

Easter Message - More than a Story.

Message to Conversation Guide

Discussion Questions

1. The message talked about great stories such as *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White, and novels by great novelist like John Grisham and amazing TV shows like *This is US*. What is your favorite piece of fiction that you have read or watched? Discuss the concept that what is different from fictional stories and the Easter story is the Easter story isn't just a good story but it is a story rooted in reality and history.
2. Review the scriptures below and engage in a conversation of what level of role the Caiaphas the high priest played in the Easter story.

- **Matt 26:1-5**

26 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, 2 "As you know, the Passover is two days away — and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified." 3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, 4 and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him. 5 "But not during the Feast," they said, "or there may be a riot among the people." NIV

- **Matt 26:57-58**

57 Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. 58 But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome. NIV

- **John 11:47-50**

47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. "What are we accomplishing?" they asked. "Here is this man performing many miraculous signs. 48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." 49 Then one of them, named **Caiaphas, who was high priest** that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! 50 You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish." NIV

- Other Scriptures regarding Caiaphas: **Luke 3:2, John 18:14, 24, 28 and Acts 4:6.**

3. Review and discuss the history of Caiaphas and what role he occupied in the time of Jesus.

- *High Priest 18 -36 AD*

- Caiaphas is mentioned by Joseph Flavius (Ant. 18:35:95) His full name was **Yosef Bar Kayafa** (Hebrew קַיָּפָא בֶר יוֹסֵף), which translates as **Joseph, son of Caiaphas**.
 - In 1990 a rock hewn burial chamber was uncovered by Z. Greenhut to the south of Jerusalem and within containing bones (ossuary) bearing the Aramaic inscription “**Yehosef bar (son of) Qafa (Caiapha)**”. The ossuary inscribed with “Joseph son of Caiaphas” was particularly ornate. Inside the remains of 6 individuals including a man about 60 years old.
 - The tomb where the ossuary was found also contains a coin of Herod Agrippa I dated 42/43 AD which places this ossuary in the right place and the right time. Based on the evidence, most scholars now accept that this artifact is the very ossuary that held the bones of Joseph Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest and the man who became such an important part of the gospel story.
4. Discuss the significance of the Pilate Stone that was discovered in Caesarea in 1961 and its description as listed below.

Inscription on the Pilate Stone

[DIS AUGUSTI]S TIBERIÉUM
 [...PONTI]US PILATUS
 [...PRAEF]ECTUS IUDA[EA]E
 [...FECIT D]E[DICAVIT]

*To the Divine Augusti [this] Tiberieum
 ...Pontius Pilate
 ...prefect of Judea
 ...has dedicated [this]*

5. What was the scope of the type and number of people that witness his resurrection from the verse below.

1 Cor 15:1-8

15 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3 **For what I received I passed on to you** as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 **and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.** 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the

apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.
NIV