



Faith Seeking Understanding Discussion Questions

Pastor Steve Albertin has created a video series that seeks to apply the Crossings perspective on faith and life to a variety of issues faced by Christians today.

The genesis of the series began in the last congregation Pastor Albertin served before his retirement. He was concerned that his church needed to make more effective use of visual media in order to better connect with a world increasingly dominated by screens and images. He also wanted a simple, accessible way to address many of questions the people in his congregation were asking about faith and life. From that context “Faith Seeking Understanding” emerged.

Steve was convinced that the Crossings community faced a similar challenge. It needed to make its ministry more accessible to a broader audience that was not all that unlike his congregation: immersed in visual media, living busy lives with short attention spans, hungry for ways to better understand their faith and better connect it to their daily lives.

This initial series of “Faith Seeking Understanding” includes ten 4–5-minute videos that seek to do just that. The videos address a series of simple and ordinary questions that Steve hears many people ask in the church today. These questions often address the most basic and fundamental aspects of the Christian faith and life. Two groups of short questions accompany each of the videos that can facilitate their use in a variety of small group situations. The first group of questions for use before viewing the video set the context. The second group of questions for use after viewing the video dig deeper into issues raised by the video. They also encourage further application to the daily lives of the viewers.

Steve Albertin is a Board Member of Crossings and a writer of text studies and occasional offerings for the Crossings Blog. He is a retired ELCA pastor now residing in Zionsville, Indiana. Steve holds M.Div. and S.T.M. degrees from Christ Seminary-Seminex and a D. Min. Degree from the Lutheran School of Theology. Over the years, he has written several new hymns and published several collections of sermons.

Episode 1: What is Crossings?

Pre-Viewing Questions

1. What do you know about The Crossings Community?
2. What does the phrase “Faith Seeking Understanding” mean to you?
3. How do you try to connect your Christian faith with daily life?

Post-Viewing Questions

1. The Crossings Community uses seeks to read Scripture and the world so that Christ can free people to serve the world. How does Christ change your relationship to the world?
2. The “Faith Seeking Understanding” series will seek to connect Christian faith with questions and problems of daily life. What are some of the questions you would like this series to address?

Episode 2: What is Law and Gospel?

Pre-Viewing Questions

1. When you read the Bible, what are you looking to find?

2. When you try to connect your Christian faith to your daily life, what do you expect your Christian faith to do?

Post-Viewing Questions

1. How would you describe the distinction between Law and Gospel?

2. How is the distinction between Law and Gospel like the distinction between Yes and No?

3. How do you experience the distinction between Law and Gospel in your life? In the church?

Episode 3: What Is The Crossings Method?

Pre-Viewing Questions

1. Think of a problem that afflicts the church, the society or the world? What kind of tools could you use to analyze and solve that problem?
2. How do you understand the terms “diagnosis and prognosis”? How are they related?
3. What do you know about the Crossings Method? What questions do you have about it?

Post-Viewing Questions

1. How is the Crossings Method related to the distinction between Law and Gospel?
2. How do the six steps correlate and differ from each other?
3. The Crossings Method is all about magnifying the GOOD NEWS of what God has done for the world in Jesus Christ. How would failing to fully diagnose the “eternal problem” undermine the “eternal solution” and the GOOD NEWS of Jesus Christ?
4. Go to the Crossings website and read a recent Text Study to see how the Crossings Method works. How does this Text Study make the GOOD NEWS of Jesus Christ **GOOD NEWS** for your life?

Episode 4: How Does The Gospel Work? The Sweet Swap

Pre-Viewing Questions

1. When people use the word “Gospel,” what do they mean?
2. What do you think the word “Gospel” means?
3. Share some examples of how people exchange, trade and swap things in our society?

Post-Viewing Questions

1. How is the “Gospel” like a sweet swap or happy exchange?
2. Why is “faith” so important in the sweet swap?
3. What makes the sweet swap a “get to” and not a “have to?”
4. Can you think of some other illustrations of how the Gospel works?

Episode 5: Do You Have Yahbut's Disease?

Pre-Viewing Questions

1. When people say, "But I'm only human?" what do you think they mean?
2. How would you describe "sin?"
3. How does "sin" manifest itself in your life?

Post-Viewing Questions

1. How would you describe "Yahbut's Disease?"
2. What are the symptoms of "Yahbut's Disease" in your life?
3. How does Jesus cure your "Yahbut's Disease?"
4. Describe how life is different once Christ has "cured" you of "Yahbut's Disease?"

Episode 6: What is Christian Freedom?

Pre-Viewing Questions

1. Have you ever heard the term “Cheap Grace?” How would you describe it?
2. Why should Christians do “good works?”
3. If Jesus forgives you no matter what, then why not just do whatever you want?

Post-Viewing Questions

1. What is the contradiction and paradox that is at the heart of the Christian life? How do you experience that contradiction and paradox in your life?
2. What are the two freedoms in the Christian life? How do you experience them in your life?
3. How is being a Christian WORLDLY? How is that good news for your life? How is that good news for the world?

Episode 7: Where Have You Seen God In Your Life This Week?

Pre-Viewing Questions

1. Where have you seen God in your life this week?
2. How do your experiences of suffering and loss affect your experience of God?
3. Name some times in your life when God has been “silent.”

Post-Viewing Questions

1. What is “the hidden God?”
2. Where is God “revealed” in your life?
3. How does “hearing the promise” change the way we “see” God?
4. What does it mean to live “with the eyes of faith?”
5. How is the “revealed” God still “hidden” in your life?

Episode 8: Will Everyone Be Saved?

Pre-Viewing Questions

1. Will someone who has never heard about Jesus and the Gospel be saved?
2. Describe some of the “good people” you have known in life but do not believe in God and will nothing to do with Jesus. What do you think God will do to them in eternity?
3. Suppose that God will finally in the end “save” everyone. What does that say about the “mission” of the church? Why is it still important?

Post-Viewing Questions

1. Describe some of the “uncle Charlies” in your life. Why would asking God to be fair with the “uncle Charlies” in your life . . . be dangerous?
2. Why is the question “Will everyone be saved?” God’s problem and not ours? Why is that good news?
3. Why is the “mission” of the church “urgent and important?”

Episode 9: Why Do Bad Things Happen To Good People?

Pre-Viewing Questions

1. “Why do bad things happen to good people?” What are some of the answers to this question that you have heard in your life?
2. What kinds of answers to this question has the church given you in your life?
3. Have any of these answers been satisfactory? Why or why not?

Post-Viewing Questions

1. How does the experience of suffering and evil undermine the notion of an all-powerful AND an all-loving God?
2. How are the stories of Job and Jesus examples of undeserved suffering?
3. How is the story of Jesus not an **explanation** but a **solution** to the problem of suffering and evil? Why is that good news for you?

Episode 10: Fake Gospel or Real Gospel

Pre-Viewing Questions

1. Give some examples of when you have heard “fake news.” Why does it seem “fake?”

2. Give some examples of when you have heard “fake news” in the church. Why does it seem “fake?”

Post-Viewing Questions

1. What is the “double dipstick test?” How does it help you to recognize the real Gospel instead of a fake Gospel?

2. How do you know when you are hearing a fake Gospel? Give some examples of when that has happened to you in the church and in the world.

3. How is flunking the “double dipstick test” an example of turning the Gospel into the Law? Why is that devastating for the church?