

Small Group Discussion Questions

Welcome to Trek to the Manger!

As is often true of life, your Trek will perhaps be more fruitful if done in the company of friends.

Whether your traveling buddies are a small group from church or friends and family across the globe, these discussion starters may encourage conversation and deepen your relationships along the way.

Consider gathering your group for weekly chats throughout the Trek.

Share a cup of coffee! Form a Trek group on Facebook!

Make time to walk alongside those who are seeking Jesus, too.

If you're interested in connecting with Brita along the way, visit pinkshoesministries.me OR send me an email: brita@pinkshoesministries.me

May God's traveling mercies be rich and real as you take these first steps toward the Manger...

Brita

Chapter 1: Preparing for Advent: A Trek to the Manger

1. How would you describe the way you feel about the holidays?
2. What challenges do you anticipate this season will bring? How might this Trek to the Manger help you face those challenges? Who might you invite to join you on the “trail”?

Chapter 2: Orientation for the Journey

1. Do you agree with Brita’s statement: “There are so many opportunities for believers to be distracted from what this season is really all about”?
What distracts you from the true reason for this Advent season?
2. If prayer is the act of tying our spiritual shoes, how might you add this important step to your daily routine during Advent?

Chapter 3: If You Were Stranded on a Deserted Island...

1. You knew I would ask this one! “If you were stranded on a deserted island and could keep only three things, what would those things be?”
2. Make a list of everything (and everyone) in your life that shines light, brings joy, elicits smiles, and creates energy. Tuck your list inside your book and add to it throughout your Trek!

Chapter 4: Saddle Up Your Camel

1. Are there ways in which your life is in a “holding pattern” today?
What keeps you from taking the next step?
2. What would you say is God’s will for your life today?

Chapter 5: Traveling Buddies

1. *Share with the group about one of your long-term traveling buddies. How did you meet? What makes (or made) this friend special to you?*
2. *Tell the group about your newest (most recent) traveling buddy. How is this relationship different from the seasoned friendships you enjoy?*

Chapter 6: Passport, Please

1. *As a citizen of Heaven, what is the nature of your business here, on earth? Describe your mission (or purpose) as best you can!*
2. *Have you ever shared your testimony, or faith-story? How might doing so draw others to the Light of the World?*

Chapter 7: They Say It's Your Birthday

1. *How has God whet your appetite for Heaven? Where do you see glimpses of what He has in store for His children?*
2. *Whose life has burned brightly for you through the years? Describe their "glow!"*

Chapter 8: Spiritual Self Defense

1. *Have you ever taken a self defense class? If so, share something that you learned!*
2. *How might "being present" and alert to your surroundings serve as a means of spiritual self defense?*

Chapter 9: (Almost) Derailed

1. *Have you ever been emotionally derailed? How is your story like Brita's? How is it different?*
2. *Share any insights you have learned about how to avoid a meltdown in potentially derailing situations.*

Chapter 10: Window Washing

1. *How do you feel about Jesus' statement: "If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light"? Has this been true for you? Why or why not?*
2. *What childlike quality is missing in your life? How might you get some of it back?*

Chapter 11: Space Cadets

1. *Have you ever done something worthy of an Air Head Award? Do tell!*
2. *How much space would you say exists in your daily routine for God to come alive? Are there adjustments needed to make room for Him to move?*

Chapter 12: Sprinkles

1. *Paul says: "Keep it simple." What does that mean to you?*
2. *On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 meaning "not at all" and 10 meaning "absolutely"), how footloose are you today? In other words, how free are you to respond if God should present a new opportunity for you?*

Chapter 13: A New Generation of Trekkies

1. Which “on the road” story speaks most loudly to you today: Damascus? Emmaus? Gaza? Explain.

2. Sometimes we pray for “traveling mercies” when people we love are on the road. When have you experienced traveling mercies? Is there a story to tell?

Chapter 14: Holy GPS!

1. C’mon! Yes, you do! You have a trip-gone-south story to tell!

2. Consider carefully the voices you are listening to today. Who are you seeking guidance from? Do the voices you listen to reflect the wisdom of God’s Word? Be honest with yourself – are there changes to be made?

Chapter 15: (Spiritually) Homeless

1. Has homelessness hit close to home for you? What would you say are the most obvious factors contributing to this concern?

2. When you read James 5:19-20 (page 61), who comes to mind? What are you going to do about it?

Chapter 16: Tend to Your Knitting

1. A critical spirit has the power to dim the lights in any relationship, doesn’t it? When was the last time you experienced a “power outage” due to criticism?

2. Toward whom might you direct your creative energy this week? Who needs encouraging words? Whose burden can you share, and how?

Chapter 17: Purposeful Acts of Kindness

1. *What would you say is the difference between “random” and “intentional” when it comes to acts of kindness?*

2. *Describe your own Secret Angel adventure from this week! Was it random? Intentional? Anonymous? Exhilarating?*

Chapter 18: 9 ½ Miles Per Hour

1. *Where would you say you are today: In a zippy car, doing life your own way? Vested in a particular “cable car”? Switching cars? Keeping your options open?*

2. *Where in your life are you holding onto the illusion of control? On a scale from 1 to 10 (with 1 being “minimal” and 10 being “significant”), how problematic is your inner “control freak” when it comes to being a part of God’s plan?*

Chapter 19: 99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall

1. *If you know it, sing it – with gusto!
“99 bottles of beer on the wall...”*

2. *Describe the last time you shared a significant belly-laugh with a friend. How did it feel to you then? How does the memory affect you now? Give yourself permission to enjoy the weeks ahead!*

Chapter 20: Kingdom Business 101

1. *Who do you know that is able to put their hands on anything you need, exactly when you need it? How can you thank them today?*

2. Customer service can be brutal, especially during the holidays. How might you give some appreciation away as you encounter clerks, waitresses, and receptionists this week?

Chapter 21: Gift Selection Day

1. Describe your own gift selection process. How is it working for you this year?

2. Pray, asking God what He desires most for you this holiday season. What “gift” can you give to your Lord that reflects your love for and devotion to Him?

Chapter 22: Tour Guides

1. Who in your life deserves the title: Spiritual Tour Guide? Who has clarity, information, and knowledge to share?

2. Consider those whose lives currently intersect with your own. Who is keeping step with you? Who is lagging behind? Who is watching from the sidewalk? What is your responsibility toward them as a bearer of light in the Kingdom of God?

Chapter 23: Turn! Turn! Turn!

1. If repent means to turn, where in your life are trajectory adjustments needed? What first-step can you take today in order to turn, turn, turn?

2. Repentance is a turn away from sin and self, and a turn toward the light and love of God. Which idea (turning away from or turning toward) motivates you to make necessary changes in your life today?

Chapter 24: Stinky Friday

1. Stink is a by-product of living. Close your eyes and engage your spiritual nostrils... What smells a bit ripe in your domain today?

2. Deodorant is a cover-up for body odor, whereas anti-perspirant works to keep smelly conditions at bay. Which have you been relying on to keep your world stink-free? How's that working for you? How might God be leading you to make a change?

Chapter 25: I Call Shotgun!

1. Read Mark 8:34-36 (pages 108-109 in the Trek). Which ideas in this text trip you up the most?

2. We've talked a lot about making changes, but what God is really after is our willingness to go along for the ride. Do you trust Him to get you where you need to go? What's it going to take for you to enthusiastically call "Shotgun!"?

Chapter 26: Road Closed

1. Have you ever been on the frustrating side of a "Road Closed" sign? Tell your story!

2. Isaiah 8:14 says: "The Holy can be either a Hiding Place or a Boulder blocking your way." Which one is it going to be for you today? How can you reach out to make another's wait less trying? Who can you whip up a batch of "chili" for?

Chapter 27: Are We There Yet?

1. So much life is lost in waiting for "some day" to arrive. Describe a time when your anticipation of a coming event or milestone kept you from truly engaging in life being lived "today."

2. If you believe that God has come to earth in our Savior, Jesus, then you know what a big deal Christmas really is. How can you transfer that "head knowledge" to your heart today?

Chapter 28: Aglow

1. *We've talked a lot about light on our Trek to the Manger. Where have you noticed light shining over the past weeks? Who has been a source of light for you? Take time to thank them today!*

2. *Together, God's light in the lives of believers shines more brightly than a life lived alone. Is God leading you toward others who share your passions? Energy? Vision? Who are they, and how are you going to respond?*

Chapter 29: Unveiled (Driving with the Top Down)

1. *Read 2 Corinthians 3:14b-18 (page 128). Which words sound like God's words to you? Why?*

2. *When I think of driving with the top down, I recall an image from an old movie, where a woman is wearing a chiffon head scarf and the world rolling past is green and sunshiny and alive! What image comes to mind for you when it comes to being unveiled before God? What three things can you do, beginning today, to insure that this intimacy between you and God can grow?*