



# The Great Surprise

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## Study Guide



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### GETTING READY

This study guide assumes that someone will be facilitating the conversation. The facilitator's main job is to create a safe space for everyone in the group to share their questions and thoughts, not to have all the answers. In fact, there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. The Holy Spirit is at work in and through each one of you. Listen to each other. And listen to what God is saying to you through the things you're hearing each other say. Relax! Laugh. Cry. Wonder. Dare. Open yourself to learning and growing. Open yourself to God.

Prior to the first session, the facilitator should:

- Make sure there are copies of this study guide for each participant;
- Ask each participant to bring a Bible;
- Make sure each participant has access to a copy of the article [The Great Surprise](#) in enough time to have read it prior to this study
- Arrange to have snacks at the session!

### **OPENING PRAYER** *Prayed out loud together.*

Prayer: Lord, we gather in your name for a time of holy conversation. Be in our speaking, and be in our listening. Bless our time together as we seek to discover new things, and hear You in new ways. We ask all this in Jesus' Name.

## **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **The Great Excuse**

1. Read Mark 6:32-44 and Mark 8:1-21. What were the disciples' "If Only \_\_\_\_\_", and how did Jesus challenge them?
2. In your context, what are the top 3 "If Only \_\_\_\_\_"?
3. What gets in your way of seeing what God is up to in your life and world?
4. How is "if only" thinking preventing you from being a part of what God is up to?

### **The Great Surprise**

1. God is on the loose in the world working in and through people in your neighborhood, at work, school, the grocery store, the park, and everywhere you go, bringing healing, love, laughter and reconciliation. And, God is at loose in and through you. Where have you been surprised by God this week?
2. Like the women at the tomb, we're often conditioned to look for Jesus in certain places and certain people. Have you experienced Jesus through an unexpected person or in an unexpected place? Share that story.
3. What would be different about you/your context, if you began to look for Jesus everywhere?



## Wrapping Up

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### Doing What Matters

1. In the article, Fryer proposes that the question we should be asking ourselves is “What is God doing, right here and now, and how can we help?” Spend a few minutes naming what God is doing, right here and right now in your community.
2. What would be different in your context if you started asking that question on a regular basis?
3. What would be different about your context/community if you helped out where God is already working?
4. What would be different about you?

### Final Thoughts

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### **CLOSING PRAYER** *Prayed out loud together.*

Thank you God, for this time together. As we leave today, give us a new awareness of all that we have. Give us new eyes to see you at work everywhere we go, and the courage to joyfully name it when we see it, In Jesus’ name. Amen.

## ABOUT ARE

The purpose of A Renewal Enterprise, Inc. (ARE) is to help people and the organizations they care about be who they are and see what they have for the sake of doing what matters.

ARE works with organizations of all types and sizes but has special expertise in churches and faith-based organizations. The ARE team is ecumenical, multi-disciplinary, and international. They are the original architects of the Renewable Organization™.

The Renewable Organization™ is a system for helping people embrace the emerging future by replacing their old consumable and centralized approach to life and work with a more organic and decentralized approach. The principles and practices of the Renewable Organization™ teach leaders how to unleash the power, creativity and passion of the people they work with, producing organizations that are more playful, purposeful, fruitful, adaptable, and resilient.

The ARE team includes process facilitators, organizational designers, leadership trainers, and coaches.

Their services include:

- Keynoting and workshops;
- Staff and board retreats;
- Personal and Leadership Coaching;
- Process design and facilitation;
- Revisioning and rebranding;
- Fundraising;
- Strategic planning using emergent principles;
- Online workshops and seminars.

## BOOKS AND RESOURCES

- The Future Starts Now: The Renewable Organization™ for Faith-Based Groups
- Seeing Through New Eyes: The PAWN Process™ for Faith-Based Groups
- 19 (or more) Ideas for Asking Purposeful Questions
- 19 (or more) Ideas for Using Participative Processes
- 19 (or more) Ideas for Working Playfully
- 19 (or more) Ideas for Taking Place Seriously
- 19 (or more) Ideas for Being Reproductive

Visit ARE Books for these and other resources at [www.arenewalenterprise.com](http://www.arenewalenterprise.com)

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Visit [www.arenewalenterprise.com](http://www.arenewalenterprise.com) for additional resources to help you

*Be who you are and see what you have for the sake of doing what matters to God.*

