



Small Group Guide – Week of March 1

Upside Down: The Gospel According to Luke

Date: Week of March 1, 2026

Focus Passage(s): Luke 15:11-32

Theme: No matter who you are. No matter what you've done. No matter where you've been. The Father is waiting to welcome you home.

Suggested Schedule (60 minutes total)

Segment	Time	Description
Icebreaker	10 min	Get comfortable, begin connecting
Intro/Recap	5 min	Read the key passages for the week
Group Discussion	25 min	Dive into Scripture and discuss real-life application
Deeper Dive Option	5–10 min	Deeper Bible study or individual challenge
Prayer & Requests	10–15 min	Close in prayer for growth + personal needs

Welcome + Icebreaker (10 min)

Prompt: In this series we are exploring how Jesus turns our assumptions upside down.

Have you ever had a moment where life did not follow the script you had written in your head? What happened?

Have you ever felt like the “main character” in a situation, only to realize other people felt the same way? What tension did that create?

Key Message Recap (5 min)

We are looking at Luke 15:11-32 and the story often called The Prodigal Son. It is a story about rebellion, resentment, and radical grace. As we talk, consider where you see yourself in the story.

Read aloud: Luke 15:17-24 What stands out to you about the father's response to the younger son?

Example Answer: “He runs before the son can even finish apologizing. The grace comes before the explanation.”

Dig Deeper – Discussion Questions (25 min)

The Younger Son – Rebellion and Return:

What do you think the younger son expected when he decided to go home?

Why do we sometimes believe God will respond to our failure with anger instead of compassion?

Have you ever had a ‘come to your senses’ moment spiritually? What led to it?

Key Truth No matter what, we can always come home.

The Older Brother – Resentment and Comparison

Read Luke 15:28-30.

We believe we’ve earned something from God, and it’s hard to watch someone else receive grace we don’t think they deserve. But that’s the thing about grace, it’s never deserved.

Why is it sometimes harder to relate to the older brother than the younger son?

Have you ever felt resentful when someone else received grace, opportunity, or celebration?

What does resentment reveal about what we believe we deserve?

Is there an area in your life where you are standing outside the party instead of sharing in joy?

Key Truth Grace is not earned. It is given.

The Father – Radical Grace

Read Luke 15:20 and Luke 15:28.

Who makes the first move toward reconciliation in both situations? Why is that significant?

What does the father’s response teach us about God’s character?

Which son do you relate to most right now? Why?

Both sons were invited to come home. One needed forgiveness, the other needed perspective. One had to come back from rebellion, the other from resentment. But the Father’s heart was the same for both: Come home. I love you. Everything I have is yours.

Key Truth The Father moves toward His children, not away from them.

Real Life Reflection (5 min)

Every one of us shows up somewhere in this story. Some of us have been running. Some of us have been resisting. Some of us have been quietly keeping score. The invitation from the Father is the same for all: Come home.

Where do you see yourself right now: running, resisting, or rejoicing?

Next Steps Challenge (5 min)

Write or share one specific step you can take this week:

If you relate to the younger son, what would coming home look like practically?

If you relate to the older brother, what resentment do you need to release?

What is one action step you will take this week to respond to what God is showing you?

Deeper Dive (Optional)

Psalm 51

David was a man who failed deeply yet returned to God in repentance. Psalm 51 is his prayer of repentance. Notice the posture of returning to God. How does David's repentance reflect the younger son's humility?

Jonah 3-4

Jonah rejoices at Nineveh's repentance in chapter 3, but resents God's mercy in chapter 4, displaying a powerful "older brother" moment in his anger. He obeyed outwardly, but struggled inwardly with resentment.

John 3:16-17

God's heart is salvation, not condemnation. For example, Peter denied Jesus, but was restored and recommissioned. What does Peter's restoration teach us about grace?

Prayer Time (10 min)

Thank God that He runs toward us instead of away from us. Confess areas of rebellion or resentment. Ask for soft hearts that receive grace and extend grace.

Invite group members to share personal prayer needs that are spiritual, relational, or practical. Encourage confidentiality and care.