**“Engage the Life of Jesus…**

**…In My life”**

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12:2 (NRSV)

**Segment 4 of 4**

**(10 Sessions)**

 **Bible Storying Guide**

Adapted from [www.blackhawkministries.org](http://www.blackhawkministries.org) and relationaldiscipleshipnetwork.com

**Do you have a “healthy” small group?**

As you begin the final segment of this series, you should be excited that your group has met at least 6 months, exploring the Bible, and opening themselves to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit! Congratulations!

Now is the time to ask if the group is simply a place that “feels good” or if it is truly helping those in your group take tangible steps toward spiritual maturity. Here are seven signs of a healthy small group.

**1. Consistency in meeting and a desire to meet.**

When a group is healthy, there is a desire and a delight in getting together. It doesn’t feel like “one more thing” but rather “when can we meet next?” And healthy groups are intentional about meeting if at all possible. Illness, travel, weather, and other events can get in the way, obviously, but for the most part, healthy groups get together regularly because they want to do so.

*The metric: Does the small group consistently meet several times per month?*

**2. Genuine authenticity and transparent sharing.**

The beauty of small groups is that it’s a place to be real. When asked how others are doing, participants open up and actually sharing more than “we’re doing fine.” A healthy group will be a place where people open up and start sharing their pain.

*The metric: Do group members know more about each other on a personal level than a month ago?*

**3. People are growing in knowledge, but they are also growing in grace.**

This is the difference between a Bible study and a small group. We need to grow in knowledge, but knowledge does nothing but puff us up unless we’re applying what we’re hearing and becoming more like Jesus.

*The metric: Do people in proximity to group members report a more gracious attitude and response to others in everyday life?*

**4. Real community and friendship is increasing.**

Group members are understanding the spiritual/family relationship of each member toward the other members. This is where real koinonia takes place – a kind of eternal bonding called fellowship.

*The metric: Do people get together outside of Bible study times and show up in crisis moments for each other?*

**5. Intentional about serving together and developing as leaders.**

Bonding can happen watching football, but it usually happens more effectively in moments of serving others as part of the same team. There is a reason why groups that go on mission trips together know each other so much more intimately afterward.

*The metric: Are needs within the group being met? Is the group meeting needs in the community together? Are leaders stepping forward out of the group for other areas of serving?*

**6. There is a culture of inclusion and inviting.**

Healthy small groups have an excitement about welcoming newcomers and they rejoice together to see a friend make a spiritual step forward. It is tempting to fall into the trap that we love each other so much, that we don’t want anything to change that. But this is not the sharing of love that God intended for his followers.

*The metric: Is anyone in the group inviting someone or sharing their faith?*

**7. New leaders are stepping forward.**

When a group is healthy, an inevitable outflow are persons willing to ‘host’ a new small group to create space for others who desire a closer walk with Jesus.

It’s always a big win when an existing group “loses” someone by sending them out on the mission of hosting a new group.

*The metric: Is anyone praying about stepping out to host a group of their own?*

**“Engage the Life of Jesus…In My Life” Overview**

This guide follows the story of the disciples as they meet Jesus, follow Him, get to know Him and begin to grow. Overall, there are 34 chronological stories from all four gospels. Jesus took these disciples on a journey together so they could become like Him and be His sent ones (“apostles”) to the world. If you face each situation they faced and respond like they did, you will be more like Jesus every day. Remember, for thousands of years God’s people have used “story telling” or the oral tradition of telling the Word of God.

**What you need to know about Segment 4**

The goal of a small group is to become more like Jesus. This guide is a simple method that gives every participant an opportunity to engage the scripture in a deeply personal way, allowing God’s Word to be a means of grace in their lives.

Segment 4 is a great time to begin thinking *outward*. As Jesus moved to years 2 and 3 with His disciples, he was obviously preparing them to take over His ministry. What needs to be done, repented of, learned, practiced, explored for the members of your group to be prepared to “take over” Jesus’ mission? By courageously helping the group identify these areas, the members of the group will grow in confidence and gain the ability to ‘step out’ and put their faith into action.

**Here’s how Bible-Storying works…**

1. Each week, assign someone to learn next week’s story. (Learn so the story is told without reading it, but not word for word.)
2. While the storyteller tells the story, the group reads along in their Bibles to see if the storyteller has missed anything.
3. When finished, the group rebuilds the story, pointing out anything that was missed.
4. Then the storyteller randomly asks someone to re-tell the story back to everyone without reading. (No one knows who will be asked, so everyone pays attention.) Statistics tell us that the majority of us actually learn better by re-telling a story. As the story is told and retold, your group will be better able to understand and apply the heart of the story.
5. Once the story has been told, rebuilt, and told again, this week’s facilitator asks questions to help participants intersect scripture with her or his life.
6. Each person identifies application points for their *own* life, and the group helps each person live it out.

**Small Group Ground Rules**

This is the “operating system” of a small group. These rules provide the boundaries of a space that is safe to be real, authentic and vulnerable so that Holy Spirit can do its work. We live, act, and talk differently in a small group! Developing this kind of environment takes time, team-work, and a whole lot of trust. It is helpful to remind your group *each week* of these rules, why they are important, and how to help maintain them.

**Even after 6 months, Continue to Review the Rules**

You may be tempted to skip over this, or give lip service to it. But don’t. Ask specific questions such as: *Has this been a safe environment for you?*  Go over these rules *in detail* every couple of months and why they are important. Make sure they understand and agree to them. It is *critical* that you remind and ensure the group to follow these rules, and give them permission to hold you to them as well!

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *1.* ***Safe Environment*** *– This is a judgment free zone! Feel safe to be your authentic self.* | *6.* ***Pause****—Allow a pause after someone finishes to provide room to consider what was said before responding.* |
|  |  |
| *2.* ***Accountability****—Everyone’s help is expected to make this safe.* | *7.* ***Silence****—Expect and welcome silence. Consider it sacred space for God to speak.* |
|  |  |
| *3.* ***Confidentiality****—What is said in the group stays in the group, unless permission is given.* | *8.* ***Respect****—Don’t try to solve or fix each other. Just receive what they share (even if you disagree) as a gift. Offer encouragement, speak truth, point to Jesus.* |
|  |  |
| *4.* ***“I” statements****—Speak for yourself-your beliefs, feelings, responses. It’s easy to talk about the issues of others, but we want you to put* ***yourself*** *on the table.  Use “I” statements rather than “them,” “the church,” “us,” “we,” “you.”* | *9.* ***Honor****-- Honor the different ways God works in individuals. Resist the temptation to console or offer condolences, as it may lead some to stop sharing, or try to fix.* |
|  |  |
| *5.* ***Listen****—Try to avoid thinking about what you are going to say next. Avoid “cross-talk” and interrupting.* | *10.* ***Sharing****—Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Recognize that all group members are invited to share aloud only what and when they are ready to share.* |

1. **Transitional Gathering. Group Check-in**

Stagnant or Moving Forward?

John 10:22-30 NRSV

*A “Check-in” is a great tool that helps participants to re-frame and re-focus their commitment to the purpose of the group. It can be used at any time—between studies, when things get tense, when emotions run high, or when behavior becomes an issue (non-participation, chronic lateness, over-sharing, or no-shows). It ensures that people are truly present. Verbal sharing, especially a brief story, weaves the interpersonal net. Check-in usually starts with a volunteer and proceeds around the circle. If an individual is not ready to speak, the turn is passed and another opportunity is offered after others have spoken. Sometimes people place individual objects in the center as a way of signifying their presence and relationship to the purpose.*

**Opening (10 mins):**

Over the last six months, what have you learned about yourself as a result of being in this group?

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules, and address any rule that needs to be celebrated or worked on.

**Scripture focus:**

**22**At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, **23**and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. **24**So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.” **25**Jesus answered, “I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father’s name testify to me; **26**but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. **27**My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. **28**I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. **29**What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father’s hand. **30**The Father and I are one.”

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

**Group “Check-in” (30 mins)**

* **Purpose**. Remind the group that the purpose of a small group is to build a safe place where each one can explore the purpose and power of Christ in their lives, in order to live more like Christ.
	1. Go over the “**Seven Signs of a Healthy Group**.” Which one do you think we are really doing well with? Which one do we need to work on?
* **Sharing. Explain this entire process before beginning.** After reading the scripture, focus the group on verse 27. Ask the group to reflect on this question: How well are you doing at “hearing” Jesus’ voice and following Him?
* Invite one volunteer to share his or her answer.
* Then, the person who just shared picks someone else in the group and does ONE of the following (It is VERY important to look the other person in the eye and speak directly to each other, rather than to the group):
	+ Ask the person for forgiveness for something.
	+ Encourage or affirm the person.
	+ Challenge the person (personal growth, leadership, etc.)
* The person responds ONLY with “Thank you.”
* Then the next person share’s their take away and challenge…until everyone has had the opportunity to shares and speaks to someone in the group.

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

Assign new partners to connect up with over the coming week. (You may decide to do a weekly rotation.) Invite them to try to “connect” with either by meeting for coffee or lunch, taking a walk, or a phone call. Challenge them to also send each other an encouraging text or email during the week.

**Next Week (1 min):** Decide who will be the facilitator and who will be the storyteller for next week. (Email next week’s story to the group.)

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 25. Jesus Predicts Peter’s Denial

Luke 22:31-62

**Opening (10 mins):**

When was a time you experienced failure? Read the theme scripture for this segment together.

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules, highlighting the ones we are doing well and need to work on.

**Transition:** After teaching the disciples how to live in Him, Jesus had to tell Peter that Satan was going to sift him like wheat and that he would deny Jesus. As they approached the Mount of Olive, Jesus’ sorrow mounted. He faced the fact that the will of His father was that He should die for the sins of the world. He spent time in prayer while the disciples slept. Now here is the story from God’s Word:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 4.)

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

**Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)**

* + - 1. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
			2. How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
			3. In what ways have you denied Christ?
			4. How has failure changed you?
			5. What impresses you about Jesus’ prayer in the Garden?
			6. When have you felt like Peter?
			7. What do you think Jesus was trying to communicate to Peter in verse 61? To you?

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

Challenge each other to memorize the theme scripture of Segment 4.

**Next Week (1 min)**

Assign a facilitator and a storyteller for next week. (Email next week’s story to the group.)

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 26. Jesus Crucified

Mark 15:1-39

**Opening (10 mins):**

When someone accuses you of something you didn’t do, how do you usually react? Who is ready to try to recite our theme verse from memory?

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules, highlighting the ones we are doing well and need to work on.

**Transition:** Jesus had gone through six trials preceding His crucifixion. In that one night, he was before Anna, Caiphas, the Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod, and then back to Pilate. At the end of those six trials, what did they find to accuse Jesus of? Here is the story from God’s Word:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 4.)

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

**Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)**

What is Jesus teaching you personally?

How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?

If you had been in this story which person do you think you would be? Why?

What part of the crucifixion story touches you the most? Why?

What difference does the death of Christ and the forgiveness of God make in the way you live your life today?

What does it mean to you to be crucified with Christ? (Gal. 2:20)

What is the riskiest thing you have ever done because of your faith in Jesus? What might Jesus be asking you to do now?

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

This week, attend a funeral, a visitation, or go visit someone who is dying. Pay attention to how you feel deep down about the meaning of death. Be prepared to share next week.

**Next Week (1 min)**

Assign a facilitator and a storyteller for next week. (Email next week’s story to the group.)

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 27. He is Alive!

Luke 24:1-49

**Opening (10 mins):**

Did anyone visit a funeral or someone who is dying? What did you experience?

When did you last experience a broken dream or a broken heart?

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules, highlighting the ones we are doing well and need to work on.

**Transition:** It was over. Jesus had paid the ultimate sacrifice to redeem us--death on the cross. Two members of the Sanhedrin, (the Jewish high court) Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus buried Jesus in Joseph’s new tomb. The woman who had followed Jesus all His ministry saw where they buried Him and planned to go bring spices the next morning after the Sabbath. Here is the story from God’s Word:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 4.)

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story, noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

**Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)**

1. What is Jesus teaching you personally?
2. How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
3. How do you think you would have reacted if Jesus appeared to you after you saw Him dead?
4. What difference does the Resurrection make in how you live your life?
5. Where is your “Road to Emmaus”—the place where Jesus surprised you recently?
6. How well do you think you can explain the Gospel--the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the way a person a can have a relationship with him? Try rehearsing it (in order to articulate it out “there,” we should practice in ‘here.’)
7. Where is the mission field Jesus is sending you?

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

Tell someone the resurrection and Gospel story this week with the same enthusiasm as the disciples told others.

**Next Week (1 min)**

Assign a facilitator and a storyteller for next week. (Email next week’s story to the group.)

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 28. Jesus Restores Peter

John 21:1-23

**Opening (10 mins):**

What is the sweetest reunion you’ve ever had with family or friends? Anything leftover from last week that we should revisit? Who is ready to recite our theme verse from memory?

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules, highlighting the ones we are doing well and need to work on.

**Transition:** Jesus told His disciples to go to Galilee where He would meet them. No doubt Peter was devastated by his denial of Jesus even though Jesus had shown Himself personally to him. Evidently they grew restless and Peter took several of the disciples fishing-perhaps going back to their old profession. Jesus came to Peter and confronted him. Here is the story from God’s Word:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 4.)

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

**Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)**

1. What is Jesus teaching you personally? How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
2. On a scale of 1 to 10, what is the excitement level in your spiritual life right now?
3. If Jesus asked you the same “Do you love me,” how would you respond?
4. What helps to restore you after you’ve “blown it?”
5. How can you show that you love Jesus?
6. Whom do you know who needs to feel forgiven by God? What will you do to communicate God’s (and/or your) forgiveness?
7. What steps can you take to show that you are taking responsibility for making disciples instead of asking about what others are going to do?

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

Who in your group seems to have slipped away? What can your group do to communicate love to that person?

**Next Week (1 min):** Assign a facilitator and a storyteller for next week.

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 29. The Promise of the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:1-11

**Opening (10 mins):**

If you were writing a book about Jesus’ work in your life, what would be some of the chapter titles?

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules, highlighting the ones we are doing well and need to work on.

**Transition:** Luke told the story of Jesus telling His disciples to stay in Jerusalem until they were filled with the Holy Spirit-to wait for the promise of the Father. He did not tell them how long that would be or how long He would keep appearing to them. Luke picks up the story in the second book he wrote in the book of Acts. Notice the dramatic words in verse 8. What do you think is the significance of naming these specific places? Here is the story from God’s Word:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 4.)

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

**Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)**

1. What is Jesus teaching you personally? How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
2. Have you ever waited on God?
3. As a disciple, what is the impact on you of Jesus’ words in verses 7-8?
4. How would you explain the effects of the Resurrection to a non-believer?
5. Where is the Holy Spirit nudging you to “bear witness”? What “power” of the Holy Spirit do you need to help you?
6. How can you carry out Jesus’ statement that His disciples would bear witness of Him in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth?
7. When you accept Christ, the Holy Spirit inhabits you and works in and through you. How can you yield to His leadership better this week?

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

Recite the theme verse from memory. Write down in 100 words or less the difference Jesus Christ has made in your life. Be prepared to read it next week. For extra, ask the group to research the origins of Pentecost.

**Next Week (1 min):** Assign a facilitator and a storyteller for next week.

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 30. Pentecost

Acts 2

**Opening (10 mins):**

What are you usually doing at 9:00am on a Saturday? On Sunday? On a weekday? Give everyone the invitation to read their “100 Word Story.”

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules, highlighting the ones we are doing well and need to work on.

**Transition:** After the disciples saw Jesus ascend into heaven they went back to the upper room where they had met Him many times. They waited as He had told them to do. They prayed. They searched the Scriptures. They cast lots to see which of the disciples that had followed Jesus the whole time should take the place of Judas. They waited in Jerusalem but probably had no idea what was about to happen when the promise of the Father was answered. Here is the story from God’s Word:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 4).

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

**Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)**

1. What is Jesus teaching you personally? How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
2. What stands out to you about Peter’s sermon?
3. How would you describe your experience with the Holy Spirit now?
4. Review verses 37-39. Does this present a challenge to you?
5. When did you make your initial commitment to Christ?
6. Acts 2 is the story of the birth of the church. What in these verses do you long for in your group? What can you do to help your group be more like this?

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

Pair up with someone in your group you do not know very well. Every day this week, pray for each other to experience the Holy Spirit. Call or meet them sometime throughout the week to talk about your prayer life.

**Next Week (1 min):** Assign a facilitator and a storyteller for next week.

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 31. Peter

Acts 3-4:31

**Opening (10 mins):**

Describe a time when you found yourself without money. Let’s recite our theme scripture from memory.

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules, highlighting the ones we are doing well and need to work on.

**Transition:** The Holy Spirit is the central character in the book of Acts. It is a story of how the Spirit radically changed the disciples and they began to live the life that Christ had promised when they began to follow Him. They worshipped in their homes and in the temple. As they went they began to do miracles as Christ had promised. That got them in trouble but resulted in the church growing greatly. Here is the first recorded story after the Pentecost experience:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 4.)

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

**Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)**

1. What is Jesus teaching you personally? How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
2. How is Jesus healing some crippled area of your life?
3. What is the result of ordinary disciples filled with the Holy Spirit?
4. How do you reconcile when it is time to be “tough on sin” with times to be a person of “grace?”
5. Have you ever been persecuted as a Christian? How did you take it?
6. How is your Christian life characterized by boldness?
7. In what way do you most need the power of the Holy Spirit?

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

Some time in your normal routine this week in public, stop for 20 minutes and just look around. Pay attention to the Holy Spirit. Pray, “Lord show me what you want me to see.”

**Next Week (1 min):** Assign a facilitator and a storyteller for next week.

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 32. On Fire

Acts 8:1-25

**Opening (10 mins):**

Who was your hero when you were 10 years old? Why? Did anyone do the exercise from last session? What did you experience?

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules, highlighting the ones we are doing well and need to work on.

**Transition:** God greatly blessed the disciples and they increased with every challenge. They had to face the threats and persecution of the Jewish authorities, deception in their ranks, prejudice in the church and the first martyrdom. God’s plan to cross every barrier led them out from Judea to Samaria and the ends of the earth. One of the chief opponents, Saul, participated in Stephen’s death but could not stamp out the witness to Jesus wherever they were scattered. Here is the story from God’s word:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 4.)

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

**Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)**

1. What is Jesus teaching you personally? How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
2. What prejudices were you brought up with? How is the Gospel breaking through those prejudices in your life?
3. What was your primary motivation in first receiving Jesus as Savior?
4. What is your primary motivation for continuing in your faith under Jesus as Lord?
5. How has jealousy of other Christians affected your faith?
6. What is your ministry?

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

Spend time this week reflecting on the Gospel. If you were asked by a non-believer, “What is the Gospel, and why is it good?” what would you say?

**Next Week (1 min):** Assign a facilitator and a storyteller for next week.

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 33. No One Left Out

Acts 10

**Opening (10 mins):**

What recurring symbol do you find in your dreams? Does it mean anything to you? Invite participants to share their work on the “Gospel in their own words” from last session.

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules, highlighting the ones we are doing well and need to work on.

**Transition:** God continued to push the disciples out across barriers: geographical, religious, and social. He brought Saul to Himself through the encounter on the road to Damascus. He used Ananias to follow up with Saul and accompany him on his first witnessing there. But there was one deep seated barrier that the church had to overcome--their relationship with the Gentiles. It took another intervention from God. Here is the story from God’s Word:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 4.)

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

**Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)**

1. What is Jesus teaching you personally? How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
2. Would others characterize you as “God-fearing?” Why or why not?
3. What traditions, principles, or beliefs do you hold that Jesus would challenge?
4. How are you limited to reach out to people “different” from you? How do you break the bonds of prejudice?
5. What barriers exist today that are keeping people from being a part of God’s church?
6. How will you apply the lessons Peter learned in your world today?

**Put it Into Action (5 mins)**

Do something this week to reach out in relationship to someone who is very different from you. For next week, make a list of a few persons that God may have made known to you that could really benefit from a group like this.

**Next Week (1 min):** Assign a facilitator and a storyteller for next week.

**Prayer (5 mins)**

# 34. Barnabas and Saul

Acts 13:1-12

*Make time for the “Series Closing Activity.” Our prayer is that over the 9 months, at least one or more of the group have felt God nudge them to walk with others in their growing discipleship. We grow in Christ for the sake of others. Encourage one another that they can do this. Give them permission to leave the group to start a new group. Nothing is more glorious than when disciples multiply themselves.*

**Opening (5 mins):**

Recite from memory the theme scripture.

**Prayer**

**Small Group Ground Rules:**

Quickly go over the ground rules, highlighting the ones we are doing well and need to work on.

**Transition:** Through Peter, God broke down the middle wall between Jews and Gentiles in Judea, but he launched the missionary movement to the ends of the earth though Barnabas and Saul. No longer was it an individual effort but eventually the whole church got involved in the mission of God. Here’s how it started from the story in God’s Word:

**Tell the Story (10 mins):**

**Tell the Story:** Don’t stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story in your own words the best you can. Have the group follow along in their Bibles looking for anything left out or added.

**Rebuild:** Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions (see page 4.)

**Read:** Read the story directly from God’s word.

**Reflect (2-3 minutes)**:

*What is the Lord showing you?* Invite the group to silently reflect on the story noting anything that the Lord points out as important, confusing, interesting, or challenging *for their life*.

**Suggested Discipleship Questions (30 minutes)**

1. What is Jesus teaching you personally? How can you disciple people as Jesus did in this story?
2. With what types of people do you feel most comfortable talking about the Lord? Why?
3. Because of Jesus’ mission to ‘seek and save the lost’ and the Great Commission, in some sense, every believer is a “missionary” called to actively participate in the mission of God. How does this understanding reframe your discipleship?
4. How are you being equipped to be a missionary in your home, school, work, friend group, community…or even around the world? What do you lack?
5. How can you better participate in Jesus’ mission as a missionary today?

**Next**

**Put it Into Action (15 mins) SERIES CLOSING ACTIVITY**

Have your group share their lists from last session of people that God may be nudging them to walk with in their discipleship. Pray together over all the names. Ask, “what is God asking us to do about these people?”

Ask, “is anyone feeling God nudging them to ‘be a missionary’ and start a new group in which we could invite some of these people?” Consider identifying a partner who would help. Maybe the current leader of the group needs to start a new group, while a member of this group steps up. There are a number of ways.

As someone steps out in faith to a new role, close with a special group prayer over that person(s) for encouragement, reliance and trust in the Holy Spirit, and blessings of fruitfulness that can only be attributed to the presence of God.

**Prayer (5 mins)**