

MOVING TOWARD MISSION

A LEAP life group study

By Matthew Svajda and Chrissy Remsberg



From Life Group to Life on Mission

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FIRST EDITION

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Table of Contents

Introduction 5

Week 1: The Gospel Changes Everything.....12

Week 2: Are You Risk Averse?.....21

Week 3: What Is The Mission?.....26

Week 4: Prayer and Discernment Experience.....32

Week 5: Living the Dream 44

Week 6: Missional Experience 50

Week 7: Don't Just Add - Multiply!.....54

Week 8: Family Dinner Assessment Experience 60

MOVING TOWARD MISSION

An Introduction for Life Group Leaders

This study was written as a companion or follow-up to the LEAP training available for life group leaders. It is designed to help leaders take their life group through similar learning steps that they have already gone through. The hope is that throughout this study each member of the group will have an encounter with Jesus and his Word that will challenge their views about what it means to be a follower of Christ, which will lead them into new ways of thinking about and living out their faith. Ultimately, we want to equip your life group to discover God's call and mission for you, both as individuals and as a group.

Though this study will be most effective when used in conjunction with the LEAP training, we have designed it so that it can stand alone for those who wish to lead their life group on a journey to discover what it means to go from *Life Group to Life on Mission*. If you would like to learn more about LEAP training, you can find information and resources on our website: leapgroups.org.

How To Use This Study

We've tried to make this study as clear and easy to use as possible. Each week you'll find a similar layout to the lesson.

Discuss: Each lesson will begin with a discussion question meant to help your group relax, open up and begin thinking about the topic at hand. Before jumping right into this question, it may be a good idea to give your group some time to discuss what they learned last week or how they applied it since your last meeting. There are no right or wrong answers here. It's just a good opportunity to check in and assess where your group is with the study and with the topic you are discussing that day.

Read: This is where you will dive into the meat of the lesson for the week. Take time to read together the passage suggested. Feel free to read the full chapter if you think your group would benefit from a larger reading. We have targeted the reading to the text from which the rest of the discussion questions will be drawn. All questions are taken from an NIV reading of the text for clarity and consistency.

Discuss: Following the reading there will be varying numbers of discussion questions aimed at helping your group to unpack the text and think through what it might be saying to you and your group. When we thought it would be helpful we've offered explanations or guidance on where we think the text is leading the reader. You don't necessarily need to read these explanations out loud (though you can if you want!), but it's good to understand this information and be familiar so that you can communicate in your own words what might be helpful for your group as you learn together. This will also help you to guide your group's discussion through the study since you will have an idea of where we are heading.

Apply: This section is meant to be continued discussion that turns from looking at the text to looking inward at yourself and your group. There are a range of questions here meant to allow your group to engage as lightly or deeply as they feel comfortable. You are the expert when it comes to your group. Don't feel pressure to answer every question here. Don't feel like every person has to answer a particular question either. Use your knowledge and relationships with the members of your group to discern which questions will best help your group to process and apply what they've learned from the Scripture. Allow yourself to be guided by the Holy Spirit in this process. Before your group meets, it's best to spend some time in prayer as you prepare the lesson. As you pray for your group and your time together, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in which questions to pursue in this section. Then feel free to use as many or as few as you'd like. And don't be afraid to improvise and add in a few of your own!

Take It Home: This final section is meant to encourage your group to put into practice what they have learned from the lesson each week. There are usually 2-3 suggestions that allow people to engage where they're ready. Don't skip this step! The most important part of transformation and growth is taking a step to put into practice (even in small ways) the things that you learn. Encourage your group members to give some of these a try. They can do all of the suggestions each week or just choose one. They could even come up with an alternative that works well for them. The idea is to DO something! Make plans to follow-up the next week and discuss how these things went. Let your group know that you're planning to discuss it at the start of the next week. Ask them what they learned from the experience, what God showed them. Have them share stories or pictures from the things they do. The idea here is not to shame or guilt anyone, but instead to continue the journey of learning and celebrating together the work that God will do in and through your group.

Planning Ahead for Learning Experiences:

You will notice on weeks 4, 6, and 8 we have deviated from the traditional Bible study lesson to offer your group an opportunity to delve deeper into a learning experience. These have been intentionally placed at each week to allow your group to continue the steps of the journey you're on together. It is important that you do these experiences as a group. These should be a break from the usual study that allows your group to reflect on and engage with the study even while perhaps pushing you outside of your comfort zone. Encourage everyone to participate. **Look ahead at where these weeks will fall on the calendar and begin planning so everyone will be able to make note and be a part of these experiences.** It's probably a good idea to go ahead and set these dates with your group on the first week of the study. These will be an important way to bring to life what you are learning throughout the study. And remember, these are meant to be fun and engaging. If you have ideas for how to personalize an experience or improve upon it, then do so! As with the Take It Home sections, the important thing is that you DO something as a group!

One Last Thing

One final point of explanation: For those who have gone through the LEAP Leader Training, we thought it would be helpful for you to see where the things you learned in LEAP are utilized here in the study. To that end, we have created a key that will represent each of the aspects of LEAP. Check out the key below to see how these symbols can offer you guidance as you lead your group.

LEAP KEY:



Language - When you see this icon it should prompt you to use some intentional, missional language. Doing this consistently will help to transform the culture of your group and encourage your group members to start thinking more missionally. So, for example, if you see this icon at the start of the lesson it could prompt you to welcome everyone and in a sentence or two remind them why you meet as a group, what your vision or core values are or what the mission of your group is.



Equip - When you see this icon it should be a prompt that this is a point in the study when you, as the leader, will want to take the opportunity to offer some practical equipping. If you're discussing a way that your group or a group member will be connecting with a friend, co-worker or neighbor then take the time to brainstorm it. Ask them what they are planning. Help them to come up with ideas if they aren't sure how to take the next step. Offer suggestions, ideas, encouragement or just basic problem solving that will help them take the next practical step. This is the tangible process of equipping your Life Group members to engage in mission in their everyday lives.

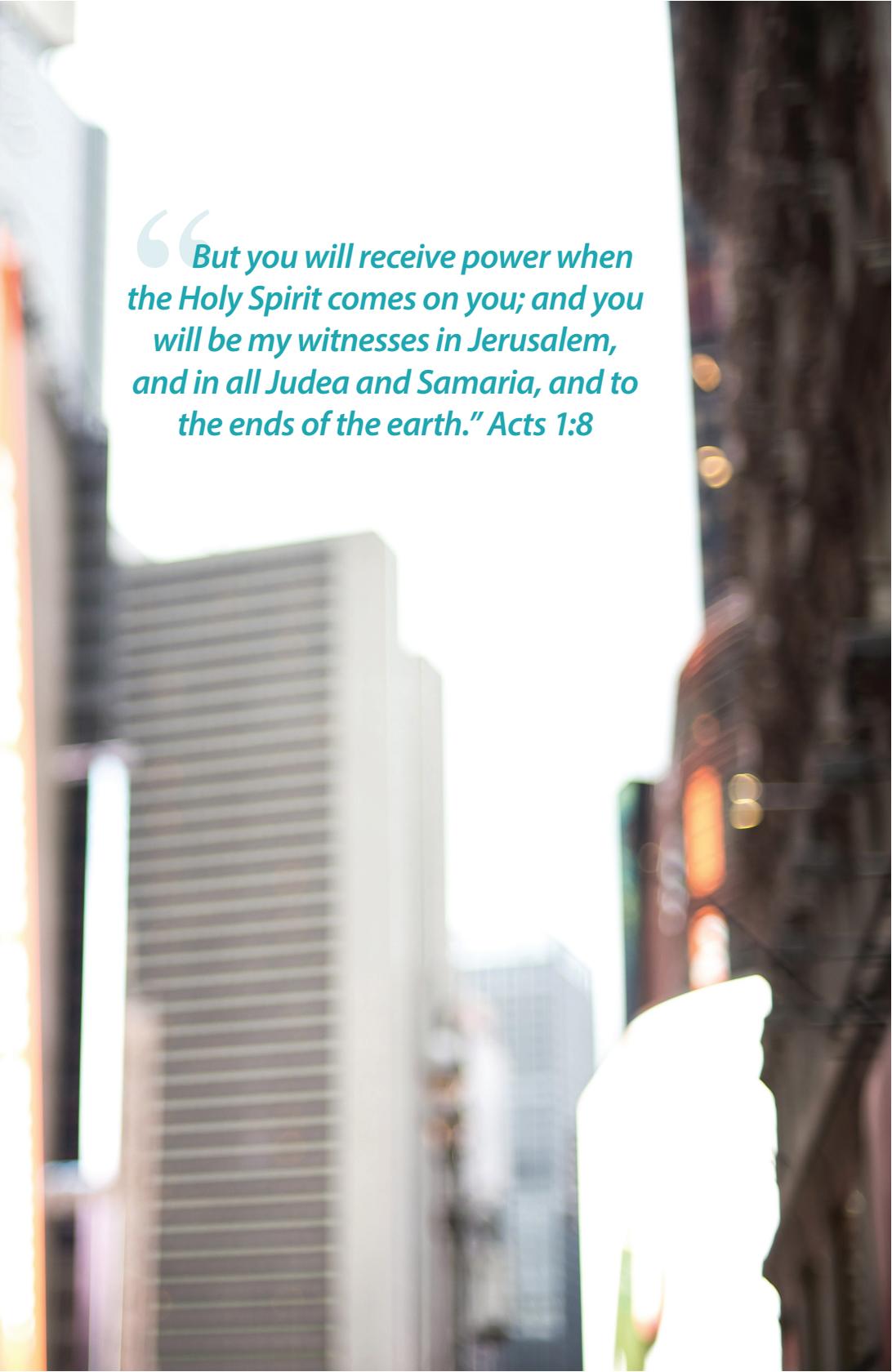


Assess - Whenever you see this icon it will represent a time during the study that is a good place for you to help your group assess what they've learned or something they've tried, so they can continue learning the best way to live out God's mission. There should be regular rhythms of assessment or accountability where all members can consider how they are doing both internally in their own spiritual journey and externally in their missional pursuit. This shouldn't be one or the other. To grow healthy, missional disciples you'll need regular rhythms of assessment in both areas.



Pursuit - Whenever you see this icon it means this is a good time in the study to help your group think about who is a part of their missional pursuit. While some group members will quickly know who God has placed within their pursuit, others will need more time to think and pray on this. Be sure to keep reminding your group, when appropriate, that everyone should be seeking to discern who God is calling them to connect with. In addition, keep in mind that a missional pursuit will shift and change with the changes of life (ie, job changes, people moving) as well as people coming to know Christ. With these changes you will need to be intentional to discern who God is calling you to pursue in this next time frame or stage of life!



A blurred city street at night, featuring tall buildings and bokeh lights from streetlights and buildings. The text is overlaid on a white, rounded rectangular background.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8



WEEK 1 - THE GOSPEL CHANGES EVERYTHING

Welcome your group/begin meeting.

Discuss:

When you go on a trip are you usually more interested in the journey or the destination? Share a story that might show your preference to enjoy the journey vs. the destination.

READ: REVELATION 21:1-5

¹Then I saw 'a new heaven and a new earth,' for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwell-ing place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'

⁵He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'

Revelation is a book about the end of all things. Whenever you begin a journey it is always good to begin with the end in mind! What is the destination? Where are you going? Revelation is a picture of what the end of the journey will look like. This chapter in particular, is a declaration of the kind of world God intends to recreate. It is a picture that helps us to understand why the Gospel is truly meant to be good news! It also helps us to understand the mission that lies ahead of us.

Discuss:

1. Look again at v. 3. Who is declaring what the results of the mission will be? Where is the voice coming from?

Verse 3 says that there is a loud voice coming from the throne. It's probably safe to assume that it is only God who sits on the throne.

“Whenever you begin a journey it is always good to begin with the end in mind!”

Thus, it is God who declares how the mission will change the world as we know it. It is God who will dwell among us. It is God who will recreate, refresh and renew all that has been broken both in people and in the creation itself. Revelation makes it clear that it is God who does the work and it is God who declares the result. This is God’s mission, his purpose for the world and for all humanity.

2. According to these verses, what will be affected or changed by God’s mission being completed?

Apply:

1. Why do you think it would be important to understand that the mission we are called to in sharing the Gospel is God’s mission and not a human idea? How does that affect the way you think about this mission?
2. When you think about how God plans to restore the world in Revelation 21, how does it make you feel about the mission?

“The Gospel is essential to accomplishing God’s mission, because the Gospel has the power to change everything!”

God reminds us in Revelation 21:5 that it is his mission to “make all things new.” Ultimately, he desires to restore every part of creation to himself. This is God’s mission. The Gospel, which is the good news about what Jesus did on the cross, is the means by which God’s mission will be accomplished. It is through Jesus that all of creation is restored to relationship with God. The Gospel is essential to accomplishing God’s mission, because the Gospel has the power to change everything!

READ: MATTHEW 26:31-35, 47-56

³¹Then Jesus told them, 'This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

³²But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.'

³³Peter replied, 'Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.'

³⁴'Truly I tell you,' Jesus answered, 'this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.'

³⁵But Peter declared, 'Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.' And all the other disciples said the same. . . ⁴⁷While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: 'The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.' ⁴⁹Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him.

⁵⁰Jesus replied, 'Do what you came for, friend.'

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. ⁵¹With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

⁵²'Put your sword back in its place,' Jesus said to him, 'for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.'

⁵³'Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?' ⁵⁴But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?'

⁵⁵In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, 'Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me.'

⁵⁶But this has all taken place that the writing of the prophets might be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples deserted him and fled."

Summarize:

In your own words describe what is happening in this passage of Scripture.

As we see in the passage we just read, despite their protests that they were willing to die with Jesus, when Jesus was arrested those same men ran for their lives. Matthew says they deserted Jesus. It isn't surprising really. They were afraid. What is more surprising is how much these same men changed in just a few weeks.

We know they changed because, well, we have the rest of the New Testament. We know that they came out of hiding. They accepted the mission given to them by Jesus and they spread the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world. And we know from history that eventually every single one of these same men who deserted Jesus would end up dying as martyrs just as they said they would.

Discuss:

1. Why do you think the disciples ran away when Jesus was crucified even though they had spent so much time with Jesus and they promised they would never turn their backs on him?
2. What do you think changed after Jesus rose from the dead? What happened that so drastically affected their lives and their willingness to follow Jesus at any cost?

The truth is we aren't much different than the disciples. We can spend time in church and get to know God. We can hear the story of Jesus and be moved by who he was and how he lived. But apart from a life-changing encounter with the risen Savior, we aren't likely to sacrifice our comfortable way of living to follow Jesus and his mission.

Yet, it's a right understanding of the Gospel that will determine how we are personally shaped and how we respond to those around us. As simple as this sounds, it truly is the foundation of everything we do as followers of Christ. The Gospel is where we start and finish. It changes everything!

So what is the Gospel and what does it mean for us? Simply put: God sent his Son because of the abundant love he has for all people. This is why the word "gospel" literally means "good news," because God's great love is Good News for you and me! The Gospel is the hope for all of humanity. From the beginning, God had a plan to redeem people from their sin. There's nothing you and I can do about our sin problem...absolutely nothing. Simply being a "good person" with moral responsibility isn't good enough, and it never will be. Without some sort of remedy for our sin, we must face the wrath of God and his judgment because our God is perfect and holy and we are not. Thankfully, there is a remedy! The cure is Christ. God sent his one and only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for the sins of all people everywhere. Christ took on the payment we each deserved - death. But that's not where the story ends. Three days after his

death on the cross, Jesus rose from the dead and walked the earth once again. The Bible says that whoever believes in this has been given new life and that person has been born again. Because of grace through faith in his Son, we are counted as children of God and will spend eternity with our Father.

I'll say it again: The Gospel is good news for all people everywhere!
It changes everything!

Apply:

1. What is the difference, for you, in hearing Scripture and attending church vs. having a life-changing encounter with Jesus, the risen Savior? What would be different about the way you live as a follower of Christ if you had a truly life-changing encounter with Jesus?
2. What are the moments or situations in your life that might cause you to want to run and hide as the disciples did?
3. Take some time to share testimonies of how God has changed your life. How has he made you new? What has He done that leaves you feeling in awe or thankful?
4. How can your life group have an encounter with Jesus that would alter the way you function as a group?
5. What would it look like if your group were fully committed to pursuing Jesus and sharing the Gospel at any cost?



Perhaps take some time at the end of the study to share in communion and pray together to thank God for his gracious salvation.

Take it Home:

At home this week, try the following:

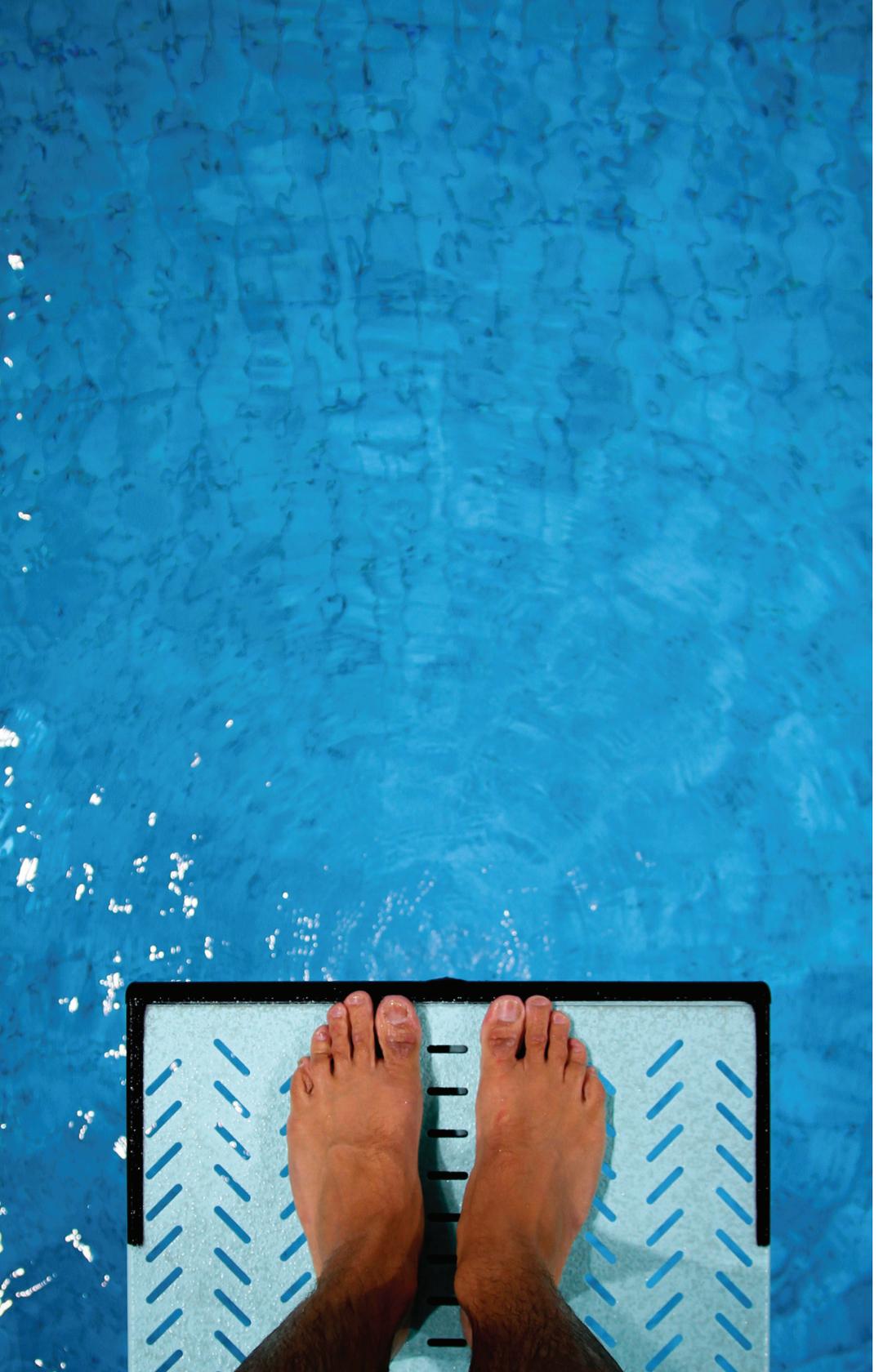
1. Make time for an intentional encounter with Jesus in whatever way you best connect with him.
2. Take a few moments to jot down in a journal any times you felt you particularly connected with Jesus. How did that affect you? What did he say? How did you feel? Did you feel called to act or respond to that encounter in any way?

Plan Ahead:

You'll want to take some time here at the end of your study to plan ahead for the learning experiences coming at weeks 4, 6, and 8. Week 4 is a regular meeting, but will require a little extra time so you'll want to make note of that. Week 6 is an outreach experience and so you'll probably want to skip your regular meeting that week and choose a time over that weekend (if possible) to plan your Missional Experience. And week 8 can take place during a regular meeting, but will require some pre-planning so that you can have dinner together. You can look ahead at each lesson for further information to help you in your planning.



Close group/end meeting.



WEEK 2 - ARE YOU RISK AVERSE?

 Welcome your group/begin meeting.

Discuss:

What does it mean to be risk averse?

The term “risk averse” is used in economics and finance to describe investors who seek to reduce uncertainty in an investment. The idea being, if an investor is presented with two equal investment opportunities, the investor who is risk averse will choose the one that exposes them to less uncertainty.

READ: LUKE 9:57-62

⁵⁷As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, ‘I will follow you wherever you go.’

⁵⁸Jesus replied, ‘Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.’

⁵⁹He said to another man, ‘Follow me.’

But he replied, ‘Lord, first let me go and bury my father.’

⁶⁰Jesus said to him, ‘Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.’

⁶¹Still another said, ‘I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.’

⁶²Jesus replied, ‘No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.’”

Discuss:

Thinking about this idea of risk, as an individual do you tend to be a risk taker or more risk averse? What about your life group? Are you a part of a group that tends to take risk or reduce uncertainty?

Discuss:

1. This isn’t the first time we see people who were with Jesus proclaiming they will follow Jesus no matter what. Jesus responds to them with three statements in Luke 9. Look at v. 58 again. What is Jesus saying here?

Jesus' first statement is fairly straightforward isn't it? He says that while everything in creation has a place to rest, a place to call home, the Son of God does not. This is Jesus' answer to those, who, out of sincere emotion, but probably still out of emotion, proclaim, "I'll follow you anywhere Jesus!" Jesus responds by reminding them that he has no place to truly call home.

2. What is it about this idea of a home that is so significant to us as people?
3. Jesus understands that there is a sense of safety and security for us in having a home, a solid place to lay our heads. There's a sense of certainty around the idea that we always have this one place. Why do you think, then, that Jesus chooses to remind the man that he has no home? What does that imply about following Jesus?
4. In v. 59, Luke tells us that Jesus calls another to follow him and that man requests to bury his father first. How does Jesus respond to this request in v. 60? What do you think he means?

When we read this statement from Jesus it may sound quite harsh to us. Even if we agree that following Jesus and sharing the Gospel are important, we might struggle to understand why Jesus would be so harsh in the face of someone's grief. However, it's important to understand the language being used here. To us, it sounds like a recent death and an imminent funeral, but, in reality, the man may not necessarily be saying my father just died and I want to go bury him. In this time, they would not have had the types of preserving techniques that we use today. A death and burial such as this would have taken two days at most. It's unlikely Jesus would have tried to stop someone from taking two days for a funeral. What is more likely is the man's father was alive and well and the man was simply saying, let me wait until my father dies. Once he dies and I can bury him; then, I'll come follow you.

5. In light of that, what was the man really saying about his intention to follow Jesus?
6. What do you think this statement from Jesus in v. 60 implies about following him?
7. Read v. 61-62 again and describe what's happening here. Do you think Jesus' issue with the person is really that he/she wants to say goodbye to their family? If not, what do you think is at issue?

Again, this appears to be a harsh statement from Jesus about forsaking family to follow him. And certainly, in both of these cases there are family members who are being left behind in the midst of this call. But I don't think the real issue is the desire to love and care for your family. I think there are two issues at play here. First, look once more at what the person says in v. 61, "...but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." This was someone who had already left home to follow Jesus and then decided to go back. Surely, they could have said goodbye before choosing to follow. Jesus isn't questioning the right to say goodbye, he's questioning the person's genuine commitment to the mission.

“*Matthew 6:33, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*”

The second issue at play can be seen in both of the last two statements. In both cases, the person responds with a "...but let me first..." One commentator has pointed out that there is something revealing about these words. The heart of the speaker seems to be more focused on "me first," which is not the heart of the Gospel.¹ In fact, it is just the opposite according to Matthew 6:33, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Matthew reminds the believer in that passage that all the worries of this world should come second to our pursuit of Jesus and his mission. But Matthew encourages the believer by reminding us that we need not worry about "all these things" - ie, where we will live, what we will eat, what will happen to our family - because our heavenly Father knows our needs and he will provide. (For further encouragement in this area, read all of Matthew 6.)

8. Considering the 3 responses of Jesus, can you summarize what Jesus is saying is necessary for those who would follow him?

Jesus basically says that to follow him you:

- Can't be risk averse
- Can't be full of excuses
- Can't be noncommittal

¹ Smith, Chuck. Blue Letter Bible Commentary. Accessed on May 14, 2017. https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/smith_chuck/c2000_Luk/Luk_009.cfm?a=982059.

Making the Connection:

Last week, we discussed that Jesus' call to the disciples was an invitation to a personal encounter with the risen Savior. It was an invitation to personal relationship. This is the message of the Gospel. This week, we are reminded that the next step in this journey is an invitation by Jesus to count the cost - to consider the life to which he has truly called us. We are challenged by Jesus to consider what it means to be one of his disciples.

Apply:

1. This could be a hard lesson for some to consider. Yet, it seems very important to Jesus that each person count the cost of the mission he's called you to. Why do you think this is so important?



2. Which of those three areas is most difficult for you (ie, risk averse, full of excuses, noncommittal)?

3. What would it look like for you to begin to challenge yourselves as a group in these areas? How can you help one another to identify your struggles and begin to grow in that area?



4. Think about God's call for you to love your neighbors - those that you interact with where you live, work, and play. What is one risk you could take this week, as a group or as individuals, toward fulfilling this call?

Take it Home:

At home this week, try the following:

1. Make a list of the types of objections you might make if Jesus stood before you and gave his call to follow him.
2. Take time to think about the people God has placed in your life where you live, work, and play. How will you take a risk this week to love the people God has placed in your life? Make a plan for something specific you will do this week.

Plan Ahead:

Take a few minutes before you close your meeting to go through the Missional Experience Kit with your group. Make note of scheduling and anything that might need to be planned ahead.



Close group/end meeting.



WEEK 3 - WHAT IS THE MISSION?

 Welcome your group/begin meeting.

Discuss:

When was the last time you had to learn how to do something? What did you learn? How did you learn it? When did you feel like you knew enough that you could teach it to someone else?

READ: MATTHEW 28:16-20

¹⁶Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

Summarize:

Explain what's happening in this passage in your own words.

Discuss:

1. Look again at v. 17. How do the disciples respond when they see Jesus?
2. The Greek word in v. 17 that is translated as "doubted" could also be translated as "hesitated." Why do you think some of the disciples still doubted or hesitated in that moment?
3. How does Jesus respond to the doubt and hesitation of some? What does he do?

I think it's important to pause here for a moment to consider this. We often read this passage focusing only on the mission that Jesus gives his disciples and we miss this important interaction that comes before. We know that these same disciples would go on to found the church and change the world.

It's exciting! In the midst of that, it can be lost that at the start of this new mission, some had doubts, fears, and hesitations. They weren't all as sure about it as we might think. And yet, we should notice that *Jesus calls them anyway!* Doubt and hesitation did not disqualify them from being used by God. They were not exempt from the mission. Following Jesus' way of life always comes with a mission!

“*You are a missionary.*”



This mission defines an important part of your identity as a follower of Jesus. You are a missionary.

As believers, we've been given a new life, a new identity, and a new purpose (Col. 3:3, Gal. 2:20, Matt. 28:19). As followers of Jesus, we are all called to make disciples as missionaries. The main difference between the family that moves to Haiti to reach people groups there and the person that is part of a life group in their church is that the family in Haiti has understood and accepted their identity as missionaries. For those of us in a Life Group, we have an opportunity to redefine what it means to be a part of the local church right where we live. We have the opportunity to understand the identity that we have as followers of Jesus.

4. Now take another look at v. 19-20. What is it exactly that Jesus calls them to do? What is the mission?
5. Jesus commanded them to do several things, but let's look specifically at this command to "make disciples." What do you think it means to make a disciple? What is a disciple?

“*Discipleship is a continual process of learning.*”

The word "disciple" literally means "follower" or "student." A disciple is one who learns. In ancient Judaism, theological training happened when a young man would choose a teacher that he wanted to learn from. He would become a disciple of that rabbi. He would follow him, quite literally going where the rabbi went and listening to his teachings so that he could learn from him. This process of discipleship would take many years. What is interesting about this is a disciple is one who is learning - not one who already knows the answers. Discipleship is a continual process of learning.

6. How does that understanding of what a disciple is affect what you think Jesus was commanding when he said to “go and make disciples?”

These are the famous last words from Jesus to the disciples before ascending into Heaven. It's the command many of us hear from our pastors telling us that this is the call for you and me... only to be left to wonder how to actually do it. There are many different models and ideas of what discipleship looks like. Many churches offer classes and curriculum for each of us to learn more about Christ and his call. Others practice a more life-on-life apprenticeship.



In missionally-driven discipleship, the focus is on relationships. This way of making disciples is similar to what we see Jesus doing in Scripture. Take a minute and look at what is said about the moment when Jesus calls Matthew to follow him in Matthew 9:9-13.

READ: MATTHEW 9:9-13

⁹“As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. ‘Follow me,’ he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

¹⁰While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’

¹²On hearing this, Jesus said, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ¹³But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Jesus simply says to Matthew, “Follow me.” At best, we can assume that they were hardly more than acquaintances at this point since it says Jesus walked up to him at the tax collector’s booth. Later that night, Matthew tells us that he invited some dinner guests over to eat with Jesus. We can also assume that the Son of God spoke to them in profound ways and pointed them to the kingdom. Matthew has entered into a relationship, perhaps even a spiritual relationship, with Jesus before fully understanding or committing his life to the teaching of Jesus. He has not necessarily believed in the Christ at this point. And yet, Matthew became a disciple the moment Jesus invited Matthew to begin sharing life with him.

7. One last thing to consider. Look again at Matthew 28:20. What is the very last thing that Jesus tells the disciples? Why do you think this would have been an important thing for them to know?

Jesus' reminder that he is with them always helps the disciples to understand 2 things:

1. The mission that Jesus is giving them will not be easy. In fact, it will be so difficult that they will not be able to do it on their own!
2. They are not alone in the mission! Jesus is reminding them that he will be with them - as he has always been with them.



Making the Connection:

We began this journey with the understanding that following Jesus changes everything about the way that we live. Last week, we considered some of those changes and the challenges that can come with living life his way. This week, we are reminded that Jesus still calls us to be his disciples and he promises to be with us as we follow him.

Apply:

1. When you think about Jesus' command to make disciples does it sometimes fill you with doubt or hesitation? If so, talk about what some of those might be for you?



2. How has your view of discipleship changed from this discussion? What do you think it might look like to make disciples today the way that Jesus did?



3. Think about your life group, what doubts or hesitations do you have about embracing this call to be a group on mission? Do you think it's possible to reorient what you think your purpose is for existing as a life group?



4. What are some things your group has done in the past to connect with non-Christians and "make disciples?" Do you think any of those things will need to be done differently in the future? What new ideas does this conversation spark for your group?

Take it Home:

At home this week, try the following:

1. Spend a little time journaling. Consider the types of doubts or hesitations that you might face that hold you back from fully committing to making disciples. Also, consider the times in your life where you have seen God show up in your life. Where have you seen that Jesus has truly been with you on your journey?
2. Jesus' introduction to Matthew and his friends began with a dinner invite. Is there someone this week that you could invite over for a meal? Or perhaps someone you could grab lunch with at work? Or a person you could grab coffee with on a break?

Plan Ahead:

Be sure to remind your group that next week's study will take extra time. And don't forget to be finalizing the details for your outreach experience, which is coming up in just three more weeks!



Close group/end meeting.



WEEK 4 - PRAYER AND DISCERNMENT EXPERIENCE

(2 HOURS)

Objective:

Create an atmosphere of dependence on God so that you can hear the Spirit's voice and understand your missional pursuit.

 Welcome your group/begin meeting.

STUDY THE WORD (30MINS)

Discuss:

We are all in pursuit of something. Whether it's in our dreams, careers, or families, each of us has something we desire to accomplish or achieve. Share with the group something you are currently pursuing or desire to pursue.

READ: LUKE 10:1-12

¹After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ²He told them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. ³Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. ⁴Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

⁵When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' ⁶If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. ⁷Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

⁸When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. ⁹Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ¹⁰But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ¹¹'Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.' ¹²I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

Summarize:

Describe what is happening in these verses.

As we see in this Scripture, Jesus is now preparing to send his team on mission. He calls 72 of his disciples and prepares them for what lies ahead. He even gives them specific instructions about how to carry out the mission.

Discuss:

1. Where and to whom is Jesus sending the disciples?
2. What does Jesus tell them to do when they go into each place?

Before we can begin a life on mission with God, it's important to know "who" and "where" he's called each of us both individually and collectively as a group. Jesus was strategic. He knew ahead of time the places he planned to visit and purposely sent his disciples to pursue these specific people in these towns. Jesus knew he would be entering those towns and engaging with those people. He knew he was already going to be at work there. So he sent the disciples ahead so they could join in with the work he was going to do.

“What if Jesus is calling us to pursue the people that are already in our lives where you live, work, or play?”

A few weeks back we were reminded that the word "gospel" comes from a Greek word that means "good news." There are specific people God has placed in our pathways so that we might share the good news! This is true not only of the people we already know, but also of the people that God is preparing to bring across our paths in the future. There will be specific people throughout our lives in whom God is already at work. We are invited to join in the work that God is doing by sharing his great good news. The question is **who** are these people? What if Jesus is calling us to pursue the people that are already in our lives where you live, work, or play?

Just as the disciples were clearly sent to the towns where they ministered, now we must ask ourselves, who are the people that God is calling us to reach out to in relationship? In other words, WHO is our missional pursuit? Over the next hour or so, we want to invite you into God's presence. We will spend time in prayer both as a group and as individuals. We'll also be asking God to illuminate to us those people he's calling us to pursue. We are really expecting the Holy Spirit to speak to you through this experience.

PRAY TOGETHER (20 MINS)

As a group, pray in the three areas discussed below. If you're not sure what to pray, a good practice is to use Scripture and pray that back to God. Just speak openly and honestly with God about whatever the Spirit brings to your heart.

Ask for Forgiveness

- **Sin** - Take this time to confess and repent the ways in which you haven't taken it seriously to live out the great commission.

ROMANS 3:23

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

PSALM 51:1-2, 10-12,

"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from sin. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."

- **Lack of faith/fear** - Confess and repent areas where you have lacked faith in God's word or fear the challenges of following him. Begin to declare, instead, faith in his promises and what he has declared to be true.

MATTHEW 14:28-33

"'Lord, if it's you,' Peter replied, 'tell me to come to you on the water.'"

'Come,' he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, Save me!'

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?'

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'"

1 JOHN 4:16-19

“And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us.

Adoration

- ***Praise/worship*** - Glorify him for all his goodness, thank him for what he's done for you, praise him for bringing his kingdom to earth.

PSALM 150

“Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with timbral and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.”

PSALM 145

“I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—and I will meditate on your wonderful works. They tell of the power of your awesome works—and I will proclaim your great deeds. They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness. The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. All your works praise you, Lord; your faithful people extol you. They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does. The Lord upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. The Lord is

righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them. The Lord watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.”

Pray for Workers

- ***Prayer for workers*** - Ask God to change the hearts of his people that you might respond to the needs of those who need to hear the good news of Jesus.

LUKE 10:2

“He told them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’”

INDIVIDUAL DISCERNMENT (30 MINS)



Find a quiet space where you can be alone with God for the next half hour.



During this time, listen to the whispers of God's Spirit speaking to you.

As a group, we just came before the Lord and asked forgiveness, gave him praise, and prayed for workers as he instructed us to. Now is the time, like Isaiah, to answer the call:

ISAIAH 6:8

"Then I heard the Lord asking, "Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?" I said, "Here I am. Send me."

As we begin to think about who God is calling us to share the good news with, consider looking first at these three areas: Passions, Places, and People.

Passions:

Think about this for a moment: What specific passions do you have? What are the specific passions in your life that you are currently pursuing OR what is it that you desire to pursue? (Examples: Graduate, do a triathlon, learn to play the guitar, own your own business, etc.)

Write them down below.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Pray: Within your passions, what opportunities may exist to share the good news with those who don't yet know Jesus? ***Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate specific opportunities to you.*** (Example: If you have a desire to get healthy by participating in a triathlon, consider the workout friends of yours who don't know Christ's love that you can invite to train with you.)

Write down any opportunities that came to mind as you prayed:

1.

2.

Places:

You may need your calendar out for this one. Think about the places you go every week or every month consistently. Where do you spend the majority of your time each week? Is it in an office? At home? At the gym? At school? Is it coaching your kid's baseball team? Serving the church? Perhaps, it's a combination of them all. ***In addition to your passions, perhaps consider the places you spend the majority of your time as your mission field/missional pursuit.***

The majority of my time is spent here:

I also spend a large portion of my time at these places:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Pray: Now that you have identified the places where you spend the majority of your time, think about the opportunities within those places and how you can form deeper relationships with people. ***Pray now and ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate how you can be more intentional in each of these places, particularly in the ones where you spend a majority of your time.***

Write down any opportunities that came to mind as you prayed:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

People:

Finally, now that you've taken a look at your passions (both current and future) and the places where you spend your time, it's time to look at the people within those areas.

When you think about making disciples as a command, it can be a bit intimidating. The reality is that the pressure is never on you to "convert" someone to Christianity. In John 5:17, Jesus said "The Father is always working, and so am I." God is at work in people's lives everywhere, so your role is simply to pray for and share the good news as you form relationships with them. This should ultimately take the pressure off of you, because it is God that draws people near to himself.

Pray: Ask God *who* it is that he is drawing to himself. ***Ask the Spirit to illuminate those people within your passions and places God has for you to connect with.*** As anyone comes to mind, write their names here. If you don't know their name, simply describe them.

Write them down below:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

DEBRIEF WITH GROUP (40MINS)

Do not be discouraged if you did not fill out the form as much as you would have liked. We believe this is a process and that God will continue to illuminate new people within your passions and places this coming week and beyond.

Discuss:

1. What did God speak to you?
2. In your places and passions, what opportunities is God inviting you into where you might have an opportunity to share the good news?
3. Share with the group a person that God placed on your heart. As you close, pray for these people by name.



Take it Home:

At home this week, try the following:

On our website (leapgroups.org), we have created a tool that can help you expand your thought process on your missional pursuit list. This tool will help you to not only identify who is in your missional pursuit, but also to note the places where you know each person/family from and the next steps in building a relationship. It can be a good visual reminder of the missional pursuit God is calling you to.

To find this and other helpful resources go to the Resources tab at leapgroups.org.

Plan Ahead:

Don't forget your Missional Experience is in just two weeks. In light of tonight's discussion around missional pursuit, consider who might be a part of your pursuit as a group or as individuals that might be appropriate to invite to this event. Be sure that you get out your invites in the next few days (if you haven't already). This is a good time to be sure that each person in your group has been assigned something they will be responsible for and to double check that all your bases are covered for planning.



Close group/end meeting.



WEEK 5 - LIVING THE DREAM

 Welcome your group/begin meeting. Perhaps begin this week by asking your group if God continued to add people to their missional pursuit throughout the week?

Discuss:

Share about a time when you received really good service or hospitality. What did you experience? How did it make you feel? How did you feel about the place and/or people who gave you that experience?

Making the Connection:

A couple years ago my brother and I took my nieces to Disneyland for two days. We stayed for a night at one of the Disneyland hotels. The slogan always reminds us that Disney is the “happiest place on earth.” I sometimes laugh at these types of marketing slogans, but my one night at that Disney hotel made me realize that sometimes it’s not just marketing - it’s culture. I had never felt so welcomed or so special at a hotel before. Our every need was attended with kindness. We were offered little extras with a wink and a smile as if we were special and the only ones to receive such treatment. I could go on and on about the service and kindness of the people at the hotel. Why does this stand out to me? Because Walt Disney spent his life building a place where fairytales would come to life, where people of all ages could “live the dream.”

We’ve spent the last few weeks considering how Jesus’ call would change our lives and require us to take risks. In week 3, we had our first glimpse of the actual mission that Jesus has called us to and last week we spent some time discerning the specific people we feel God is leading us to connect with. Today, we will continue our journey to unpack what the mission looks like. I believe that what we will discover is that much as Disneyland brings a dream to life, our Christian community has the ability to bring to life the kingdom of God on earth. Though God’s kingdom is not a dream - it can, at times, feel that way in this difficult world. Yet, perhaps it does not have to be that way.

READ: ACTS 2:42-47

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

Discuss:

1. Describe what this community of Christ followers looked like. What did they do together?
2. Look again at v. 46. How often did they meet together at the temple or in homes? Do you think this is significant?



The idea here is not to suggest that we must all be with other followers of Christ every single day. The idea is to recognize the intentional rhythms of their lives. This was a group of people who were on mission together and the only way to be on mission together is to BE together! There's a lot of prioritizing and intentionality that goes into a group of people choosing to be together in regular rhythms. It doesn't happen by accident.

3. How do you think these intentional rhythms affected the way they interacted when they were in community?

The passage says that they had everything in common; that they shared with those who were in need; that they rejoiced together. It's likely that they knew one another's needs because they were regularly together. That time together allowed them to build trusting relationships in which they could share openly. It's easier for a group of people to share common love for one another and for God's mission when they are together and in relationship. Intentional rhythms of community would seem to keep people encouraged, supported, and from feeling alone or wandering off.

4. What does the passage say was the result of their way of living (see v. 47)?

READ: MATTHEW 5:3-16

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

¹³You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

In his teachings, Jesus often described the kingdom of God. He took much time to give an image of what it would look like to live in his kingdom. He also took time to try to help people understand what it would look like to live his way and bring his kingdom to earth. He didn't promise it would be easy, but he does remind us that it would set a group of people apart. They would be noticed if they lived this way.

“*Maybe, there is something irresistible about a group of people “living the dream.”*”

5. Consider that early church community in Acts 2 in light of what is said in Matthew 5. Why do you think so many people were attracted to that Acts 2 community of Christians? What was it about living that way that would draw so many to want to be a part of it?

 It seems that the Acts 2 church was living out Jesus' teaching from Matthew 5. Their daily rhythms of community allowed them to, "let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." Perhaps, there is just something inspiring about seeing the kingdom brought to life in community. Maybe, there is something irresistible about a group of people "living the dream."

Apply:

-  1. How much time in your week do you spend in intentional community with your Life Group? What do you think healthy, intentional rhythms would be?
-  2. Do you keep your Christian and non-Christian friends compartmentalized? What would it look like to include your friends who don't yet know Jesus into kingdom community?
-  3. Think about your life group, how does your group model Acts 2 community? Where is there room to grow and improve?
-  4. Does your group have healthy rhythms where non-Christians are included and welcomed into your community in comfortable ways? Why/Why not?
-  5. What would it look like to create spaces within your group where non-Christians could be included? What kinds of things could your group do to make this happen?

Take it Home:

-  At home this week, try the following:
 1. Think about the Christian community that you have within your Life Group. Are you involved? Do you hold back or keep parts of your life separate? Are you fully engaged and pouring into a healthy community? Take some time to journal what it would look like for you to be more open to living out Acts 2 community.
 -  2. Last week you were encouraged to invite someone over for dinner. Could you do it two weeks in a row? Could you invite 4-5 people over (some Christian and some not) to spend time together over a meal?

Plan Ahead:

Remind your group that your Missional Experience is next week! If you have changed your Life Group schedule for this event, be sure everyone is clear about the event date/time/location as well as when you're next meeting for your regular Life Group.

Also, keep in mind that your Family Dinner Experience will be coming up in 3 weeks. If you won't be meeting next week, you may want to go over any planning that needs to be done ahead of time, this week.



Close group/end meeting.



WEEK 6 - MISSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Objective:

To get a taste of what it would be like to be on mission together as a life group. Through this activity you can experience how to connect with neighbors and friends and how easy it can be to build new relationships.



Using Your Missional Experience Kit

If you chose to add on the Missional Experience Kit when you purchased your study (or if your study came in a Life Group Pack) then, inside the kit you will find all of the materials you'll need to plan this event with your group. There is a checklist that you can use to step you through each part of the planning from a month before to the week of. Be intentional so that every person or family in your group has a meaningful way to contribute and help with the planning, organization or activities of your event! Everyone should feel some ownership of what you choose to do.

During your last meeting before your event, be sure to go over the “why” section of your kit. Talk together as a group about why we do these events. The information provided in the “why” section of your kit will help guide you in this conversation.

It would also be good to include a time of prayer for the event each week in your study. Keep in mind that this is an important part of your journey as a group and weekly prayer as a group and as individuals is essential.

Creating Your Own Missional Experience

If you did not purchase the Missional Experience Kit, not to worry! You have two options! The first option, is just to hop over to our website and purchase one now. Kits can be purchased individually and will be shipped out right to you. If you decide to do this, just delay your Missional Experience by a week and skip ahead to the next lesson. To purchase a kit just go to leapgroups.org and check the Resources tab.

Your second option is to simply organize your own Missional Experience without the kit. We don't want you to skip this important learning experience and we want to see you succeed in your missional journey so below we will outline the basics of what you need to know to plan your Missional Experience.

The Basics of Planning

1. Choose your event, date, location, activities
 - You can host a BBQ, dinner party, game night, or any other type of party that you might like to invite friends and neighbors to.
 - Be sure to secure a location if not using your own home. Check with your community or HOA about using public community spaces. Or use a local park nearby!
2. Plan food and give out invites
 - Be sure to ask those you invite to bring something (ie, main dish, side dish, tables or chairs). This will make them feel included and needed for your event.
 - Be sure your invites state all needed info. and provide a way for people to RSVP to let you know if they will attend.
 - You'll want to give out your invites about 2 weeks before your event and, if possible, hand them out personally. Introduce yourself (if you haven't already met) and let them know you're hosting a party to get to know your neighbors better (or to get to know your work colleagues or classmates better...wherever you know them from!).
3. Host your event!
 - Be sure you've gathered all the items you'll need for your event (ie, tables, chairs, grills, coolers, EZ-up, signs, decorations, lawn games, etc.).
 - Invite some friends from your Life Group or church group to join you on the day so they can help you with the event so you are free to host and mingle with your guests.
 - Be yourself and be friendly!
 - Once everyone has arrived, take a couple minutes to welcome everyone and let them know why you wanted to organize this event. Remember, you're not trying to put on a "Christian" event, you're there to form relationships!

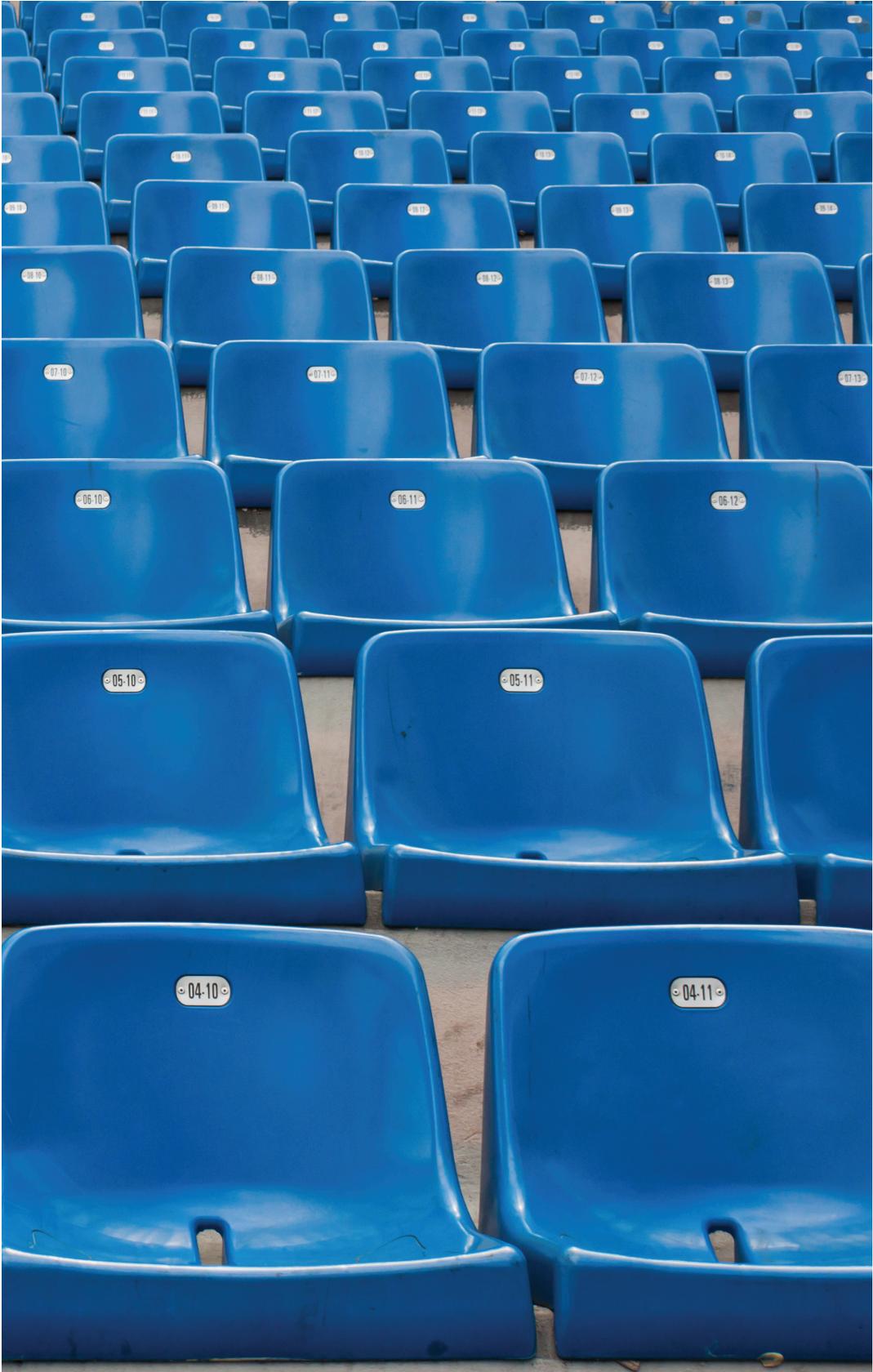
- You could have an ice breaker prepared for the start of the event just to give everyone a chance to say hello and get to know one another.
- Be sure to linger with your guests until everyone has left.

DON'T SKIP IT!!

There could be a temptation to skip this! Don't do it!! Yes, we know that life gets busy. Things are hectic. It's difficult to imagine how to fit in one more thing. But be intentional. THIS is the most important piece of your LEAP journey from Life Group to Life on Mission! You need to actually GO on mission! This one experience is not all that's involved with living life on mission, but it's an important first step. Without doing this experience, you're just doing another Bible study.

“THIS is the most important piece of your LEAP journey from Life Group to Life on Mission!”

So, be encouraged. Be excited. Make a plan and go for it! Then, send us a note and let us know how it went! We'd love to hear your stories. And if you have an idea for how to make your experience even better, share that too! Send your e-mail to info@fiduciacomunity.com.



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WEEK 7 - DON'T JUST ADD - MULTIPLY!

 Welcome your group/begin meeting.

Discuss:

Share a story about someone who left a significant impact on your life that enabled you to step into a new area of calling in your life. Perhaps it was someone who invested time in you, someone who trained you and helped you learn a new skill, or someone who recognized something in you before you did.

Read:

Have your group split into pairs and each pair choose a passage of Scripture from the ones below. Have each pair read the Scripture together. (**Note: Some have long passages or whole books. Just read a couple chapters to get the idea of the story...the rest can be read later for further study!**) Then, come back together and have each pair describe who are the people in the story? Who is the leader and who is the one being mentored or developed? What else do you see about their relationship?

Exodus 18 (Jethro and Moses)

Deuteronomy 31 & 34 (Moses and Joshua)

1 Kings 19 & 2 Kings 2 (Elijah and Elisha)

Ruth 1-4 (Naomi and Ruth)

Luke 1 (Elizabeth and Mary)

Acts 4, 9, & 11 (Barnabas and Paul)

Acts 16, Philippians 2, 1 & 2 Timothy (Paul and Timothy)

Discuss:

1. Consider the mentoring relationships you've just discussed. What was the result of those relationships? What did each person who was mentored go on to do in the future?
2. How do you think the mentoring relationship affected their ability to lead and/or serve God in the future?

3. What are some of the other ways these people could have been prepared for the mission God was calling them to? How do you think mentoring relationships differ from other ways of learning, growing, and preparing for mission? What are the strengths and weaknesses?
4. Did those who were mentored go on to do the same for anyone else? What does that tell you about their experience with being trained and disciplined in this kind of relationship?

“*This isn't a loss of community, it's about growing the community.*”

One of the most challenging questions that comes up in Life Groups is whether or not the group should stay together or multiply. Some churches give vision for life groups to stay together for just a season, while others encourage a life-long strategy. Not often do we see the vision to multiply. When we talk about multiplication, let's be clear from the beginning, we are not referring to adding other followers of Jesus to your group and eventually morphing into two (although this happens). Rather, when we think about multiplying, we are actually referring to those that are far from God forming a new group with a leader raised up from your life group. Or perhaps, it's those who are far from God getting plugged into your group and as you grow too large, you eventually morph into two groups with a newly raised up leader. As stated earlier, we are called by Jesus to be “fishers of people.” So how do we do this in group life and does it apply to my group? ***Those are the questions we need to wrestle with.***



What we need is a culture shift! We need to begin to recognize that our life groups exist not only for the sake of our personal community and enjoyment, but also for expanding the kingdom and reaching those far from God. This isn't a loss of community, it's about growing the community. The natural step of going from Life Group to Life on Mission is that as our group grows, new leaders will need to be mentored, trained and, eventually, sent out to continue to grow the community of faith. It is a beautiful cycle of new life that God promises to all those who follow him.

Apply:

1. Take some time to process the idea of multiplication. What do you think about it? What do you see as a benefit of multiplication? What do you worry about?

2. What would it look like for your group to begin to be intentional in living out multiplication? What are some ways to begin to empower others within your group to take on leadership roles?



3. Take some time as a group to recognize a gifting or leadership quality of each member of your group. As you call that out, take a moment to pray over one another. (If your group is small, you can do this all together or, for times' sake, you can split into groups of 2 or 3.)

Although they were not referred to as a Life Group or small group, the original 12 disciples could be considered this as they followed Jesus. They ate together, they studied the Scriptures together, and they even partied together. They shared life! But, imagine if Jesus hadn't shown them this new way of living on mission. Imagine if he hadn't commanded them to go and multiply themselves in Matthew 28. Imagine if instead he had said, "Now therefore stay together and study the Scriptures together. And know that I'm with you until the end of the age." This would have led to a completely different outcome. His disciples would not have risked everything they had to tell the world about him. I'm not sure that I'd be writing this or if you'd be reading this if that were the message he left them with. But it wasn't the message. He told them to "go and make disciples." Or in other words, "Go and multiply yourselves."

This set the disciples on a mission that would change the world.

“*Sometimes the most important thing you can do is just begin.*”

Taking a Baby Step:

In this section we want to help your group think through some of the small steps you can take to begin creating a culture of multiplication within your Life Group. Even if you are not the one leading the group, it will be helpful for you to understand the way multiplication works. And, one day, God may give you an opportunity to lead a group of your own and this will be a good foundation in preparation of that time.

Sometimes the most important thing you can do is just begin, just take one small step. A child doesn't go from immobile to running overnight. There's a process of rolling over, scooting, crawling, hanging on to things, tentative steps, and lots of falls along the way. Neither will your group suddenly multiply overnight.

This will be a process. But it's good to know that this is the intent and heart of discipleship as Jesus modeled it for you. It should be your goal. With that in mind, here are some steps you can begin to take to prepare you as you make the LEAP from *Life Group to Life on Mission!*



1. Discuss with your group the maximum size you want to grow before you send out a new set of leaders to plant another group (remember, growth should come as a result of people who are far from God joining you and not just more Christians joining your group!).
2. Discuss ways others can take opportunities to lead or have more ownership within the group's activities. How can each person's gifts be used beginning today?



3. Sometimes the best place to find new leaders is simply identifying the willing. These willing group members can be trained up with the proper equipping. The group leader(s) should identify a few members who God may be ready to use in leadership. Discuss whether there are any who may already be sensing that God is calling them to step up and lead, either within the group or by forming a new group in the future (or both!).

Looking ahead: What does multiplication look like?

The biggest trouble we see in multiplying groups is knowing when and how to do it. There's a few ways it typically plays out. Use these as examples for when you are ready to multiply:

1. A group member is very actively engaging with people far from God and intentionally building relationship with them. They are eventually invited to start a Bible study all together. The leader leaves his/her life group and starts shepherding this new group of people as they grow toward God. In this instance, and if possible, it is recommended that another person (or couple) from the Life Group join this person as this new group is beginning. This will serve both as leadership development as well as strong Christian support. This will also position the group to multiply again in the future. By the way, new Christians historically have the most zeal when it comes to sharing their faith story early on. Encourage this behavior and be ready to multiply again soon after. Be encouraged, you are making disciples!

2. A few people are added to a Life Group and the group has outgrown the ability for everyone to be shepherded or it's simply outgrown all available meeting places. Hopefully, at this point someone in the group is ready to lead. The most important thing here is morphing the group in a way that makes the most sense. Perhaps you can group by geography, age demographic, or life stage of the family. Or maybe it's a combination. Whatever the case, the most important thing when multiplying is making sure that everyone is recommitting to the mission and to the newly formed groups. Keeping the kingdom and God's mission at the forefront will make multiplying easier, even when a new leader who has a different personality or different gifts joins the group.

Always, always have a plan to develop new leaders and multiplying will become much more attainable over the long haul. For more instruction on how to multiply and gain some tools on developing new leaders, consider going through LEAP training. Go to leapgroups.org for more information.

Take it Home:

At home this week, try the following:

1. What are your thoughts about multiplication? Are you convinced? Take some time to journal about what you've learned, how you've been challenged, and how you're feeling.
2. Take some time to consider if God is calling you to step up in leadership. If so, where might he be calling you to lead or in what capacity?
3. Want to take it one step further? If you know that God is calling you to step up in leadership, contact your Life Group leader or pastor and let them know you're willing! Find out how you can begin to lead.

Plan Ahead:

Remind your group that next week is the final week of the study and your Family Dinner. Be sure everyone knows how you are doing the food and note if there's any time or location change for your meeting.

Close group/end meeting.



WEEK 8 - FAMILY DINNER ASSESSMENT EXPERIENCE

Objective:

To experience what a rhythm of regular assessment and community dinner can be like for your Life Group. To reflect on what you've learned throughout this study and consider what your next steps are in going from a *Life Group to Life on Mission*.

Welcome your group/begin meeting.

Begin with a Meal: You may wish to add an additional hour to your group meeting this week so you have time to have dinner together. Begin your meeting with a meal! To the best of your ability, try to have everyone eat together at the same table or at least in the same area.

To keep costs low, we suggest a potluck style meal where everyone can contribute, but feel free to take whatever approach you decide. This is a great way for your group members to begin expressing their hospitality gifts.

“N. T. Wright said, “When Jesus himself wanted to explain to his disciples what his forthcoming death was all about, he didn’t give them a theory, he gave them a meal.”

This time together over dinner should be aimed both at *fellowship* and at *reflection*. Intentionally, make time to talk through the journey your group has been through together and discuss what you've learned.



Talk about how your Missional Experience went; discuss what you've learned and how you've been changed. What new relationships have been formed - both inside and outside your group? Share stories of new connections with people that are far from God that you'd like the group praying for.

As you finish eating, gather together as a group for a final time of reflecting on God's Word. If you have dessert prepared, this would be a great place to enjoy it and transition into the short study.



Discuss:

Have there been specific times when sharing meals with others has significantly impacted your relationship with them?

READ: MATTHEW 26:17-30

¹⁷“On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?’

¹⁸He replied, ‘Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’” ¹⁹So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

²⁰When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. ²¹And while they were eating, he said, ‘Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.’

²²They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, ‘Surely you don’t mean me, Lord?’

²³Jesus replied, ‘The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But owe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.’

²⁵Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, ‘Surely you don’t mean me, Rabbi?’

Jesus answered, ‘You have said so.’

²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’

²⁷Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.’

³⁰When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”

Discuss:

1. What two meals are represented in this passage? (Hint: Think OT and NT coming together)
2. What elements does Jesus use from the Passover meal that have become a part of the communion meal that we now celebrate? Do you think these were unusual elements of a meal or a common place part of many meals?

Notice that at the Last Supper Jesus chose bread and wine. These were everyday items. Jesus took some of the most ordinary parts of a meal, something he knew they would eat almost every day and he attached an invitation to remember him.

3. What significance do you see from Jesus' choosing such ordinary items as a means for the disciples to remember him and his sacrifice? What is the significance that this time of remembrance is placed around a meal?

N. T. Wright said, "When Jesus himself wanted to explain to his disciples what his forthcoming death was all about, he didn't give them a theory, he gave them a meal."¹ Eating together held powerful significance in Jesus' ministry. It wasn't simply a place to refuel out of necessity, but it was a moment of connection where the new kingdom of God began to take shape in visible ways.

READ: MATTHEW 11:18-19

¹⁸"For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.'"

¹⁹"The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is proved right by her deeds."

Discuss:

1. Jesus received criticism for the type of ministry he was doing among people. What was it exactly that he did that made people so angry? Why do you think this angered them so much?

“Perhaps before we invite people to Jesus or invite them to church, we should invite them to dinner.”

To look at just one example, look at Matthew 9:1-11. Here Jesus angers the Pharisees, those who grew up in the faith, because he ate with tax collectors and sinners. There are other stories of Jesus eating with those the world would shun.

¹ Wright, N.T. *Simply Jesus: A New Vision of Who He Was, What He Did, and Why He Matters* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 180.

It wasn't only Jesus who understood the significance of a meal. Those who ate with Jesus, and those who did not, recognized that something new was happening here. This was not how things had always been done. This was something new. This was the kingdom of God coming close. This was divinity taking on flesh and blood and sitting down to a meal with broken, sinful people. This was unlike anything that had been done before.

2. How might the kingdom of God be revealed in a meal among Jesus and sinners?

In an article for Dallas Theological Seminary, Dr. Barry Jones writes, "I'm convinced that our dinner tables have the potential to be the most 'missional' places in all of our lives. Perhaps before we invite people to Jesus or invite them to church, we should invite them to dinner. If table fellowship is a spiritual discipline that is vital for shaping and sustaining our life with God for the world, we need to make a point to share our tables with people who are in our lives but far from God. This was one of the most distinctive aspects of Jesus' ministry."²

Discuss:

1. Does this idea of eating with others who are far from God excite you or scare you? Discuss with the group.



Apply:

1. Who do you know in your life that you could begin to connect with in relationship over a meal?



Close group/end meeting.

² Jones, Barry. The Dinner Table as a Place of Connection, Brokenness and Blessing. Accessed on July 6, 2017. <http://www.dts.edu/read/a-place-at-the-table-jones-barry/>.



BONUS DISCUSSION: WHAT COMES NEXT?

As you wrap up this study, we want to encourage you to consider what comes next for your Life Group. We want to suggest taking a few minutes at the start of your next study to discuss these questions:

1. How has your thinking about your role as a Christian and Life Group changed?
2. What are some ways that your group can actively stay focused on God's mission no matter what study you do next?

To the Life Group Leader:

Remember that no matter what study you're doing, you can still utilize all of the things you've learned about LEAP to keep moving your Life Group toward mission. If you've completed this study, but have not yet gone through the LEAP Leader Training, you can sign up for an online training at leapgroups.org.

If your group would like to find more resources, including a variety of other Missional Experience Kits, those can also be found at leapgroups.org.

A Note from the Fiducia Team:

Thank you for taking this 8-week journey. We hope that God's Spirit worked in you as you went through each experience and wrestled with the questions. The journey is just beginning! Keep the faith and stay the course - God will surely meet you there.

Kingdom Come,

Fiducia Team

