



Journey • Empower • Motivate

DOCUMENTARY DISCUSSION GUIDE

The John Mason Story and His Journey with God

GVRA Disability Empowerment & Employment Readiness Program

Presented by John E. Mason

Author • Inspirational Speaker • Filmmaker • Inventor

JOURNEY • EMPOWER • MOTIVATE

Purpose of This Guide

This discussion guide accompanies a screening of *The John Mason Story and His Journey with God* as part of the JEM - Journey • Empower • Motivate Disability Empowerment & Employment Readiness Program. It helps participants move from watching John's story to examining their own journeys, strengths, barriers, goals, resources, and next steps.

JOURNEY	EMPOWER	MOTIVATE
Understand where you have been, where you are today, and where you want to go.	Recognize your abilities, build confidence, advocate for yourself, and	Turn goals into action toward independence, education, training, employment, and

Facilitator Guidance

The facilitator should create an environment where participants can speak openly without pressure to disclose personal information. There are no required 'correct' answers. Participation in personal reflection should be voluntary.

- Speak from your own experience.
- Respect different experiences, abilities, goals, and perspectives.
- Listen without interrupting.
- Focus on abilities as well as barriers.
- Encourage practical next steps rather than comparisons between participants.
- Suggested discussion time: 45-60 minutes, excluding the documentary screening.

Part 1 - The Journey

John Mason's life changed dramatically after sustaining a spinal cord injury at age 18. His plans changed, but his life and ambitions continued.

1. What part of John's journey stood out to you the most?
2. What challenges did you see John encounter after his injury?
3. What helped him continue moving forward?
4. How did John's circumstances change his original plans?

5. What is the difference between changing your plan and giving up on your goal?
6. Have you experienced a situation that forced you to change your plans? What did you learn from it?

Personal Reflection

My journey has taught me:

One challenge I have already overcome is:

Part 2 - Empower

Empowerment includes participating in decisions that affect your life, understanding your abilities, communicating your needs, requesting appropriate accommodations, making informed choices, and learning to advocate for yourself.

7. What does independence mean to you?
8. Does independence always mean doing everything without assistance? Why or why not?
9. What examples of independence did you see in John's story?
10. Why can asking for appropriate assistance be part of independence?
11. What does self-advocacy mean to you?
12. Why is it important to communicate what you need in school, training, employment, and everyday life?
13. What can prevent someone from advocating for themselves?
14. How can confidence affect a person's willingness to pursue opportunities?

Self-Advocacy Exercise

One strength I have is:

One thing I do well is:

One accommodation, resource, technology, or type of support that could help me succeed is:

When I need assistance, I can advocate for myself by saying:

Part 3 - Employment and Opportunity

A disability may create barriers, but it does not eliminate a person's talents, interests, knowledge, creativity, or ability to contribute.

15. What abilities should an employer look for when considering a person for a job?
16. What employment barriers can people with disabilities encounter?
17. Which barriers involve the physical environment?
18. Which barriers can result from attitudes or assumptions?
19. How can accommodations and assistive technology create employment opportunities?
20. Why should a person's abilities be considered rather than assumptions about a disability?
21. What skills do you currently have that could be useful in a workplace?
22. What skills would you like to develop?
23. What type of work would give you a sense of purpose?
24. What resources or people could help you move toward that work?

Part 4 - Turning Barriers into Strategies

Identify one barrier you currently face, then identify several possible strategies for addressing it.

My barrier:

Strategy 1 - Something I can do:

Strategy 2 - Someone I can ask for assistance:

Strategy 3 - A resource, accommodation, service, or technology that could help:

Strategy 4 - An alternative path I could consider:

Part 5 - Motivate: From Goal to Action

Motivation becomes more useful when it leads to action. Identify one realistic goal related to education, employment, training, independence, or personal development.

One goal I want to accomplish is:

This goal is important to me because:

The first action I will take is:

A person or organization that could help me is:

I will take my first step by:

Part 6 - Journey • Empower • Motivate

JOURNEY - Where am I now?

Where do I want to go?

EMPOWER - What strength, resource, accommodation, or support can help me get there?

MOTIVATE - What am I going to do next?

Group Discussion - What Is Possible?

What would you attempt if you stopped defining your future only by the barriers you face today?

Possible discussion areas:

- Career goals
- Education and training
- Independent living
- Entrepreneurship
- Relationships
- Travel
- Technology
- Community involvement
- Personal development

The facilitator should emphasize that participants will have different goals, abilities, resources, support needs, and definitions of success.

Questions for John Mason

Something I would like to ask John about his journey:

Something I would like to ask about independence:

Something I would like to ask about education, employment, or entrepreneurship:

My JEM Action Plan

Use this page to turn today's discussion into one practical next step.

MY JOURNEY - One experience that has helped shape who I am:

MY STRENGTH - Something I am proud of:

MY GOAL - Something I want to accomplish:

MY BARRIER - Something that could make achieving my goal difficult:

MY RESOURCE - A person, organization, accommodation, service, or technology that could help:

MY FIRST ACTION - One thing I will do next:

MY COMMITMENT - I will take this first step by:

Closing Discussion

JOURNEY: What did John's journey make you think about in your own life?

EMPOWER: What ability or strength do you recognize in yourself that you can build upon?

MOTIVATE: What is one action you are willing to take toward your next goal?

Facilitator Closing Message

John Mason's journey is one person's story. Every participant's circumstances, abilities, goals, resources, and support needs are different. The purpose of JEM is not to tell participants that their journeys should look like John's. It is to encourage them to recognize their own possibilities, advocate for the resources they need, establish meaningful goals, and take their next step.

JOURNEY	Understand your story.
EMPOWER	Recognize your abilities and advocate for yourself.
MOTIVATE	Take the next step.

Program Information

JEM - Journey • Empower • Motivate

John E. Mason, Founder

Author • Inspirational Speaker • Filmmaker • Inventor

Featured Documentary: The John Mason Story and His Journey with God

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Website: _____

Documentary / Trailer: _____