

LIFE GROUP LESSON

Now More than Ever - Week of August 17

Introduction

Now more than ever we long for connection and acceptance. Now more than ever we need help navigating the challenges of life. We all need loving support and community, and relationships in which we feel valued, strengthened and encouraged. We need God, and a genuine relationship with our Heavenly Father is found only through his Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And here is the amazing thing: God longs to be in relationship with us. That is why he sent his only Son into the world!... to make a way for each of us to come back home to God. Like a good shepherd, Jesus goes after lost sheep.

“Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.” In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven’t strayed away! (Luke 15:6b-7)

This week we are focusing on the R in the acronym of C-H-R-I-S-T.

R – Reaching *and* developing fully devoted followers of Jesus encapsules two key components of our Mission Statement at Christ Church. Read together our mission –

Reaching millions of unchurched persons by developing thousands of fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

Read Luke 24:38-49

It is interesting that the risen Jesus asked, “Do you have anything here to eat.” In his resurrected body Jesus still wants to fellowship and enjoy a meal with his disciples. No wonder he left us a meal! Jesus is all about connection and he wants us to be where he is. He said he was going to prepare a place for us and how there is plenty of room in his Father’s house. “There is more than enough room in my Father’s home... When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am” (John 14:2a,3). Christ is Emmanuel – *God with us* – and he came to be *with* us, so we can be *with* him now... and one day, be *with* him in the glory of his Father and the holy angels forever. As children of our Father, we must be about what he is: being *with* people.

Read Matthew 28:16-20

Reaching equals Evangelism and once the life-changing message of the Gospel reaches the ears and hearts of people around us, we are to disciple these precious ones. Once we profess faith in Christ, God invites us – and commissions us – to participate in gathering in *all* his children and helping to restore their lives to health and harmony. Not one follower of Jesus is exempt from this holy, divine assignment. We reach and develop. Thus, Satan the enemy, the accuser of men, will do anything he and the forces of darkness can do to distract us from the mission. The devil will try to trip you up, sidetrack you, turn you against your brother or sister, discourage you, and defame the holy name by which you are called. We must pray what Jesus taught us to pray: *Our Father, may your name be kept holy!* This means we make room for Christ daily, acknowledge the privilege of being invited into God’s mission in the world, and continue to set ourselves apart for HIS purpose and call over us... no matter what may come. The apostle Paul says:

“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other” (1 Corinthians 12:4-7).

Discussion:

- How would you define evangelism?
- What is your reaction to
 - ◊ *Accepting* the commission of Christ as a privilege
 - ◊ *Going and preaching* (sharing) the message Christ in Luke 24:47: “There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent” ...?
 - ◊ *Doing* your part to help develop fully followers of Jesus Christ?

Evangelism is not a checklist. Sharing our faith in Christ does not mean we have to be a Bible scholar or work full-time at the church. The work of evangelism is not about putting on a game-face and pretending you have all the answers, nor is it about being puffed up with pride and acting as if you are better than ‘lost sheep’. Evangelism must be authentic, and when we start to take an interest in others around us, they may become interested in what we believe. According to Mike Frost, author of [Surprise the](#)

World, a good way to be relational is to practice some simple habits, using the acronym BELLS.

B – Blessing others daily

E – Eating with others weekly

L – Listening to others

L – Learning about others

S – Serving others in ways that foster relationship

Overtime, as we live attuned to the Holy Spirit, people will notice, take an interest, and begin to ask questions. Remember, evangelism is about being relational, like Jesus. We do not have to have all the answers. WE DON'T have to argue. We simply share who Christ is to us, love them, and pray the Holy Spirit opens hearts. People are open to an invitation of friendship. The early church provides us with a model of befriending, reaching, developing:

“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved” (Acts 2:42-47).

Close in a time of prayer.

One Year Bible Reading For This Week:

August 17: Nehemiah 12:27-13:31, 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, Psalm 35:1-16, Prov. 21:17-18

August 18: Esther 1:1-3:15, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, Psalm 35:17-28, Proverbs 21:19-20

August 19: Esther 4:1-7:10, 1 Corinthians 12:1-26, Psalm 36:1-12, Proverbs 21:21-22

August 20: Esther 8:1-10:3, 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:13, Psalm 37:1-11, Proverbs 21:23-24

August 21: Job 1:1-3:26, 1 Corinthians 14:1-17, Psalm 37:12-29, Proverbs 21:25-26

August 22: Job 4:1-7:21, 1 Corinthians 14:18-40, Psalm 37:30-40, Proverbs 21:27

August 23: Job 8:1-11:20, 1 Corinthians 15:1-28, Psalm 38:1-22, Proverbs 21:28-29

Now More Than Ever

Text: Luke 24:44-49, Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 12:30-31

Reaching lost people is a core value because lost people matter to God.

PLAIN TRUTH

We focus on _____ because _____
people _____ to God and to _____.

Principles for the Why and How of Reaching

1. Because Jesus _____ us to.
2. Our _____ for _____ is rooted in _____.
3. First, let's _____ for our unchurched friends, neighbors, family and friends.
4. The _____ in reaching is _____ persons and _____ enough to _____.
5. Develop Relational _____ to _____ Relational _____.

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