

BASIC QUESTIONS



INVITING OPEN DISCUSSION ON 6 KEY
QUESTIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN FAITH



YOUTH DISCUSSION GUIDE

ROOM FOR DOUBT



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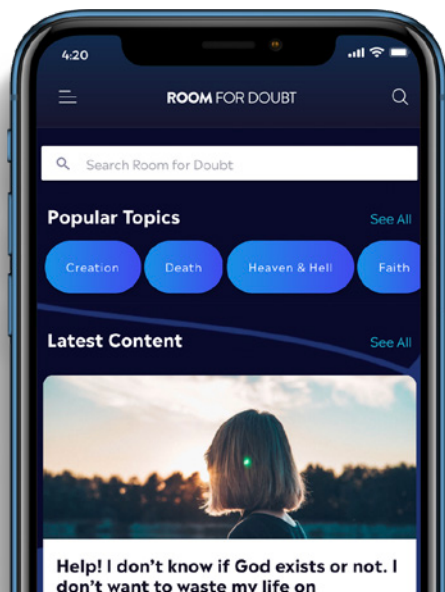
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WELCOME TO THE ROOM FOR DOUBT “BASIC QUESTIONS” SERIES!

This curriculum is based on the idea that it is acceptable, and even commendable, to ask tough questions about the Christian faith.

Whether you consider yourself a Christian or not, this series is for you. It will help you think about yourself and what life is about. It will prompt you to reflect on the basic claims of Christianity. It will encourage you to express your questions and doubts. And hopefully, it will allow you to discover some satisfying answers. Long ago, God said something through Jeremiah that still applies today: “You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13 ESV).

We hope this series will help you seek God with all your heart and find Him more real than ever before.



Download the Room for Doubt App
and access additional resources:

ROOMFORDOUBT.COM



SESSION 1



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IS DOUBT ALWAYS BAD?

“DOUBT IS AN INVITATION TO GROW IN
FAITH AND UNDERSTANDING.”

ALISTER MCGRATH

BACKGROUND STORY

“You believe in God just because your parents believe!”

Everyone sitting at our lunch table looked over at me. I could feel my heart pounding in my chest.

“But if you were born into a family somewhere on the other side of the world, you wouldn’t be a Christian, that’s for sure. Yep, you’d be a Muslim, or maybe a Buddhist, or more likely an atheist!” Silence. I didn’t know what to say. Besides, maybe they were right. Allyson broke the tension. “Danny, you can believe whatever you want, and the rest of us can believe whatever we want. It doesn’t really matter anyway. So don’t let them bother you.”

But it did bother me. And it wasn’t just what was said, but who was saying it. These were my best friends. Or so I thought. Justin, Allyson, Megan, and I were friends since the second grade. We’d gone to church camp together every summer since fifth grade. But now, Justin was on the football team and didn’t have time any more for our church youth group. When Allyson’s parents split up, she became so angry at God that she began to doubt if He was even really there. And Megan said she still went to church only because her mom made her. She couldn’t wait to go away to college so she could do whatever she wanted—and going to church wasn’t on the list!

“Wait. I don’t believe just because of my par...” I tried to defend myself. “Look, I think for myself already! And yes, I question things too!” And that was the truth. But I don’t think I had ever admitted that out loud. I’m not exactly sure why, but I always just kept those doubts inside of me. Questions about why God lets so many bad things happen to people, and if He really cared about me, and why all my friends no longer believed. And when I’d stop believing someday too. The truth was out: I had my doubts.

→ ICE BREAKER: WE DOUBT IT!

Ask everyone in your group to write down 3 statements about themselves. Two of the statements must be true, and one of the statements must be false. Participants could choose one of the examples listed below or simply come up with their own topic:

- 3 things you like on your pizza.
- 3 animals you've actually petted.
- 3 middle names of your family members.
- 3 places you've been on vacation.
- 3 things you keep in your school locker no one knows about.
- 3 presents you received for your birthday over the years.

Next, each person takes a turn reading his or her list of 3 statements in random order, and lets the rest of the group members guess which one of the 3 statements they doubt is true. Keep track of how many times each person guesses correctly. After everyone takes a turn reading their list and letting the others guess which statement is false, the person with the most correct guesses wins!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. During the ICE BREAKER activity, what process did you go through in your mind to decide which statement to guess as the false statement? What clues or indicators did you look for to help you determine the truth? How did that work for you?
2. In general, do you find yourself mostly doubting others or mostly believing others? Why?
3. How could doubting something or someone be helpful to you? And at what point could it become unhealthy, or even harmful?

"Father, we can see and understand only a little about you now, as if we were peering at your reflection in a poor mirror; but someday we are going to see you in your completeness, face to face. Now all that we know is hazy and blurred, but then we will see everything clearly, just as clearly as you see into our hearts right now. And, Father, we can have confidence in that because of what you have already chosen to reveal to us. In Jesus' name. Amen."

1 Corinthians 13:12, Living Bible

“

**I’M NOT EMBARRASSED BY
MY FAITH AND I’M ALSO NOT
EMBARRASSED BY MY DOUBT.”**

- John Green , Author of The Fault In Our Stars

4. Why do you think it’s difficult for some to admit they have spiritual doubts? What prevents you from speaking out about your doubts? What makes you feel safe and unafraid to honestly open up with others about your spiritual questions?

5. Do you think it is wrong to have doubts about the Christian faith? Is it wrong to doubt God? Why or why not?

6. What questions or doubts about faith come into your mind from time to time? Which category of questions and doubts listed below do you or your friends wonder about the most, and why?

- Doubts about God, His existence or who He is?
- Doubts about creation and evolution?
- Doubts about whether God really cares about you?
- Questions about living life in a way that God approves?
- Questions about other religions and whether Christianity in the “only way”?
- Questions about Jesus, his life, his death or his resurrection?
- Doubts about why God allows suffering and evil?
- Fill in your own category: _____?

(Continued on next page)

“

FEED YOUR FAITH AND YOUR DOUBTS WILL STARVE TO DEATH.”

– *Anonymous*

7. What do you think causes many people to have spiritual doubts such as the ones listed above? Why do you suppose you have the spiritual doubts you identified?
8. Do the spiritual doubts you struggle with push you to grow in your Christian faith or pull you away from your Christian faith? Explain your answer.
9. How might your spiritual doubts and questions actually inspire you and motivate you to better understand God and the Christian faith? Explain.
10. What does this statement mean to you: “It’s been said that Christians should believe simply – that is, have the faith of a child – but they shouldn’t just simply believe.” What types of activities could you undertake to go beyond “simply believing”?
11. We brush our teeth every day to prevent cavities. What might you do to take preventative measures against spiritual doubts? What step will you take to begin to address your most pressing spiritual doubt?
12. How could a friend most help you when you are struggling with spiritual doubts? What could you do to help a friend who is struggling with spiritual doubts?
13. Some of the greatest heroes of the Christian faith also struggled with doubts. So even after all our prayers, preparation and study, we may still carry around some doubts. On a scale from 1-10, how comfortable (or content) are you with believing in Jesus Christ and yet still having some lingering doubts?
14. When was the last time you turned to God and expressed your honest doubts and heartfelt need for guidance? What’s keeping you from taking that step right now?

Studies have shown that many students in high school church youth groups struggle with doubts about the Christian faith, and yet **only about 20% of those students ever talk to anyone about their doubts.**

In other words, many students who go to church wrestle with their doubts alone in silence.

