



**Sermon Based Small Group
Leader Discussion Guide**

Sermon Title: "Trust Jesus"

**Sermon by Pastor Fred Oaks
Week of May 22, 2011**

Icebreaker	<p>Option 1: Think back to your childhood. What were some oaths that you made? Were there special words, actions, ceremonies you used to show your sincerity in keeping your promise?</p> <p>Option 2: What ideas about death and dying did you pick up in your family of origin? Have your views changed since then? If so, how?</p>
Big Idea	<p>When you know Jesus and walk with him, you know the Father and can trust him completely.</p>
Sermon Text	<p>John 14:1-14 New International Version</p> <p><u>John 14:1-14</u> Jesus Comforts His Disciples</p> <p>1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God^[a]; believe also in me. 2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going."</p> <p>Jesus the Way to the Father</p> <p>5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"</p> <p>6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really know me, you will know^[b] my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."</p> <p>8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."</p> <p>9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you</p>

such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? **10** Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. **11** Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. **12** Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. **13** And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **14** You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Footnotes:

[John 14:1](#) Or *Believe in God*

[John 14:7](#) Some manuscripts *If you really knew me, you would know*

Learning more about the lesson

The scene of these verses was the intimacy of the upper room as Jesus shared the Passover meal with his disciples. Nearing the end of both his ministry and life, Jesus desired to share a special message with only his closest followers. The book of John records Jesus' ministry in the first 12 chapters as focused on a wide public audience. He is depicted traveling, teaching and performing miracles. But the focus changes by the thirteenth chapter of John. Jesus turned his message directly to those who believed his message and followed. He was preparing them for ministry without his physical presence.

Jesus spoke these words of comfort to a group of very disturbed disciples. Just a few verses before our reading, Jesus warned them that he was going away to a place where they would not be able to follow at that time (John 13: 33, 36). He had predicted his betrayal and Peter's denial. They needed comfort, but first they had to believe that Jesus was worthy of their trust, their faith.

1. Why would Jesus have saved these final words for his disciples and not shared them with the masses of people who had been following him?

Follow-up question: What implications does the answer to this question have for modern day readers?

2. Jesus made it clear to his disciples that he would soon leave them. What images and words did he use to communicate this fact?

3. Jesus knew that he would return, following his resurrection. Why, then, do you think it was important to him to let the disciples know that he was preparing to leave?

Digging Deeper

4. Examine the text with an eye towards Jesus' commands to believe and to know. How many times in these verses does he communicate to his followers his expectation that they live their faith with resolve?

Follow up questions: (This topic offers hope for the believer who is struggling with doubt) Can I be a believer and doubt? How do I deal with doubt? Do I feel uncomfortable expressing doubt?

5. The disciples were concrete thinkers; they wanted a map so they could follow Jesus. What did Jesus tell them, instead?

Optional: This was one of Jesus' last times to speak with them before his arrest. Imagine that you were in the group of disciples that day. Without knowing that Jesus would be crucified and resurrected, do you think his answers to Thomas' and Philip's questions would have lent clarity, filling you with confidence, or led to more questions?

6. In these modern times, when tolerance is of supreme value, what does it mean to assert that Jesus is:

- The Way?
- The Truth?
- The Life?

Follow up: (This topic offers hope for the seeker struggling with the narrow way). Why is there only one way to God? How can I be sure Jesus is that way?

7. Why are these three concepts (Jesus as way, truth, and life) bound together?

Optional: Is it possible to believe one or two of these assertions, made by Jesus about himself, without believing all of them?

8. What difference does believing what Jesus said make in your daily life? Conversely, what effect would not believing Jesus have on different areas of your life?

9. Statements like these certainly took the disciples out of their comfort zone and demanded them to make a verdict. Jesus asks the same of people today. What situations in my life do I feel are out of my faith-comfort zone? Do I believe that God is good all the time?

<p>Taking it Home</p>	<p>How will I live it? Apply it?</p> <p>Respond to this statement: Christianity is perceived in the USA as a religion lived by people who know what they believe and resolve to live according to those beliefs. (10: strongly agree, 1: disagree completely). Does a discussion like this stir any resolve within you for change?</p> <p>Have you ever thought about “doubting believers?” Is it possible to be a believer and have doubts at times? Talk about some of the reasons that we have doubts about things of a spiritual nature. Did Jesus reject Thomas because of his doubts?</p> <p>Do the assertions that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life get stuck in your throat? If you agree that he is who he says he is, when was the last time you expressed your agreement with what Jesus said about himself? How can group members help you take a faith-filled step to live as his disciple?</p>
<p>Looking Ahead</p>	<p>How can I prepare for the next Small Group meeting?</p> <p>THIS IS THE LAST SBSG SESSION UNTIL NEXT SEPTEMBER. IN THE MEAN TIME:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite your group members to attend “Community,” 9:00-10:00 Sundays in the fellowship hall.
<p>Prayer Focus</p>	<p>How can I connect with God and others through prayer?</p> <p>Prayer :</p> <p>God, you are so amazing and great. I am incredibly thankful for your blanket of security in my life. No matter what is taken from me, I know that your love surrounds me and I will continue through the struggle. God, I am so thankful for you teaching me what truly matters in this world. Things such as money and prestige are worthless and will wither away, but true relationships with you and those around us can continue on forever. Please help me as I continue to trust in you throughout this day. Sometimes it can be hard in the face of what I can see in this world. I need your help as you walk with me. It is in your name we pray. amen.</p> <p>Record prayer requests here:</p>

Prayer Focus

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Record prayer requests, continued: