

Personal Wisdom

What wisdom would you share with yourself?

Carter Moss

If you could give any advice to your younger self, what would you say and at which age?

Leader note: People can have fun with this question by giving humorous answers, but it can also lead to some deep introspective discussion, so you can decide how you want to use it (I like encouraging both kinds of answers). Be clear that the point here isn't to beat ourselves up over things we didn't know when we were younger (that's common to all people!), but instead to help us grow in our self-awareness, in learning from our mistakes, and in wisdom. Use it with a group that knows each other better, and consider it for a discussion about wisdom, God's plans for our lives, purpose and direction, or maturing in our faith.

Work History

Group members share their more interesting past jobs.

Carter Moss

What was your favorite job, or your most strange or unusual job?

Leader note: This is a great icebreaker to use early on in a new life group, for people to get to know each other and get the chance to make each other laugh. Plus when you hear people's favorite job, you can gain insights as a leader into their passions and talents and what brings them joy. It even helps create some "running jokes" that can carry on in the group, which deepen the sense of connectedness. It can also be used for a discussion about faith at work, or calling and purpose.

Exciting Events

Share about a favorite experience.

Carter Moss

What is your favorite live event you've ever attended (e.g., concert, sporting event, musical theater)?

Leader note: This is just a fun question that truly helps "break the ice", so it works well to use early on with new small groups who don't know each other yet. People don't have to get too personal and anyone can come up with an answer for it. It tends to spark good, fun discussion because people discover common interests. Plus they may leave group with some great new ideas of fun things to try!

New Life

Easter reminds us that God offers us new life.

Amy Jackson

With Easter comes the promise of new life. Spend time with your group reflecting on the new life God has given you over the past year. First, read aloud a few of the verses below. Then answer the following questions.

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. Lamentations 3:22-23

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But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code. Romans 7:6

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2 Corinthians 5:17

Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything—and I do mean everything—connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life—a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you. Ephesians 4:22

He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Revelation 21:5

Questions

- What new life has God brought into your life over the past year?
- What has God been making new over the past year?
- What signs of new life to come do you see in your life right now?

Famous Mentor

Who would you spend a day with?

Carter Moss

If you could spend one day hanging out with any famous person (living or from the past), who would it be and why?

Leader note: This is a great question for new groups or as you start a discussion about discipleship, leadership, or mentoring. This gives some great insights on who people see as “mentors” and would want to learn from, or just would enjoy getting to know. You can decide whether to accept Bible characters as answers or not. I usually ask them to pick someone outside of the Bible, just to get a different perspective from them and avoid the “cop-out” answers.

Gifts That Don't Fit

Sometimes our help isn't all that helpful.

Amy Jackson

Provide construction paper, markers, tape, and a stapler. Ask a few group members to create a paper jacket for a stuffed animal, but don't show them the stuffed animal. You can describe the stuffed animal—what kind of animal it is, whether it's “average” size, etc.—but don't give too many details. After the group members have collaborated to create a paper jacket, bring out the stuffed animal and see if it fits. Discuss why it's difficult to custom-make an item for something you haven't seen.

When has someone tried to help you in an unhelpful way?

When have tried to help and then later realized your help wasn't all that helpful? What happened?

How often do we try to help others or give gifts when we don't really know the person well enough to give good gifts or help in the right way?

How can we ensure that our help and gifts actually fit the person we're giving them to?

Talking About Race

When discussing race feels overwhelming, start by reflecting on your experiences and sharing your story.
Aaron Cho

What were the conversations around race and ethnicity like in your family growing up?

When were you first made aware of your racial and ethnic identity?

Leader's note: Create a safe space to be honest here. It's okay, and actually preferred, for people to come to terms with acknowledging their discomfort with the topic, their fear of saying the wrong thing, and their worry about being judged or called a racist. This dialogue will go nowhere if folks aren't willing to move past their fear and engage.

Cell Phone Distractions

How do our phones distract us?
Carter Moss

How many times a day would you say you look at your cell phone (not counting when someone is calling)?
Would you honestly say this is too much, too little, or just the right amount?

How might our cell phones distract us from spending time in silence and solitude and really hearing from God?

Experiencing God Through Others

Discuss how you've been blessed.
Amy Jackson

When have you experienced God's love through another person? What did the person do that made you feel loved?

How did the person's actions meet a need you felt at the time? What was that need?

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Impact

Who has impacted you?

Carter Moss

Who has had a profound impact on your life, and why?

Leader note: This is a more serious question so it works better with groups that are at a place where they're sharing more honestly with each other, but it's a powerful one. It challenges people to think through the different individuals that have made an impact on their lives, so this question works great in a study that's communicating the importance of investing in others, discipling them, and leaving a legacy with our lives.

Favorite Team

When do you work with others?

Carter Moss

What's your favorite group or team you've ever been a part of, and why?

Leader note: This is a great question to use for communicating the importance and power of community and how God designed us to experience life together, connected to other people. It's a great question to use with a brand-new group at the first meeting, or any time you're discussing spiritual community and connectedness. Give group members examples of groups or teams if needed: school band, school choir, theater group, sports team, study group at college, fraternity or sorority, military unit, group projects at work, etc.

In the "why" part of the question, you can help people discover from their own answers what it is that makes groups so impactful (e.g., shared sense of purpose, feeling like everyone has your back, seeing various gifts work together well) and then connect that to how small groups were designed by God.

Needs and Passions

Group members share about the causes that move them.

Carter Moss

If you had the necessary resources and could meet any need in the world, what would it be and why?

Leader note: This is a great question to use when you're discussing calling, missional living, outreach, generosity, or serving others. This one pushes people to think through the variety of good causes in our world to decide the one that they are most passionate about. I like to affirm everyone's answers afterward, and then tell them to really pay attention to their own answer (many people have never verbalized it before) and consider that maybe God actually planted that passion in them and wants to use them to do something about it. I've seen people suddenly realize they should start doing something about the cause they mentioned because it's from God!

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