**The Power of Time: 3 Ghosts or 3 Gifts?**

**Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”**

**Psalm 90:12 “Teach us to number our days aright that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”**

**Thesis: Jesus helps us reframe our past, live mindfully in the present and be unafraid of the future.**

**Note to leader: Remember, you don’t have to ask every question on this leader’s sheet. Review the questions and choose the ones that seem to fit your group the best. Consider having group members draw their responses to the last question as the very first question of the evening.**

**1. How many times have you seen “The Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens? Do you prefer the book, the movie or live theatre? What part of the story do you like the best?**  (Make the point - The 3 ghosts really became 3 gifts to Ebenezer Scrooge, and helped him to change, to become a new man).

**2.** “You can’t change your past, but your past can certainly change you.” **What is one way in which your past experiences have forever marked you for the better? What kind of positive roots did you experience in your family growing up?**

**3. If you could go back in the past and change one day, what day would you change?**

**4. Read Genesis 45: 1-8. What emotions are in this story that are also in the Christmas Carol?** (terror, distress, crying, anger, regret). **Do you think Joseph was tempted to regret the lost years of his past as a slave? How does Joseph reframe his past so that God fits in the picture (45:7,8).**

**5. Did anyone experience a defining moment in 2014? What was it?**

**6.** A study was done on the things we worry about. It was discovered that: 40 percent of the things we worry about never happen, 30 percent of our worries concern the past, 12 percent of our worries are needless worries about our health, 10 percent of our worries are insignificant. Only 8 percent of our worries are actually over legitimate troubles. We spend 92 percent of our emotional energies over things that won’t happen or things we can’t change. **What is something that you find yourself worrying about most often? What helps you worry less?**

**7. Read 2 Peter 3:10-12. How should the future change how we live?**

**8. Share something from your bucket list that you’d like to do before you die.**

**9. What kind of changes in the way you use your time might help you be more consistent with your stated priorities?**

**10. Which of the following verses do you find most encouraging: Heb. 13:5,6; Rom. 8:28; Phil. 2:13?**

**11**. Rick Warren suggests there are 3 secrets to **JOY**: Jettison all regrets about your past (Phil.3:13), Omit all worries about your future (Phil. 4:6,7) and Yield yourself to God’s purpose (Phil. 1:21). **Which of these is easiest for you to do, and which is hardest? What things from the past do you need to “shake off” so that you can “step up” in 2015?** (You might have to retell the story of the mule that fell into the well to answer that question.)

**12.** Spend some time filling out **Power of Time sheet**. Fold a sheet of paper into 3 parts: Past, Present and Future. Encourage group members to draw a picture depicting something good that happened in 2014, something they are looking forward to in 2015, and something they are currently praying about. Take 5 minutes or so to reflect and draw a picture. Use pens, colored pencils, markers or even crayons. Don’t worry about stick men drawing – the goal isn’t to be a professional artist. The goal is simply to draw a picture that enables group members to share.

**Finish by praying for each other about the current concerns of the heart expressed in the Power of Time coloring sheet.**