



UN

COVER

**CONNECT GROUP STUDIES ON LUKE**

# WELCOME!

You have a massive opportunity to meet with Jesus in the pages of Luke's Gospel. Maybe you've heard about Jesus but never seriously investigated the facts for yourself. Or maybe you know him well and long for more. Whether you feel like you have known Jesus for ages or whether he feels like a complete stranger to you, reading through Luke and uncovering what we know about him is the best way to form a clearer understanding of who he is and make up your own mind about what that means for you.

Primarily the task is simply to read the Gospel according to Luke in the Bible for yourself but alongside another person or tracking with a group of people so that you have dialogue partners. This study resource is just a bonus to help you with that. There is a reading guide that sets out a recommended schedule so you can pace yourself with the rest of the church and lines up with the focus passages that will be preached from in our Sunday Gatherings. There is space on the left hand side of each page to record your reflections from your personal reading and if people actively engage with that then there would be plenty to discuss when you meet together. On the right hand side of each page there are suggested questions if more exploration is required for Connect Groups to use on the focus passages.

If you get one of the Uncover Luke resources that has the printed text of Luke's Gospel there are further questions and content that you can access online. Or simply go to <http://www.uncover.org.uk/luke> and explore what is there. There are lots of videos, questions, and content to explore.

For those who would like to extend themselves we're recommending another book called *The Lost Letters of Pergamum* that is a fictional account of what it might have been like for a Roman citizen to encounter Luke's Gospel and to dialogue through ancient letter correspondence with Luke himself. This is an extraordinarily helpful book and personally I found it to be profoundly moving (it's in my top 5 all time most significant reads for faith formation).

May God bless your reading and may you encounter Jesus!

*Mark Juers*

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# READING GUIDE

<b>Sunday Date</b>	<b>Personal Reading</b>	<b>Focus Passage</b>	<b>Lost Letters of Pergamum</b>
May 5	Luke 1	Luke 1:1-4	Author's, Editor's preface, Letter collection 1-4
May 12	Luke 2	Luke 1:46-55, 67-79, 2:25-35	Letter collection 5
May 19	Luke 3-4	Luke 3:1-22	Letter collection 6
May 26	Luke 5-8	Luke 5:27-6:11, 6:27-36	Letter collection 7
June 2	Luke 9-10	Luke 9:43-50	Letter collection 8
June 9	Luke 11-16	Luke 12:22-48	Letter collection 9
June 16	Luke 17-20	Luke 18:15-30	Letter collection 10
June 23	Luke 21-24	Luke 21:1-38	Letter collection 11-14

# UNCOVER LUKE: CHAPTER 1

What do I notice about Jesus?

What do I notice about others around Jesus?

What questions do I have?

# MAY 5TH FOCUS PASSAGE: LUKE 1:1-4

## To get you thinking

According to McCrindle Research, the most trusted people for Australians to go to for advice are family or friend, experienced practitioner, and technical expert (in that order). The least trusted are government official or regulator, CEO/Senior leader, and not-for-profit body or association. Why do you think this is the case? What causes us to trust or distrust our sources of truth?

## Digging deeper

What does this passage tell us about how the story of Jesus has been made available to us? How was it handed on?

Who were the eye-witnesses and servants of the word?

The opening story is about Zechariah and an experience he had in the temple. How would Luke come to know such intimate detail?

What positive indications are given to us that we can trust Luke's account of Jesus?

From other sources we know that Luke himself was born in Antioch (in modern day Turkey), that he was a physician, that he died at age 84, and he was unmarried and childless. What kind of picture do we start to get about this man? What is his agenda?

Why did Luke write his account of Jesus' life (1:4)?

Have a look at Acts 1:1-2. What does this tell us about Luke and Acts? Why might this be important?

## The bottom line

If an intelligent, educated, highly capable man from the ancient world investigated all these things so that there can be certainty, how do we receive and live in that certainty for ourselves?

What do we do with our genuine questions and the doubts that arise when we explore matters of faith?

## Curly question

The name Theophilus literally means "friend of God" and some people think that this was not a person but an honorary title for anyone who fits the description. As such it is deliberately addressed to anyone who wants to seek the truth. Do you think it matters either way?

# UNCOVER LUKE: CHAPTER 2

What do I notice about Jesus?

What do I notice about others around Jesus?

What questions do I have?

# MAY 12TH FOCUS PASSAGE: LUKE 1:46-55, 1:67-79, 2:25-35

## To get you thinking

Who are the most powerful people in the world right now? What are the most powerful institutions/organisations/systems? What gives them power?

## Digging deeper

Read Luke 1:46-55

Mary's song (often known as the Magnificat) is a beautiful declaration and response. What was Mary responding to? Read from verse 26 if you need.

What do we learn about Mary in verses 46-49?

What do we learn about God in verses 50-55?

Some countries - such as India, Guatemala, and Argentina - have outright banned the Magnificat from being recited in liturgy or in public. Can you see why this might be?

Read Luke 1:67-79

After the birth of his son and naming him John, Zechariah was suddenly able to speak again and was moved to make his own declaration.

What do we learn about God in verses 68-75?

What do we learn about Zechariah's son John in verses 76-78?

What do we learn about ourselves from verse 79?

Read Luke 2:25-35

Simeon's response is not entirely a positive message. What does this prepare us to see as the narrative progresses?

## The bottom line

Have you ever seen God at work and been spontaneously moved to respond in some way?

What steps can you take on the path of peace?

## Curly question

We read that Mary, Elizabeth, Zechariah and Simeon were overcome or filled with the Holy Spirit. So who produced those songs and responses, the Holy Spirit or the humans?

# UNCOVER LUKE: CHAPTERS 3 - 4

What do I notice about Jesus?

What do I notice about others around Jesus?

What questions do I have?

# MAY 19TH FOCUS PASSAGE: LUKE 3:1-22

## To get you thinking

It can be really hard to make the most of a bad set of circumstances. Do a google search for "ethical dilemma examples" and see how you might answer some of these. These can be fun to think about intellectually but not at all fun when we are faced with the real dilemmas of crooked roads and rough ways.

## Digging deeper

What kind of message does John bring (verses 3-6)?

Why is John so unfriendly to his audience (verses 7-9)? Why is he so forceful and urgent?

What does it look like to "produce fruit in keeping with repentance"? Read verses 10-14 for their application.

If this is the preparation for the Messiah (the anointed hero of God), what does it say about the Messiah himself? What kind of person should we expect (verses 15-19)?

Why does preaching the good news end with John getting locked up (verses 18-20)? How is this good news?

## The bottom line

Imagine you are in the crowds coming to be baptised by John. What feeling does his message stir up inside you?

What ethical standards might we need to adhere to if we are to "produce fruit in keeping with repentance"?

## Curly question

If the axe is ready at the foot of the unfruitful tree to cut it down, should we be worried about our lives? How should we think about our character flaws that make us unfruitful?

# UNCOVER LUKE: CHAPTERS 5 - 8

What do I notice about Jesus?

What do I notice about others around Jesus?

What questions do I have?

# MAY 26TH FOCUS PASSAGE: LUKE 5:27-6:11, 6:27-36

## To get you thinking

Not many of us have an arch-nemesis who is our perpetual lifelong enemy that attempts to foil every plan we make. Who are our enemies and how did we end up with them? Can we be honest about the people who cause us to recoil in disgust?

## Digging deeper

Tax collectors were considered to be traitors and cheats because they collected money for the oppressive Romans and took a whole lot for themselves. Why does Jesus hang out with them?

What does Jesus do for Levi? What does Levi do for Jesus? (5:27-31)

How are the rules broken three times in 5:33-6:11? What is the motivation and defence given by Jesus? What does this tell us about his heart? What does this tell us about rules?

What does 6:5 tell us about the identity of Jesus and what kind of claim is this?

What kind of message does Jesus preach in 6:27-36?

## The bottom line

What does it take to love your enemies? How do we love outsiders and people we consider sinners when it can be hard enough loving our friends effectively? Could you invite your worst enemy for brunch?

What does it mean for us that the love of Jesus extends to us, even when we've been entangled in the midst of our own sin-sickness?

## Curly question

Do we need to repent before we can be accepted by God? Do we need to change before we can receive God's love?

# UNCOVER LUKE: CHAPTERS 9 - 10

What do I notice about Jesus?

What do I notice about others around Jesus?

What questions do I have?

# JUNE 2ND FOCUS PASSAGE: LUKE 9:43-50

## To get you thinking

If you could let your ego run wild to write your own eulogy, what words would you hope to include? What kind of achievements would you want listed?

## Digging deeper

The message Jesus shares about his betrayal (verse 44) immediately takes the disciples from marvelling at God's greatness (verse 43) to confusion (verse 45). Why couldn't they ask Jesus about it?

In verses 46-48 Jesus changes an argument about who is the greatest into a redefinition of what greatness actually is. How does he define it?

What is it about children that turns greatness upside down?

How is welcoming a child the same as welcoming Jesus and the one who sent him (God the Father)? (verse 48)

There is a strong theme of power and control through this whole passage. What does Jesus do with the power of his name when it is in the hands of outsiders (verses 49-50)?

Jesus demonstrates powerful acts as well as letting go of control. Can you think of other paradoxical aspects of Jesus' identity that go together in surprising ways?

## The bottom line

Are there questions you hesitate to ask? What feelings hold us back from the truth? Jesus knows the thoughts of our hearts anyway so how could we live more courageously?

What does it mean for us to welcome children? How can we do this well?

## Curly question

Courage and vulnerability are regularly seen as opposites. How do they go together? (Check out some Brene Brown for ideas)

# UNCOVER LUKE: CHAPTERS 11 - 16

What do I notice about Jesus?

What do I notice about others around Jesus?

What questions do I have?

# JUNE 9TH FOCUS PASSAGE: LUKE 12:22-48

## To get you thinking

Can you think of a time when a future event shaped or changed your behaviour in the present? Share with the group.

## Digging deeper

Jesus teaches his followers not to worry (verses 22-34). Many of us would say that is easier said than done. What guidance does he provide? What perspective does he want us to see that alleviates our everyday concerns?

What do we learn about God's care for us?

What perspective do we get here about God's relationship with the rest of creation?

Where should we direct our concern (verse 31)?

After Jesus finishes teaching about worry he goes straight to the other end of the spectrum and addresses apathy (verses 35-48). What is the problem with a lack of preparation, watchfulness and action?

What motivation is given to stay alert and watchful? Is this a carrot or a stick (positive reward or negative punishment)?

## The bottom line

What are the kinds of things that draw us either towards worry or apathy? See if you can think of at least one for each.

How can we manage our worldly possessions well without becoming overly attached to them?

## Curly question

Do we really live as if we believe Jesus could return at any moment (verse 40)? How might our lives look different if we really believed this?

# UNCOVER LUKE: CHAPTERS 17 - 20

What do I notice about Jesus?

What do I notice about others around Jesus?

What questions do I have?

# JUNE 16TH FOCUS PASSAGE: LUKE 18:15-30

## To get you thinking

What are all the different terms and phrases we have when we try to describe the goal of the spiritual life (eg. eternal life, paradise, etc.)? Make a list of as many as you can. Feel free to include words from other religions and even more secular phrases.

## Digging deeper

What problem does Jesus cause for the ruler who comes with his genuine question? What is the ruler unwilling to do and why?

What emotion does the ruler experience? What emotion does Jesus feel (see Mark 10:21)?

A camel going through the eye of a needle is a very striking but alarming image. What hope do people with great wealth have (verses 26-27)?

Do verses 26 and 27 give us a way out? Could we just collect great wealth and trust that God will do the impossible work of salvation? What do verses 28-30 contribute to the discussion?

## The bottom line

What does it take to hold our possessions lightly rather than with a clenched fist? What other things in our lives do we value highly, that can get in the way of us living fully in the kingdom of God?

How can we live more fully in the things that are impossible for people but possible for God?

## Curly question

The initial response of Jesus to the ruler seems to be a rejection of being called "good" and he says only God is good. Is this an acknowledgment by Jesus that he is sinful or something else?

# UNCOVER LUKE: CHAPTERS 21 - 24

What do I notice about Jesus?

What do I notice about others around Jesus?

What questions do I have?

# JUNE 23RD FOCUS

## PASSAGE: LUKE 21:1-38

### To get you thinking

When all is said and done, what do you think really matters? Out of all the ups and downs of the rollercoaster of life, what are the most pivotal moments that shape human existence?

### Digging deeper

How can two copper coins be worth more than gifts out of an abundance (verses 1-4)? What reality is Jesus showing us here? What is it that really matters?

How does the destruction of a great and beautiful temple help us see what really matters and what really lasts (verses 5-6)?

Read verses 7-11. Why do people get caught up in the things Jesus warns against: the latest hero preacher or saviour; the latest battle to fight and war to win; the biggest news item and natural disaster?

What instruction does Jesus give to persecuted Christians (verses 12-19)?

The temple of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70AD. These words of Jesus in verses 20-24 are sadly what became a reality for those who were living there. Why does Jesus say flee instead of fight?

What is the one sign Christians wait for (verse 27-28)?

### The bottom line

What are the lesser things we get caught up in that distract our attention from what truly matters?

Are you ready to stand at the return of King Jesus?

### Curly question

There are so many curly questions in this passage you don't need any from me! Scholars have been debating the details of exactly what Jesus was referring to for a long time.



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