**

*Opening Questions*

1. Take a few minutes and see if you can tell the story of the Bible together, from beginning to end.

*Going Deeper*

Read Matthew 5:17-20:

1. What grabs your attention in this passage?
2. Jesus begins with the phrase “*do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets*.” Why do you think Jesus’ listeners would have thought he would abolish them?
3. What is Jesus trying to say in verse 18? Why does this matter?
4. Suppose someone came up to you and said “*I respect a lot of what you Christians believe, but I can’t accept the Old Testament. It’s patriarchal, violent, and full of outdated laws*.” How would you respond to them?
5. What has your experience of reading the Old Testament been like? What role has it played in your faith journey?
6. What does it mean that Jesus fulfills the law and the prophets?
7. Read verse 20 again:  
   1. What does it mean to be righteous?
   2. What was the problem with the righteousness of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law?
   3. Is Jesus being unrealistic in asking his followers to have a righteousness that *surpasses* that of the Pharisees?
8. Where does grace fit into this passage?

*Close in prayer*