



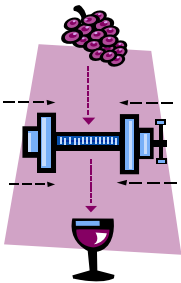
## The Theater of God's Glory *A look at Job*

Community Reflection is Vineyard Boise's small group leader resource to help you lead/facilitate your group effectively. It's made up of four parts: **CONNECT**, **PROCESS**, **COMMIT**, and **SHARE**. It's a basic plan for your group time as you track with this study of 1 John. Leading a small group is as much an art as it is a science, so consider this a "palette" from which to draw colors for the "canvas" of your small group time. This guide is intended to be your servant, not your master! Be creative, have fun, and stay attentive to what God is doing in your group this week. The time listed for each of the four parts is just a guideline to help keep you on track as you lead your group. (Total suggested time, just under two hours.)



### CONNECT (15-20 minutes)

1. Welcome everyone. If your group is new or you have new people in the group, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves.
2. You might consider having the group read a Psalm together as a lead into worship. Pick a favorite, or you could use **Psalm 73** (theme: groaning over injustice in the world).
3. Worship! Live, CD, DVD, or however...worship is one of the best defenses against a purely intellectual group experience and really helps set the stage for what is usually the "main course" of a small group meeting – processing the truth together.



### PROCESS (35-45 minutes)

1. As summarized in the devotional, this week we take a seat next to Job in the "creation theater" where we see God's glory on display in a context of intense suffering. Chapters 38-41 of Job provide one of the most awesome and captivating descriptions of God's creation. The challenge is to relate these grand vistas to the problem of suffering in the world epitomized in Job's experience.
2. As a way of breaking the ice, you might read the quote from Eugene Peterson on the first page of the devotional and ask for people in your group to respond. Then have them share what they saw as they worked through the devotional.
3. Normally you would be presented with a few different options to consider for group discussion. This week, since the devotional is essentially an interconnected overview of Job's story and God's answer to him, we just have one option which follows the devotional path. Feel free to come up with your own alternative tailored to where your group is right now. You might also consider taking good sermon notes and debriefing the sermon with your group. Ask them their impressions and observations, and any specific applications they made from the teaching.

Weekly Discipleship Track



1. Life reflection – need for change, hunger for God
2. Presentation of truth – teaching and studying
3. Processing the truth – reflection and debrief in community
4. Life change – response to truth, new habits and actions

# Community Reflection

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Here are some discussion questions to consider using to facilitate group discussion:

- What's the closest you've come to experiencing what Job did, "sitting among the ashes" in a period of intense trial and suffering? What questions did you ask of God then? What have you found to be the greatest help in getting through hard times?
- How would you rate Job's friends as "comforters"? Where did they go wrong, and what specific lessons can we learn from them as we try to comfort and support one another in times of difficulty and stress?
- What does God's prolonged answer to Job and his friends say about the problem of suffering in the world? How does observing creation help us deal with hard times?
- What other insights or lessons do you see in Job's story?

The human alone, surrounded by the gleaming surfaces of his artifacts, cannot bear the pain. He can do that only when the grief can disperse, radiate, and be absorbed. Fellow humans and their works, bearing the same burden, cannot absorb it.

To reconcile, that is what the forest does, silent and accepting, as if God were present therein, taking the grief unto Himself. When humans no longer think themselves alone, masters of all they survey, when they discern the humility of their place in the vastness of God's creation, then the creation and its God can share the pain. For Christians, the Cross symbolized that reality; confronted with it, the human is not freed from grief, but he is no longer alone to bear it. It is taken up, shared.

That is the age-old wisdom of the book of Job. When God speaks, the framework is different. He speaks not of pain but of the vastness of creation, of the gazelle in her mountain fastness and the mighty creature of the deep sea. God is not avoiding the issue. He is teaching Job the wisdom of bearing the pain that can neither be avoided nor abolished but can be shared when there is a whole living creation to absorb it.

**Erazim Kohak, *The Embers and the Stars***



## COMMIT (10-15 minutes)

This is the "so what" stage of your group meeting. Not only talk about what each individual in the group can do in response to the biblical truths explored, discuss what the group could possibly do together by way of application.



## SHARE (15-20 minutes)

If people in your group really open up about times of suffering and difficulty in their lives (or especially if any reveal they are in the midst of a very difficult season), take time for focused ministry and prayer over them. The group will have a great opportunity to put into practice lessons learned from the mistakes of Job's "miserable comforters." "Be swift to hear, slow to speak..."