

**Welcome**

Start by spending some unstructured time together. Eventually, transition to a welcome question, either general or specific.

- General Question: What was the highlight of your past week? What was the roughest part?
- Specific Question: Have you ever had the opportunity to share with someone in need? Or have someone share with you when you had a need? Talk about it!

**Lectio Divina****Listen**

- Begin with a few moments of quiet or a prayer.
- Facilitator: “During the first reading listen for specific words or phrases that grab your attention.”
- Have one person read the passage aloud.

**Meditate**

- Facilitator: “During the second reading meditate on the text, asking God what it means.”
- Have one person read the passage aloud.

**Share**

- Facilitator: “After the third reading, share out loud the word or phrase that came to you.”
- Have one person read the passage aloud.
- Take this moment to share your word or phrase.
- If you have time to go through the discussion questions, do so now.

**Savor**

- Facilitator: “During the fourth reading savor Let go of words, and ask God to reveal how the text might affect your life this week.”
- Have one person read the passage aloud.

**Luke 3:7-18**

*John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

*“What should we do then?” the crowd asked.*

*John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.”*

*Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”*

*“Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them.*

*Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?”*

*He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.”*

*The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.*

**Discuss**

Take your time to discuss the following questions. Make space to let everyone speak.

- 1) What thoughts or emotions stir in you when you read this passage?
- 2) Is there anything in the text you find discouraging or encouraging?
- 3) What does this passage teach us about the nature of God?
- 4) How might this affect the way you interact with the people who make up Austin Mustard Seed? How might this affect how you interact with neighbors (literal neighbors, coworkers, friends, etc.)
- 5) What do you want to remember about this passage in the week to come?

**Pray Together**

*Spend time praying together for hopes, dreams, joys and needs. Make sure at least one person records the prayers and sends them to the rest of the group.*

**Notes**

v7. The image here is of snake slithering away from a grassfire.

v8. John's point is God does not give favor to people based on where they were born. Even though God has a covenant with the children of Abraham, that does not mean that God "needs" them.

v11. Tax collectors were Jews who worked for the Roman empire, and were known for overcharging. They were considered traitors.

v14. Some scholars believe that these were Jewish "enforcers," who worked with the Tax Collectors. However, since Jews were not allowed in the Roman Army, it is more likely they were Roman Soldiers.