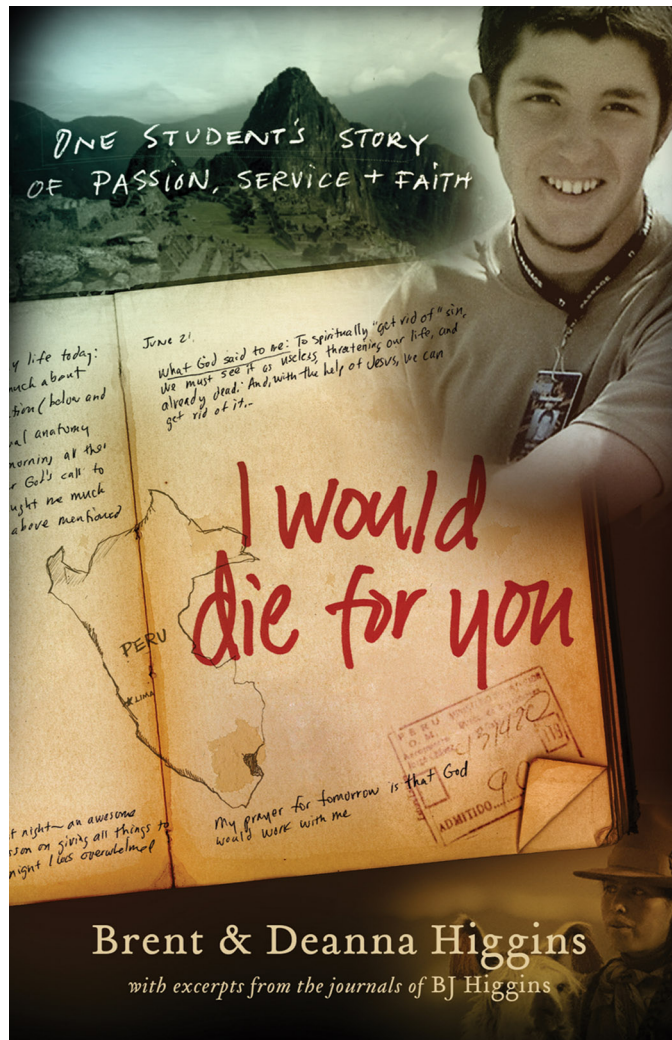


Discussion Guide for I Would Die for You By Brent and Deanna Higgins



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Introduction

When was the last time you and your students gave your all—for God? Do your students find it difficult to know how to make a difference in everyday life? Do they have the courage to do so?

I Would Die for You is the powerful, true story of BJ Higgins, a young man who loved God with everything he had. His life on earth ended when he was just fifteen after a six-week battle with an infection contracted on the mission field. Today, BJ's journals and blogs, along with testimony from family and friends, reveal a young man whose short life left a huge impression on many lives.

This study guide provides questions, activities, and tips to help you lead your group through a discussion of *I Would Die for You*. Together you will read BJ's journals, hear from his family and friends, and be challenged to pursue a more passionate, active relationship with God. Through his amazing story, you and your students will be inspired to live your lives for the Lord.

The material in this guide has been divided into six sessions—each corresponding to one section of the book. Encourage students to prepare for each discussion time by reading the appropriate book sections before you meet. We recommend passing out copies of the book to your students at least two weeks before your discussion sessions begin, to give them plenty of time to look through the book and start reading.

Each session opens with an activity designed to be interactive and easy-going, so let your students have some fun with these. Next, you'll see a list of discussion questions about the book. Please note that these questions are not intended to make your discussion rigid. You may find that students come with enough questions of their own to fuel the conversation, and you may rely on the questions provided here simply to help keep the discussion rolling. As conversations unfold, encourage an atmosphere of respect and trust by asking students to keep the information shared within your group confidential.

You're almost ready to begin. But first, here are some helpful hints on leading a discussion in a group setting.

Group Rules

Remind your students that this study group is a place where people are to be valued and respected. We suggest that you share these simple group rules with everyone before you start:

- **Practice confidentiality.** What's said in the group stays in the group.
- **Respect other people's views,** even when they are different than your own.
- **Listen. Listen. Listen.** Don't be the one who does all the talking. Let others have a chance to share their views too.
- **When someone is talking, don't interrupt.** Wait your turn to speak.

Tips for Leading a Discussion

Here are a few ideas to keep your discussion rolling in a meaningful way:

- **Prepare.** Make sure you've read through the book chapters and the discussion guide for each session. As you prepare for the sessions, consider ways to make the questions more specific to your group. You may also find it helpful to think about one or two personal anecdotes you could share during the group's discussion.
- **Be yourself.** Thank students for sharing their thoughts and opinions, but don't feel that you need to agree with everyone. Be honest with your students about your own thoughts and the lessons you've learned. Your opinion may not always be popular, but your honesty will earn your students' respect—and maybe even push them to think about the issue from a different angle.
- **Encourage students to go deeper.** When someone gives a simple response, ask them follow-up questions such as "Why do you feel that way?" "What do you mean by that?" or "Tell us more."
- **Allow for silence.** Remember, your students haven't read the questions ahead of time and may need a few moments to process a response. Allow for about 7–10 seconds of silence before saying anything further, even when it makes you feel uncomfortable. If necessary, you can reword the question or move on to another topic.

- **Draw everyone into the discussion.** If it seems like the same two or three students are responding to all your questions, look for ways to bring others into the conversation. Some students may need a little encouragement to share their thoughts and opinions. So invite them to talk by saying something like “Lisa, I’m curious what you think about this” or “Alex, I’d love to hear what you have to say about that.”
- **Be a good listener.** The goal is to have a true discussion, not a lecture from the group leader. Avoid putting words in the students’ mouths or overreacting to comments that you may not agree with. Try asking “mirror” questions that challenge students to clarify or affirm what you’ve heard. For example, say “What I hear you saying is this. Is that what you mean?” or “So what you seem to be saying is this. Would you agree?”
- **Bring God into it.** Pray for the students before and after each session. Ask God to direct your discussion, and be open to the Spirit’s leading. It may be that he takes you in an unexpected direction, so don’t get too hung up on “the plan.” If students are genuinely interested and engaged in a healthy side topic, let the conversation go, saying a silent prayer for God to work in their hearts.

Session One

Faith Basics

Opening Activity: SuperChristian Comic Strips

Supplies Needed: poster board, markers

Divide students into groups of 3–4 for this activity, and give each group a piece of poster board and several markers. Tell them to imagine that they are comic strip artists working to develop a hero called “SuperChristian.” Ask them to outline their character on the poster board, including the following elements:

- a picture of what this superhero looks like
- a list of SuperChristian’s character traits, special powers, and favorite pastimes
- possible story ideas where SuperChristian comes to the rescue

Give the groups 5–10 minutes to develop their hero, and then regroup. Ask each group to share a few highlights and display their poster board. Then lead a brief discussion of the following questions:

1. What were some common traits that every group gave to “SuperChristian”? Why do you think these were obvious traits for your hero?
2. In what ways are you similar to SuperChristian? In what ways are you *not* like the SuperChristian you described?

