the world can be described as "collectivistic." In these cultures, groups (families, communities, tribes, nations) are considered primary and individuals are considered secondary. People in collectivistic cultures tend to think of their identity primarily as a member of a particular group. Other cultures, including the United States, can be described as "individualistic." In these cultures, individuals are considered primary and groups are secondary. Identity is found in individualism and independence and self-sufficiency are key values.*

---

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25*

---

## WEEK 1

---

*For those who grew up in an individualistic culture (most of us), we naturally tend to view our faith through that lens. While there are positives that can come from this viewpoint (for example, people from an individualistic background tend to have a high view of personal responsibility), it definitely exposes us to the risk of focusing mainly on the narrow chapter of our own personal experience with Jesus and missing out on the larger story.*

*Even though this can be a difficult mental shift for us to make, it's an important one! Because if we focus only on our own narrow chapter, we miss out on so much beauty and power! We miss out on all of the "C's" we talked about in the previous question, and our view of who God is and what he's done shrinks.*

*Here's an image that might help:*

*In the movie **The Lion King**, Pumba (a warthog) and his friend Timon (a meerkat) are looking up at the sky one night and Pumba asks Timon, "do you ever wonder what those sparkling dots are up there?" Timon answers, "Pumba – I don't wonder, I know! They're fireflies that got stuck up on that big blue-ish black thing!" To which Pumba replies dejectedly, "Oh, gee – I always thought they were big balls of gas burning billions of miles away."*

*We laugh because even though Timon scoffs at his friend Pumba, we know he's right! And the tragedy is that while Pumba is experiencing the wonder of knowing that he is just a tiny part of an enormous and glorious universe, Timon thinks that the stars are only the size of fireflies.*

*When we focus mainly on our own experience with Jesus, we miss out on the glory and grandeur of God and the amazing story he is writing, and our world shrinks. But Scripture gives us another alternative! In Galatians 2:20 and Colossians 3:1-3, we see Paul saying that when we become Christians, it is as if our own (individual) life is crucified and we find a brand-new (and much bigger and more significant) life in Christ. In Matthew 16:24-25, Jesus expresses the same idea – that when we "lose our life" by turning away from ourselves and toward him, we actually find the life we were created for...the "abundant life" John 10:10 talks about.*

- What are some of the big questions about life that people in our culture are asking? How can the "Full Story" of the gospel help address these questions?

**Leader's Note:** *This question helps us realize that reflecting on the Full Story not only expands our own experience of God and his kingdom, but it also strengthens our ability to share the gospel with others! As we said in the video, focusing on the narrow (but super important!) chapter about how Jesus' death paid the price for my sin and secured my forgiveness definitely addresses questions about sin and shame. But people in our culture are asking other big questions too! They're asking questions like:*

---

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25*

---

## WEEK 1

---

- *How did we get here?*
- *Why is the world so messed up?*
- *Are things ever going to get any better? If so, how?*
- *What's my purpose in life?*
- *How do I find significance?*

*The Full Story of the gospel addresses all these questions and more! It tells us we got here because a glorious, holy, and loving God created us. It tells us the world is broken because of sin, but that through Jesus, God is restoring all things and one day Jesus will return to finish the project. It tells us that our purpose is to love God and love our neighbor, and that we can find true and lasting significance in God's Kingdom as his dearly loved children, partnering with him to love the world.*

## **PRACTICE (5 minutes)**

Each week in the *This is My Story* series, we're asking each person to participate in a Practice Exercise designed to help us grow in our understanding of God's big story, how our story fits into his story, and how we can share it with others.

The instructions for this week's practice exercise are included in the second video in the YouTube playlist. You can access it using the same instructions you used to play the teaching video.

## **PRAYER (5-10 minutes)**

As you close this week, lead the group in a time of prayer:

1. Thanking God for the beauty and power of the gospel story
2. Thanking God that we get to be a part of the full story
3. Asking God to help us more fully grasp the full story of the gospel and our place in it

---

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25*