

## Part Two: Discussion Questions

### Gospel According to Luke

- How much can you tell from the first four verses of this gospel about why, how, and for whom one might write a story such as this?
- What are the most remarkable details, and patterns of details, in Luke's birth narrative
- Note all the singing in Luke's birth narrative. What might that suggest about the nature of this part of Luke's story?
- Of what significance is Jesus' relationship to John the Baptist?
- What exactly gets put to the test in the story of Jesus' temptation (4:1-13)?
- Based on chapters 5 and 6, how might Jesus' contemporaries have viewed him?
- What do the healing and other 'miracle' stories of this section of the gospel teach the reader about Jesus? About God?
- What do Chapters 7-12 teach about the nature or meaning of being a disciple of Jesus?
- Precisely what question does the "parable of the good Samaritan" answer (10:25-37)?
- Many believe that Theophilus, to whom this gospel is written, represents a rich and perhaps powerful audience. How do the teachings of Jesus in this section of Luke speak to issues wealthy and powerful people face?
- What does chapter 15 teach about God's values as compared to those of most human beings?
- What lesson should one take from the parable about the dishonest manager in 16:1-13?
- What do you think of the attitude toward the rich man in the parable of 16:19-31?
- How, precisely, should rich people heed Jesus' advice in 18:22 (understood in the context of 18:18-30)?
- Jesus enters Jerusalem in the way rulers returned home from great battles (19:28-48). What kind of king does Jesus appear to be in his entry?
- How would you characterize Jesus' views about the temple and its meaning to the people of Israel?
- Whom does Luke hold responsible for Jesus' death?
- A series of encounters unique to Luke's gospel occur after Simon of Cyrene picks up Jesus' cross and carries it behind Jesus (23:26). What do these conversations teach about the work of those who would carry crosses and follow Jesus?
- How does chapter 24 answer these critical questions that faced the first Christians: Where is this Jesus whom you say is risen? What is he doing? Where can I see him?

### Read O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*

- What significance can you find in the items the soldiers carry with them in chapter one?
- What items would you carry with you, or have you brought with you, to difficult and strange transitions and duties in life, and what do those choices say about you and the situations you find yourselves in?
- What are some of the more common "things" that people carry?
- What is the heaviest thing the soldiers carry?
- How do the narrator and Jimmy Cross change because of the war?
- What does the ending of "Love" mean?
- In "On the Rainy River," what does O'Brien fear the most about going to Canada?
- What role does Elroy Berdahl play in helping Tim O'Brien make his decision?
- What is the meaning of courage, in this story?
- What is the role and meaning of "truth" in these stories?
- How many different kinds of truth does O'Brien describe?
- Who, according to O'Brien, has the authority to interpret war stories?
- What makes O'Brien's voice (or voices of others who tell war stories) authoritative?
- Is truth in a war story different from truth in another kind of story?
- How is the story about Curt Lemon and Rat Kiley a love story?
- How do gender roles fit into war stories? Is war the same for women as for men?
- What must individuals do to prepare to fight an enemy?
- Why does O'Brien invent a life story for the dead Vietnamese soldier in "The Man I Killed"?
- What is the purpose of repetition in that story?
- What is a "good kill"?
- Does your attitude toward death in war differ from your attitude toward death as a natural process?
- How does Norman Bowker spend his time after the war, and why?
- Why can't he talk to his father about what happened?
- Who is responsible for Kiowa's death?
- Why does the narrator return to the field where Kiowa died?
- Why is it necessary for O'Brien to revisit Vietnam, both literally and figuratively?