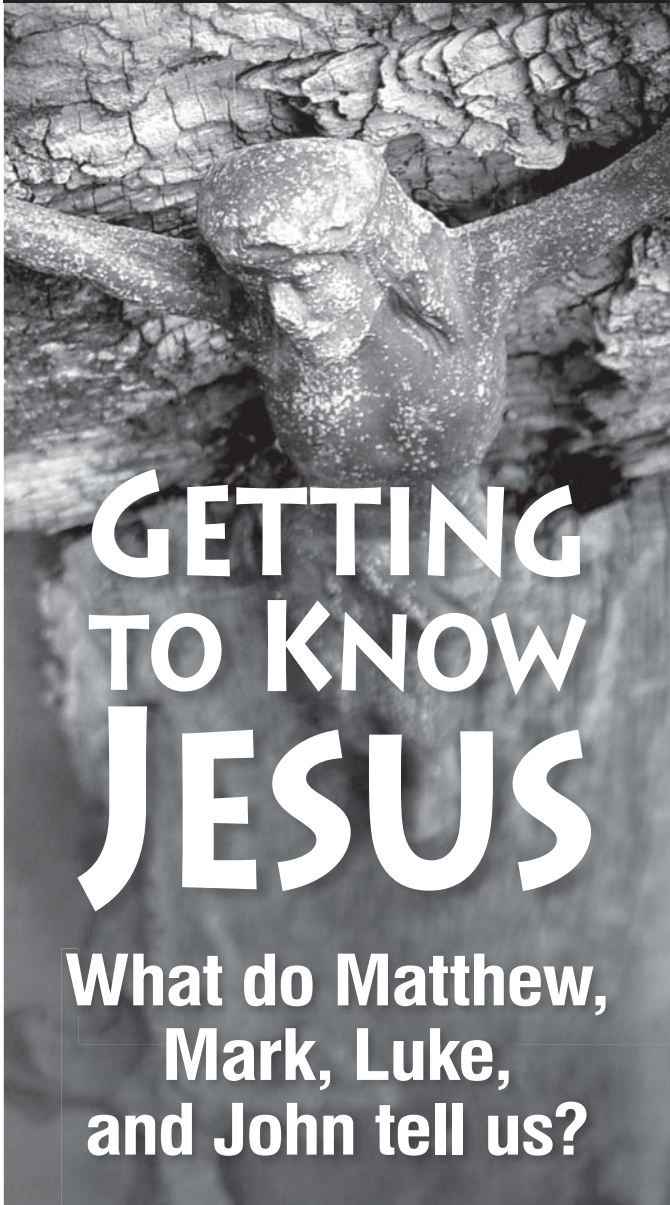


Leader's Guide



GETTING TO KNOW JESUS

What do Matthew,
Mark, Luke,
and John tell us?

Getting to Know Jesus, by Father Juan Alfaro, a well-known biblical scholar, is a tool to help men and women understand what each of the Gospels teaches us about Jesus. Although the book was designed for individual reading, this *Leader's Guide* can be used to facilitate group discussion about the Gospels.

The book has a question-and-answer format that covers the following themes:

- Chapter 1: General topics about the Bible
15 questions (1–15)
- Chapter 2: The Gospel of Saint Matthew
20 questions (16–35)
- Chapter 3: The Gospel of Saint Mark
15 questions (36–50)
- Chapter 4: The Gospel of Saint Luke
30 questions (51–80)
- Chapter 5: The Gospel of Saint John
38 questions (81–118)

The first chapter covers the Bible in general, including terminology, the synoptic Gospels, oral tradition, and apocryphal writings.

Chapters 2 through 5 explore the key teachings of each Gospel.

LEADER'S TIPS

GENERAL

- You needn't be a Scripture scholar—anyone with a strong desire to learn more about the Bible by studying it with other men and women can lead the group. Remember, parish-based Bible-study programs are not like university courses—parishes provide a pastoral, rather than academic, learning environment.
- Father Alfaro used the text from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, but you can use any Catholic version of the Bible.
- The program can be used with groups of any size.
- Each session should last about two hours, including a ten-minute break.
- We suggest each course consist of eight two-hour sessions that cover a total of 15 to 20 questions.

- *Getting to Know Jesus* contains 118 questions about the Bible and the Gospels. It will be impossible to cover every question in the book in one eight-session course, so choose the questions carefully.
- You can study the Gospels in any order, but it's best to follow their order in the New Testament. Some groups prefer to begin with Mark's Gospel because it's the briefest and the first to be written and because participants will be able to identify most strongly with the situation of the people in Mark.

PLANNING THE COURSE

- Choose the time and dates of your course.
- Publicize the sessions in the parish bulletin at least two months before the start of the program. Give a registration deadline so you'll know how many people will attend.
- Order a copy of *Getting to Know Jesus* for each participant (800-325-9521 or www.liguori.org).
- Reserve a well-lit room large enough to allow everyone to be seated.
- Choose the chapters and questions you'll cover. You can concentrate on one or two chapters or cover the entire book. It's possible to cover any of the first three chapters in one eight-week course, but chapters 4 and 5 each have almost twice as many questions as any of the first three. Therefore, if you want to cover more than one chapter in one eight-week course, decide how many sessions to devote to each chapter.
- Large groups will need to break into smaller groups for the discussions. If your group has more than fifteen people, recruit volunteers to

help with small-group activities (one volunteer for every six to eight people). Choose at least two Bible verses to read aloud at each session along with the questions.

- Choose questions from chapter 1 to begin and end each session with.
- Plan time for questions at the end of each session.
- Prepare a course outline that shows the dates, times, and topics covered for each session. Make a copy for each participant.
- Plan to cover at least two questions per session.

RUNNING THE SESSIONS

- Begin and end on time.
- At the first session, give each participant a copy of the course outline.
- At the beginning of each session, go over the topics to be discussed and tell what time the break will be.
- Ask for a volunteer to read the opening prayer.
- Keep your Bible open during the session. Wait for participants to find the text in their own books so you can read together.
- To encourage interaction among large-group participants, have them break into groups with different people for each activity.
- If someone appears to be dominating the discussion, thank the person for the comments and remind the group that it's important to hear from everyone.
- At the end of each session, give the reading assignment for the next session. Remind them that if they come prepared, there will be more time for discussion.

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FIRST SESSION

Ask participants to sit in a circle. Introduce yourself to the group, then ask participants to introduce themselves.

Give each participant a copy of the course outline and go over it. Ask participants to prepare for each session by reading the assigned Bible passages before the session. Preassigning the questions gives you more time for class interaction.

ALL SESSIONS

Participants sit in a circle.

Opening Prayer/Announcements (5 minutes)

Each week, ask a different participant to read the following prayer or a prayer of his or her choosing:

Participant: Lord, we come looking to know more about you. Although we have gone down many paths, none seem to bring us the comfort we seek.

All: We are here as family, longing to hear your Word and follow your call. Amen.

CHAPTER 1

Dialogue (15 minutes)

Read aloud a question and answer from chapter 1. Then ask the following questions:

1. What terms didn't you understand?
2. What is the most relevant message in this passage?
3. How does this information help you understand the Gospel better?

CHAPTERS 2 THROUGH 5

Divide large groups into smaller groups of six to eight people. Have a facilitator for each small group.

If everyone has already read the assigned questions, move directly to the discussion.

Dialogue (15 minutes)

Read aloud a question and answer from chapters 2 through 5. Then ask the following questions:

1. Did you understand the content?
2. What do you think the message is?
3. What doubts or questions do you still have?

Discussion of Related Bible Text (15 minutes)

Relate questions to at least one Bible verse. Ask a participant to read the verse(s) aloud from the Bible. Then ask these questions:

- Did you understand the context and meaning of this Gospel passage? Discuss.
- What actions or images are repeated?
- What message can you take from this reading?
- How does this message apply to your daily life?
- How does this message apply to the Church?

Break (10 minutes)

Even if the group is still heavily involved in the discussion, find a stopping point and take a ten-minute break.

Dialogue (15 minutes)

Repeat the process with the next question and answer from chapters 2 through 5.

Discussion of Related Bible Text (15 minutes)

Repeat the discussion process.

Conclusion (15 minutes)

After the last question has been discussed, take fifteen minutes to sum up what they have learned in this session. Encourage them to talk about what intrigued them the most or what they were surprised to have learned.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Recite the Lord's Prayer (Our Father) together.

Remind participants of the date and time of the next session and assign the questions and Gospel text for the next session.