

EQUIP

outward focused

Week One: Foundations

THE BIG IDEA

Through the Great Commission, God has chosen and ordained Christ-Followers to engage non-believers with the gospel. Three of the tools that God has equipped the Church with to bring the gospel to others are serving, evangelism, and multiplication.

1 Peter 4:10 "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."

BREAKING THE ICE

Watch the video and answer the following questions to get the conversation started:

Grace: <https://tinyurl.com/ycsrf3d3p>

- What role did other people play in Grace's story and what impact did they have?
- Think about each of your own salvation stories. Who has spiritually impacted your life?

1. GREAT COMMISSION: READ Matthew 28:18-20

CONTEXT: The Great Commission is Jesus' final command to his disciples before he ascends to heaven. If Christ-Followers truly believe that faith in Jesus is how someone receives eternal life, the Church should sense a constant prompting to share this truth with others.

- A. What does Matthew 28:18-20 tell you about God's character?
- B. In what ways does this scripture inform your life's purpose?
- C. How do we respond to this conviction or prompt, based on what Jesus said in the Great Commission?

2. SERVING: READ John 13:14-15

CONTEXT: In John 13, Jesus washed his disciples' feet. This was a job typically reserved for the bondservants because it was known to be a foul and filthy task. But their King lowered himself to the position of a bondservant to ensure that they knew not even He was exempt from being a servant and, therefore, neither are those who follow him.

- A. What directions does Jesus give to his disciples after he washed their feet? What do those directions mean for your life?

- B. Jesus says, “Do just as I have done for you.” In what ways have God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit been a servant to you?
- C. How does your answer to question B inform your attitude towards others?

3. EVANGELISM: READ *Matthew 5:16*

CONTEXT: Christ-Followers are called to reflect God’s light in their actions and their words so that people may come to know Him. As a result of Jesus’ Great Commission and the call to be servants to others, God has created the opportunity for the Church to share the gospel and ultimately fulfill the Great Commission.

- A. Based on John 13:14-15 and Matthew 5:16, how are your actions a platform to tell others about Jesus?
- B. What does it say about God’s character that he chose us, a broken people, to be the vessel by which he reaches the lost?
- C. Who in your life can you share the gospel with through acts of service?

4. MULTIPLICATION – READ 2 *Timothy 2:2*

CONTEXT: The Church is not only called to be disciples, they are called to make disciples that make other disciples. Multiplication is modeled by Jesus throughout the Bible. He does this by building the disciples up and sending them out. This is evident in His walk with the disciples, who then go and multiply their faith to others.

- A. In what ways are you seeking to multiply your faith?
- B. Discuss the difference between evangelism and multiplication – why does the Lord instruct us to do *both*?
- C. Discuss ways in which your group can seek to multiply itself and pray for guidance in seeking to do so.

5. PRAYER & ACTION: PRAY through 1 *Peter 4:10*

PRAYER: Ask the Lord to start showing you where he wants to use you in other people’s stories. Thank the Lord for inviting you into his family and equipping you to be an integral part of His plan to reach all people.

ACTION:

- A. Reflect on the role that other people have played in bringing you to Christ.
- B. Take time to write out your salvation story in its entirety and practice sharing it.

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Week Two: Why us?

THE BIG IDEA

The Lord has specifically chosen a broken people to be the ones to bear His image. The Church is the vehicle to carry out this Great Commission, and there is no plan B.

Acts 9:13-15 “[Ananias speaking about Paul] But Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many about this man [Paul], how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.’

But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.’”

BREAKING THE ICE:

Watch the video and answer the following questions to get the conversation started.

Brian: <https://tinyurl.com/ycfyf2f7>

- Why do you think God chooses to use the broken in order to carry out his love and grace? What does that mean for us?
- What are some ways God has used your brokenness to make a spiritual impact in the lives of others?

1. WHY US? READ 2 Corinthians 12:9

CONTEXT: Just as the Lord chose Paul to be his chosen instrument, He has chosen each Christ-Follower to be His instrument as well. God chooses to use broken people because, as 2 Corinthians says, his power is made perfect in our weakness. Even though we are broken, our decision to follow Christ and be obedient to his call shows others God's redemptive plan and goodness.

A. Why is our brokenness glorifying to Him?

B. What does it say about God that he would invite imperfect people into His mission?

2. CHRISTLIKENESS: READ 1 John 2:6 & 2 Corinthians 3:18

CONTEXT: When people become Christ-Followers, they are called to reflect Jesus in their daily lives – through words, thoughts, and actions. By becoming more like Christ, the Church exudes Christ's love and attention toward others.

- A. What areas of your life has the Lord grown you in Christlikeness most in the last year?
- B. What does it look like to be “transformed into the same image” of Christ in your life? Explain some ways you can become more intentional for this to take place.
- C. Read John 15:1-5. Even though we must be intentional in growing, what does the concept of abiding in Jesus have to do with our growth?

3. NO PLAN B: *READ Romans 10:14-15 & Mark 16:15-16*

CONTEXT: God is capable of reaching the lost entirely on His own, but He chose to invite His people into the process and commanded them to be part of it. The Church, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is the only plan for unbelievers to meet Jesus.

- A. What does it say about the Lord’s character that he wouldn’t have a backup plan?
- B. Reaching people with the gospel is a matter of obedience. If we believe this, what should our attitude be toward becoming an Outward Focused people?
- C. What can you do to make sure that you are interacting and building relationships with non-believers?

4. PRAYER & ACTION: *PRAY through Acts 9:13-15*

PRAYER: Ask the Lord to reveal to you the ways in which He has made you to be His chosen instrument. Thank Him for choosing you in spite of your brokenness. Ask that He would continue to work in and through you to build His kingdom.

ACTION: Expect God to answer your prayer to be used, and then follow the Lord’s promptings to engage others with the gospel.

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Week Three: Who are we called to reach?

THE BIG IDEA

The Lord has called Christ-Followers to reflect His heart for all people. He makes a point to include those who have been outcast. He acknowledges that the Church should regard their neighbors as highly as they regard themselves. Lastly, He expands the Church's scope to the nations.

Isaiah 61:1 "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound."

1. THE OUTCAST: READ Luke 4:16-19; Isaiah 61:1-3

CONTEXT: Jesus quotes Isaiah and declares that He has come to bring the good news to the poor, brokenhearted, captive, and bound. As we grow in Christ-likeness, we are called to embody His heart for those cast out by society.

A. What groups in society today are considered outcasts?

B. In what ways do you feel like you need to grow in your love for those who are considered outcasts?

C. What can you do to show the heart of Christ to those whom he came to free?

2. OUR NEIGHBORS: – READ Luke 10:25-37

CONTEXT: The story of the Good Samaritan would have been crazy in Jesus' day. Samaritans were detested by the Jews while priests and Levites would have been held in high esteem. Jews and Samaritans had hundreds of years of hatred dividing them and yet Jesus says that everyone, even the Samaritan, was to be considered their neighbor – treated as themselves.

BREAKING THE ICE:

Watch this video and answer the following questions to get the conversation started.

Collision: <https://tinyurl.com/ya2yzbyo>

- We often assume that meeting the physical needs of an individual is of the utmost importance. In what ways did you hear the missional residents seeking to meet the relational needs of the residents?
- How did you see the Lord using the missional residents' relationships with other residents to meet their deeper need for a relationship with Jesus?

- A. When you think of the relational divide between the Jews and the Samaritans, who comes to mind in your own life?

- B. What causes the divide that separates you from them? What would it look like for you to allow the Lord into that space?

- C. What does it mean to treat “your neighbor as yourself”? How do you value and love everyone in this way?

3. THE NATIONS: *READ Matthew 28:18-20, Revelation 7:9*

CONTEXT: Both of these passages communicate that the Lord’s heart is for all nations to have his free gift of salvation. This means the heart of a Christ-Follower is not just for their next-door neighbor, but for all unreached people around the world.

- A. In the past or the present, how have you interacted with people from different backgrounds and ethnicities?

- B. Talk about some of the difficulties you experience in interacting with individuals from a different culture. Why does God value cross-cultural interactions and call us to engage in it even when it is difficult? What are the fruits of obedience?

- C. How can you personally or as a group get involved in the global Christian movement? (prayer, advocacy, funding, going?)

4. PRAYER & ACTION: *PRAY through Isaiah 61:1-3*

PRAYER: Pray that the Lord would grow your heart for the outcast, your neighbors, and the nations. Pray that He would mold and shape your life around this call to reach and be a servant to these people.

ACTION:

- A. Take next steps to get involved cross-culturally.
- B. Be open to the Lord if and when he decides to expand the scope of your personal ministry to people with whom you have no similarities, interactions, or proximity.
- C. Pray the Missional Big Three with your group this week.

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Week Four: Where?

THE BIG IDEA

The Lord's call to reach the lost is all-inclusive – every person, every people group, everywhere. God helps the Church to stay mindful about the scope of that call when he specifies that they need to be engaged where they are, in the city, and around the world.

Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

1. WHERE YOU ARE: READ Acts 1:18, Jerusalem

CONTEXT: The first of these three areas is the closest to home. This is representative of where you are placed right now and the sphere of influence that the Lord has given you there. This is your home, your neighborhood, and the people that most immediately surround you.

- A. What would change in your day-to-day if you viewed the people around you as those God has sent to you?
- B. Make a list of the people God has placed in your life that need to know Jesus.
- C. Write down some tangible ways that you could reach them with the gospel.

2. IN THE CITY: READ Acts 1:8, Judea and Samaria

CONTEXT: Judea and Samaria are the larger regions surrounding Jerusalem. These are representative of the city – where people work, play, go to church, and go to school, etc. The Lord has equipped the Church to be involved in and meet the needs of the city and its people.

BREAKING THE ICE

Read this short story and answer the following questions to get the conversation started.

Kristin: <https://tinyurl.com/ycobx7sh>

- Identify the parts of Kristin's life where the Lord used her where she was, in Austin, and around the world. Where do you see the Lord overlapping those areas of service in her life?
- Where could you see the Lord overlapping areas of service in your life?

A. What do you see the Lord doing in Austin right now?

B. What are the needs in your city and how can you help meet them? If you don't know, ask someone on the Life Groups team.

3. AROUND THE WORLD: *READ 1:18, the ends of the Earth*

CONTEXT: The “ends of the Earth” can be intimidating and hard to grasp. Nonetheless, the Church is called to minister and share the gospel globally.

A. This is a follow-up from the previous section. Share with the group how God has grown your global perspective.

4. PRAYER & ACTION: *PRA Y through Psalm 67*

PRAYER: Pray that God will help you see the ways in which he wants you to minister where you are, in the city, and around the World.

ACTION:

- A. Be mindful about why the Lord has physically put you where you are and look for ways in which He's moving in your surroundings. He is strategic in His plans and He wants you in on it.
- B. From which of the three areas are you most disconnected? Pick one way that you can grow in your involvement with that area and make it part of your routine. That may mean anything from taking time each day to pray for the nations or taking time each week to visit with your neighbors.

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Week Five: Multiply!

THE BIG IDEA

Our faith and growth are not just for us – they are meant to spur on others' growth and to spread the gospel through us. As the Church becomes a people who make disciples, they begin imparting biblical wisdom, sharing their spiritual experiences, and exuding Christ's love for all people.

2 Timothy 2:1-2 "You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

1. DISCIPLE-MAKING DISCIPLE MAKERS: READ 2 Timothy 2:1-2

CONTEXT: Paul had taken Timothy under his wing as an apprentice who assisted and accompanied him. Most importantly, though, he learned from Paul and grew in his own faith because of Paul's spiritual investment in his life. In these verse, Paul instructs Timothy to make the same spiritual investment in the lives of other believers.

- A. Who are some people who have made significant spiritual investments in your life? In what ways did they do that?
- B. Paul poured into Timothy and Timothy was empowered to pour into other men. Why do you think it would be important to have someone in your life to learn from and someone to then pass those learnings onto?
- C. Who is investing in you spiritually as your Paul? Who are you investing in spiritually as your Timothy?

2. MULTIPLYING A GROUP: READ Acts 2:42-47

CONTEXT: In these verses, the apostles were doing what God called them to do and, therefore, God added to their number day-by-day. The Lord calls the Church to live in biblical community like this because he wants to do a great work in their community!

BREAKING THE ICE:

Watch the video and answer the following questions to get the conversation started.

Matt: <https://vimeo.com/265768308>

- What did God use in order to help Matt meet Jesus? After he met Jesus, what did the Lord use to help him grow in his faith?
- In what ways has the Lord redeemed Matt's life in order for him to invest in the spiritual lives of others?

- A. What stands out to you from these verses about the ways that the apostles lived in community together?

- B. What benefit do our neighborhoods stand to gain if we make room in our biblical community for others to be welcomed in through multiplying and launching groups?

- C. What can you do, as a group, to be a reflection of Christ's love in your neighborhood?

3. REFLECTING: *READ Ephesians 4:13-15*

CONTEXT: These verses display God's heart for biblical community. Use them as a framework to reflect over the last five weeks.

- A. Discuss each of your major takeaways from these last five weeks of study.

- B. Which verses or conversations encouraged you? Which verses or conversations convicted you?

- C. How can you be diligent to follow through with what the Lord has put on your heart over the last five weeks?

4. PRAYER & ACTION: *PRAY through Acts 6:7*

PRAYER: Pray that the Lord would humble your heart to receive wisdom from those making spiritual investments in you. Pray also that you would be bold and consistent in investing in the growth of other believers. Pray that your Life Group would make a spiritual impact in your communities.

ACTION:

- A. Think back to the questions about who your Paul and Timothy are. If you are missing one of these, pray for and seek out people with whom you might begin these relationships.
- B. Follow up on question 3C. Make an action plan to help you grow in this area of your spiritual life.