

Year B Summer Reading Small Group Questions



Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus

by Ann Spangler and Lois Tverberg

This book is designed to help you jump into the world of the New Testament. You'll learn about life for a first-century Jew, and you'll see how Jesus' followers would have experienced Him. This will help us approach Year B from within the culture in which Jesus lived and the New Testament books were written.

Please answer the following questions and bring them with you to our First Class Kick-off. Your instructor may wish to collect your answers, so bring them to class the first day you meet at your parish location.

At the First Class Kick-off, be sure to introduce yourself to those at your table. Share why you have chosen to return to the Biblical School this year, then answer the following.

Jewish life in the time of Jesus:

1. What are some of the characteristics of discipleship, or being a *talmidim*, that were followed in Jesus' time?
2. What are some ways that prayer impacted the life of Jews at the time of Jesus?
3. What are some of the aspects of the education and life of a rabbi at the time of the New Testament?

Faith and daily life (answer at least 1):

1. The authors relate the story of an apprentice potter who was told, "When you came to us, you were like a fully grown tree with big branches. We have to cut those branches for something new to be able to grow" (pgs. 51-53). Lois later remarks, "Lab work is wonderful for building character" (pg. 146).

How have you experienced God's pruning and character building in your secular or spiritual life?

2. The authors point out: "None of us are so mature that we cannot be influenced. The question is: Who or what do we want to shape our lives? Even the culture around us will try to 'disciple' us"

What are some ways you have been 'discipled,' either by God or by culture? How have things changed as you have matured, both physically and spiritually?

Our relationship with God through Scripture (answer at least 1):

1. The authors write that in the Jewish tradition, "when we pray, we speak to God, but when we study Scripture, God speaks to us" (pg. 26).

How have you found God speaking to you through Scripture this past year?

2. The authors comment that for Jewish people, reading Scripture is "reading the Bible as their own family history" (pg. 68).

After studying the Historical Books last year, do you feel as though you are now a part of this family and why or why not?

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Catholic community life (answer at least 1):

1. The authors devote a chapter to the importance of having community around us and explain: “through the ages Jewish thinkers have considered it vital to study the Scriptures in the presence of other people” (pg. 66).

What was your experience studying Scripture in a group last year? Has this impacted how you hear or understand God compared to before you began CBSM?

2. In the chapter on Jewish feasts, the authors look at some of the lessor-known Jewish feasts. Outside of Christmas and Easter, are there Catholic feasts or celebrations that have special meaning to you and why?
3. The authors describe love as the essence of the Torah, and that holding love of God, love of neighbor, and love of self are all inter-connected (pg 176-179). Which of these three do you find easiest? Hardest? Does that change as life changes?