

## Reading Tracks

### TRACK ONE

*Follow along with basics of the story in a short selection of readings this week..*

Monday: Mark 8:27-38

Tuesday: Mark 9:33-37

Wednesday: Mark 10:32-45

Thursday: Mark 14:17-26

Friday: John 10:10-18

Saturday: Matthew 26:47-56

### TRACK TWO

*Get a little bigger perspective by reading assigned sections from The Story © 2011 by Zondervan.*

Read pages Chapter 25, pp. 362-363 this week.

### TRACK THREE

*Get the whole story by reading through most of the Bible in longer sections.*

In your Bible, read John 10-13 this week.

## This Week's Scripture Memory Verse

"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." Mark 8:34 NIV

## Next Week in Worship

**Next Week's Message:** *A Withering Attack*

**Next Week's Readings:** Mark 11:12-21

Next week in the Big God Story, we will look at Jesus' continued journey toward the cross. As he enters Jerusalem, Jesus turns over the complacent and corrupt religion that he finds in the Temple. Join us as we learn about God's passion to break through the barriers that keep us from living with His presence in our lives.



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# Group Discussion

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## Connect

Every heroic story has surprising challenges that the hero must face and overcome. What is your favorite hero movie? Why?

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## Learn

Throughout the gospels, Jesus' is very clear about his plan to die. Before rising from the dead, he must go through pain and suffering on the cross. Despite his clear teaching on this, his disciples did not understand.

- Read John 10:10-18: Why is it significant that Jesus was not a victim, but planned to die? What was His intention by laying down His life?

Read Mark 8:31-37 and Mark 9:32-45. Put yourself in the disciples' shoes.

- Why was Jesus' prediction of His death so confusing to them?
- How did Jesus' plan to suffer and die confront some of their deepest expectations about God and life in His Kingdom?

Jesus also tells them clearly that they will deny themselves and "take up their crosses" as they follow Him.

- How is the call to "deny yourself" and take up your cross to follow Christ counter-cultural in America? How does this path of discipleship challenge some of our ideas about God and finding meaning in life?

Read II Corinthians 4:7-18: After Jesus' rose from the dead, the cross became a symbol of hope rather than defeat and torture to the early Christians.

- How did the cross give them hope and strength in the midst of their present, difficult circumstances?
  - How did the cross become a symbol of hope for the future?
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## Apply

The cross should confuse our human ideas about what it means to be in relationship with God and how to really love each other. God wants to transform our human love with the costly love He showed us on the cross. Take a moment to reflect and pray about the following questions to share with each other. What twist does God want to bring into your story through the cross? What does it mean for you to take up your cross and follow Christ in your life right now?

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## Pray

Spend some time in prayer together about what you shared. Pray for God's hope and strength in the midst of difficult circumstances people can be going through. Spend some time praying for each other's families or relationships that God would grant us the grace and strength to embody His selfless love for each other. Pray against the attacks of the Evil One that try to keep us focused on our own desires for comfort, security, and self-preservation instead of following the path of Christ.