



CONNECT GROW SERVE

FBC FRANKFORT 2020

Being a Disciple Community: Loving God and Neighbor

Teaching Suggestions

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Teaching Suggestions – Community (Session 2)

Following are some teaching options you could choose from to use with your class along with your own ideas.

Scripture Focus: Luke 10:27 - “You shall love your neighbor as yourself”; Luke 10:25-42

Overview

The church is a disciple community. Everything we do—worship, prayer, teaching, missions, witness, care, equipping—we do together as a community. So the community aspect of the life of the church surrounds everything.

Protestant, Baptist, American ideals of individualism, freedom, and self-sufficiency, have value, but can run counter to God’s ideal of community. We would do well as a church to reflect on how our traditional ways of thinking about the self, help and hinder our ways of being as a disciple community.

Practices of the church help nurture community—Baptism, Communion, Fellowship Meal. Baptism is a powerful symbol of our entrance into the family of God. It is a way of identifying with the Christian community. Communion is a regular community remembrance that we belong to Jesus, that we share the bread and the cup with Jesus and with each other. When we gather around the table with our Christian brothers and sisters for a fellowship meal, we nourish our bodies and our relationships, and we are following Jesus’ example who shared meals with all kinds of people and we continue the practice of the early church.

Hospitality is welcoming all people to the family of God—foreigners, outcasts, sinners, the poor. Jesus said welcoming a guest is like welcoming himself, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:38).

As in each of these sessions, the key question is, “What does this study teach us about what it means to be a disciple community, loving God and neighbor?”, specifically, “How can we as a disciple community (First Baptist Church) love God and neighbors through community?”

Open

We need each other

- Name three things you can do well and three things you can’t. For example, “I can cook a meal. I can’t perform surgery.”
- Do you know someone who can do what you can’t do well?
- What would life be like if we could not rely on the help of others?

Gifts in the body of Christ

Romans 12 lists spiritual gifts: prophecy (speaking out), serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leadership, and mercy.

- Ask: “Which of these gifts (or another not in this list) would you say is your spiritual gift?”
- Ask each class member to share one or two gifts. List them on the board or chart paper as they are named.
- When finished, examine the list. Are any of the gifts missing? If so can you think of others in the church with those missing gifts? What does this say about the importance of community?

Stranded on an Island

Imagine you have been stranded on an island. Besides your immediate family, name those people you would miss the most? (for example: your doctor, your pastor, someone with a specific skill?)

What is Community?

What is community? What does community mean to you?

Study

Bible Background

Using your own study and the material provided, provide background and context for this passage especially the command to “love your neighbor as yourself” in Luke 10:27.

Community and Connecting in Luke 10:25-42

Read Luke 10:25-42 listening for all the places community occurs and people connect with Jesus and with each other.

Reflect In the passage:

- Name places where you see community and connection in this passage.
- What is the importance of community in each of these stories?

Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

Luke 10:27 – You shall love...your neighbor as yourself

What does “love your neighbor as yourself” mean in the biblical context?

Consider different perspectives for understanding this text. Some cultures identify first as a part of a community, group, or village. Protestant Americans, with an emphasis on individualism, soul competency, autonomy, and freedom might tend to identify first as an individual. How do these different perspectives influence our reading of this command?

- (1) Alan Culpepper reads Luke 10:27 as a threefold command: “The phrase 'as yourself' implies that love for oneself is also expected. Three loves, therefore, characterize the life of one who is already experiencing a measure of that life that will characterize the age to come: love of God, neighbor, and self. Only in this sequence of priority, however, does each require the others.”
- (2) Those that identify first as the member of a community might hear the command differently. Keith Stillwell writes: “Could it be that we love our neighbors because within the body of Christ we are one, not completely separate individuals? Using Paul's illustration of the body of Christ

we might say, “Love your foot as yourself. Love your hand because it is part of one body. Love your neighbor as a part of your body. Love your neighbor because you are one in the same body—the body of Christ.” Ideally there is no difference between loving self and loving neighbors since in Christ we are all created as one community. Simultaneously we love our neighbors and ourselves.”

Consider the command, “love your neighbor as yourself” from each of these perspectives:

- How are they different? Are they different?
- What if any difference if any does it make in how we live out this command?

Reflection: What does community mean to our church and to me?

Questions

- What does it look like when you love your neighbor as yourself?
- Does this command assume you love yourself? What if you don’t love yourself? How does that affect your relationship with others and the way you love others?
- Do you identify first as an individual or the member of a group?
- What groups do you identify with? (for example: family, church, job, country)
- What does loving your neighbor as yourself look like within each of these groups?

Being a Disciple Community

The graphic depicting this series on Being a Disciple Community, places community at the top to suggest that community is a part of all aspect of the life of the church loving God and neighbor (a copy of the graphic is attached). Discuss how each task of the church is done as a community.

- What does it mean to worship as a community?
- What does it mean to pray as a community?
- What does it mean to teach as a community?
- What does it mean to engage in missions as a community?
- What does it mean to bear witness as a community?
- What does it mean to care as a community?
- What does it mean to lead or equip in a community?



Application: So what now?

Given what you have learned from this Bible Study and given our uniqueness as a disciple community, what now? How will we think, feel, or live differently as a result of God’s call through this Bible study?

Do we need communal worship?

You may have heard it said, “I don’t need to go to church to worship. I can worship God just as well, or better, out in God’s world (on my boat fishing, in my backyard, etc.),” or “I prefer to worship in my home watching a worship service on television or Facebook live.”

What do you think?

Remember your baptism

What do you remember about your baptism?

What did it feel like to become a part of the church family in this way?

Break bread together

- Bring a loaf of bread and place it on a table in the center of the room.
- Say, "The Bible says that we are to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Notice the loaf of bread. If the bread represents the body of Christ and we are members of Christ's body, who are the neighbors that we are to love?"
- Invite members to name neighbor that we are to love as we love ourselves.
- After a period of time, pass the loaf of bread and invite member to tear off a piece of bread and hold it.
- Say, "Do you love yourself? God does. Take a moment of silence to rest in the presence of a God who loves you. Pray for the ability to love yourself as God does."
- After a period of silence, say, "You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself. Let us share the bread." Eat the bread.

Enneagrams

If a number of your class members are familiar with enneagrams and their enneagram numbers, you might discuss how community and the enneagram are related. What is your number? How does your number connect with the numbers of others in your group?

Loving God

Loving Neighbors

Community

Worship

Teaching

Prayer



Missions

Witness

Care

Leadership

Teaching Suggestions – Worship (Session 3)

Following are some teaching options you could choose from to use with your class along with your own ideas.

Scripture Focus: Luke 10:27, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind.”; Luke 10:38-42 – Mary at Jesus feet as an act of worship; Definition of worship - Psalm 96:7-8, 95:6

Overview

This session looks at what it really means to worship and considers distraction to worship or inadequate understandings of worship. God is the focus of worship. To worship is to ascribe honor and glory to God. However, some may attend worship as passive observers, for the purpose of being entertained or getting fed.

The command in Luke 10:27, to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind,” is a good way of thinking about what we are doing in worship. The story of Mary at Jesus’ feet can be seen as an act of worship.

Thinking about the various elements of worship, help us be more intentional about putting our theology of worship into practice. Worship might include some of the following elements and others: Gathering for worship, call to worship, Invocation, confession and assurance of pardon, praise & thanksgiving, offering, scripture reading, proclamation, Invitation and commitment, benediction.

Open

Order of Worship

Consider structuring your Bible study like a worship service. Organize your Bible study session activities as a worship service. Communicate what you are doing and why. For example, something like:

- (1) Gathering
Fellowship time, prayer concerns, announcements.
- (2) Call to worship
Read Psalm 96:7-8 and 95:6- “Ascribe to the Lord Glory”
What is the purpose of worship?
- (3) Invocation
Prayer for the purpose of invoking God’s presence, or acknowledging God’s presence
- (4) Confession and assurance of pardon
Use one of the readings attached: “Confession”.
- (5) Praise and Thanksgiving
Discuss prayer as a “wow” or “awe” response to the wonder of God.

Share some awe inspiring photos, videos, stories, or items.

Ask class to name attributes of God as an offer of praise and share those things for which they are thankful.

Offer praise and thanksgiving to God.

(6) Scripture Reading

Luke 10:27 & 38-42

(7) Proclamation

Bible Study: What is God's message for us about worship in these Luke passages and the Psalms.

(8) Response and Commitment

What are we being called to be, do, think? What is our response to God? What commitments are we willing to make today?

(9) Benediction

Explain and offer a Benediction/blessing. See attached for examples or offer your own

Wonder at God's Creation

Offer something that makes us marvel at God's creation, for example:

- Video of universe, pictures
- Acorn- marvel at planted in the ground it will grow to a mighty oak tree
- Picture of caterpillar, chrysalis, butterfly

Share about a meaningful worship experience

Share a worship experience in which you felt you were able to worship God in a particularly meaningful way? Share a worship experience in which you felt God's presence? What about the worship experience made it so meaningful?

Study

Emphasize

Using your own study and the material provided, provide background and context and emphasize the main points in the story.

1. To Worship is to ascribe honor and glory to God (Psalm 96:7-8, 95:6). God is the focus of worship. The primary purpose of worship is not entertainment or to feed us.
2. Love God heart soul, mind are ways we can express our worship of God (Luke 10:27).
3. Consider the key elements of worship and their purpose. For example: Gathering, Call to Worship, Invocation, Confession and Assurance of Pardon, Praise and Thanksgiving, Offering, Scripture Reading, Proclamation, Invitation and Commitment, Benediction.
4. Worship as a community is important.

Questions

- What is the purpose of worship?
- What does Mary teach us about worship?
- What does it mean to "Ascribe to the Lord Glory" (Psalm 96:7-8)?
- What does Psalm 96:7-8 and 95:6 teach us about the purpose of worship?

Heart, Soul, Strength, Mind

Provide copies of the order of worship (worship bulletin) for the day.

Discuss the meaning of the words, heart, soul, strength, and mind as they might have been understood in Jesus' time. How does that compare to how the words, heart, soul, strength, and mind are understood today?

Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind in Hebrew thought:

Heart - Can refer to our emotions, but also to our thought and will and our innermost self

Soul - one's whole life and breath

Strength - might, power, strength, and ability

Mind - the place of thinking and planning.

Discuss:

How can we worship God with our hearts?

How can we worship God with our soul?

With our strength?

With our Mind?

Look at the order of worship for the day. Identify the various elements of worship and indicate whether these are loving God with heart, soul, strength, or mind.

Reflection: What does worship mean to our church and to me?

Audience of worship

Discuss this quote:

Who is the audience of worship? Soren Kierkegaard, in an often cited analogy, has likened worship to a drama, but not in the way we might think. We may tend to think of the worship leaders (pastor, choir, and others who ascend the platform) as the actors and the congregation as the critical audience. After all, we sit facing the platform or stage, some in theatre style seats, and may even offer our critique of the performance on the way out. This view of worship as drama, according to Kierkegaard, is far off base. On the contrary, God is the audience of worship. The worship leaders are the prompters. Members of the congregation are the actors.

Kierkegaard writes, "In the most earnest sense, God is the critical theatergoer, who looks on to see how the lines are spoken and how they are listened to: hence here the customary audience is wanting. The speaker is then the prompter, and the listener stands openly before God. The listener, if I may say so, is the actor, who in all truth acts before God" (Soren Kierkegaard, Purity of Heart Is to Will the One Thing, New York: Harper & Row, 1938, p. 181).

- If worship leaders are the actors and the congregation is the audience, what is worship like?
- If God is the audience, the congregation the actors, and worship leaders the prompters, what is worship like?

Look at the order of worship

Provide copies of the order of worship for the day. Discuss how the various elements relate to worship? What is the purpose and theological significance of each element? Why are they placed where they are in the order of worship? Is there anything that might be added to the worship service? Is there anything that could be left out?

Orders of Worship

Secure copies of the order of worship (worship bulletin) for the day, previous orders of worship from your church, and a variety of orders of worship from other churches and denominations. Compare and contrast the various orders of worship. Consider the purpose the various elements and their placement in the service, especially as they relate to what we have been discussing about worship.

Worship for You

Based on our understanding of the purpose of worship, what does an ideal worship service look like to you?

Mary at Jesus' Feet

Have you ever been caught up in the presence of God, like Keith Stillwell imagines Mary was in Luke 10:38-42?

Worship as a community

What does it mean to worship as a community versus as a group of individuals?

Application: So what now?

Given what you have learned from this Bible Study and given our unique gifts as a disciple community, what now? How will we think, feel, or live differently as a result of God's call through this Bible study?

Worship Readings

Attached are some sample readings (Benedictions, Confession and Pardon, Music) that you might use as a class.

Worship

Enter worship today with anticipation. Focus on God. Listen. Think about the purpose of each element of worship. Go now and worship.

Benediction

Offer a Benediction (Samples attached)

Benedictions

Numbers 6:24-26:

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon
you, and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon
you, and give you peace.

“Till We Meet Again” is a well-known musical
benediction:

God be with you till we meet again;
By His counsels guide, uphold you,
With His sheep securely fold you;
God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet, till we meet,
Till we meet at Jesus’ feet;
Till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.

2 Corinthians 13:14:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with all of you.

Celtic Christianity was known for its creative
benedictions. The following is attributed to
Saint Patrick:

Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who
thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who
speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

Keith Stillwell:

As you go from this place to be the
church in the world,
May God above you (hand toward the
heavens),
Christ beside you (hand to your side),
and the Holy Spirit within you (hand
over your heart),
bless and keep you,
until we meet again.
Amen.

Confession

O God

We confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart. At the center of our innermost self we have stubbornly held onto our own desires over your will for us.

Forgive us O God of mercy

We confess that we have not loved you with all our soul. We have not devoted our every breath and our whole life to you.

Forgive us O God of grace

We confess that we have not loved you with all of our strength. We are weak and often we have not acted with your strength to bring about goodness and justice.

Forgive us O God of might

We confess that we have not loved you with all of our mind. So many times when we would focus our mind on you, we are distracted by selfish thoughts, fearful thoughts, and pride in our own plans.

Forgive us O God of love

Amen

O God, you have shown us the way of life through your Son, Jesus Christ.

We confess with shame our slowness to learn of him, our failure to follow him, and our reluctance to bear the cross.

Have mercy on us, Lord, and forgive us.

We confess the poverty of our worship, our neglect of fellowship and of the means of grace,

our hesitating witness for Christ, our evasion of responsibilities of our service. Our imperfect stewardship of your gift.

Have mercy on us, Lord, and forgive us. Amen

(The Worship Sourcebook, Second Edition, Faith Alive Christian Resources: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2013, 2.2.11)

Have mercy on me, O God,

according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.

**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.**

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

**Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.**

You desire truth in the inward being;
Therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

**Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.**

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right[a] spirit within me.

**Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.**

--Psalm 51:1-4, 6, 9-11

(The Worship Sourcebook, Second Edition, Faith Alive Christian Resources: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2013, 2.2.8)

Teaching Suggestions – Teaching (Session 4)

Following are some teaching options you could choose from to use with your class along with your own ideas.

Scripture Focus: (1) Luke 10:25-28, Deuteronomy 6:4-5, (2) Luke 10:38-42, (3) Luke 24:13-35

Overview

This session seeks to broaden our perspectives about what it means to teach and learn. Teaching is more than a classroom exercise in which a teacher imparts information to passive student. Teaching is formation, transformation, experiential, and occurs not just inside a classroom but in all of life.

Luke 10:25-28, Deuteronomy 6:4-5: The lawyer refers to Jesus as “teacher.” Jesus had disciples, which were learners who followed a teacher. The lawyer’s answer to the question of how to inherit eternal life was taken from the Shema in Deuteronomy 6. This command comes with a teaching method—basically to recite it and write it, all day and everywhere.

Luke 10:29-37: Jesus often taught using parables. Parables were intended to leave the listener wondering, thinking, meditating, and often confused. Deeper insights into God’s Kingdom and dramatic life transformation do not come easily and simply.

Luke 10:38-42: Mary sat at Jesus’ feet as a disciple. Mary was engrossed in learning from Jesus, the teacher. Jesus affirmed that Mary’s action was worthwhile, “Mary has chosen the better part.” While action like that of the Good Samaritan is good, so is taking time to learn from Jesus.

Luke 24:13-35: Jesus’ resurrection encounter with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus is loaded with many different ways of teaching and learning. For example: relationships, questions, listening, scripture, worship, stillness, time, application, using all of the senses, and much more.

The learning cycle which connects with four learning styles includes: Life Experience, Study, Reflection, and Application.

You will probably want to choose one of the scripture passages to focus on for this session.

Open

How do you learn best?

- (1) a. Listening, b. Seeing, or c. Touching
- (2) a. like Mary, b. like the Good Samaritan, c. like the lawyer
- (3) a. Experience, b. In depth study and analysis, c. Quiet reflection, or d. Planning, applying, connecting learning to life

- (4) a. Do it, b. Think about it, c. Research it, d. Apply it
- (5) a. Work in soup kitchen, b. Research best ways to feed the hungry, c. Imagine all the ways we might feed the hungry, d. Make plans for feeding the hungry based on what we have learned about feeding the hungry.

Study, Reflection, Application

You will probably want to choose one (maybe two) of the scripture passages to focus on for this session.

Luke 10:25-28, Deuteronomy 6:4-5 – Jesus the teacher/the Shema

- (1) The lawyer called Jesus teacher. Jesus had disciples. Consider what it means to be a disciple. They followed Jesus everywhere he went, listened to his teaching, observed his interactions with all kinds of people, witnessed his miraculous healing and casting out demons, ate with him, and worked alongside him. What does being a disciple of Jesus look like today?
- (2) The answer to the lawyer’s question, “what must I do to inherit eternal life,” came from the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). Read that passage and listen for all the different times and places they were to write and recite the teaching. What does that say about the importance of the command? What does that teach us about how to teach important teachings of Jesus?
- (3) Most understand the passage in Deuteronomy 6 to be taken figuratively, but some Jewish people practice the command literally:

Orthodox Judaism understands literally the command to bind the words of the Shema on one's head and hands, doorposts and gates. Since before the time of Christ . . . small leather boxes containing manuscripts with the words of the Shema plus three related texts (Exod. 13:1-10, 11-16; Deut. 11:13-21), each in one of four separate sections. . . . Orthodox young men from the age of 13 onward (Shebu. 111:8, 11) begin morning and evening prayers by binding these leather boxes first on their left hands and then their foreheads by means of long leather straps. (Biddle, Mark, Deuteronomy: Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary, Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2003, 128).

Additionally, many Jewish families will follow the centuries old tradition of affixing to the front doorframe of their homes a small decorative tube-shaped container, called the Mezuzah, with the words of the Shema inside.

- (4) Provide pictures of Phylacteries and Mezuzahs. See Keith Stillwell if you have trouble finding pictures. Also, Keith Stillwell has actual Mezuzahs you could use to show your class.
- (5) List all the places and times you might recite and write the command, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind.” If you have children and/or other family at home, how can you apply this teaching from Deuteronomy 6? How can a church apply this command to write and recite?
- (6) Plan to write and recite: Provide notecards and pens. Ask class members to write the verse, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself,” “Love God and your neighbor as yourself,” on a card (or several cards) and place them in key locations this week (for example your mirror, refrigerator, car dashboard, office, kitchen table, night stand, etc.).

Luke 10:29-37 – Jesus taught with Parables

- (1) Discuss Jesus' use of parables.

Keith Stillwell in the student guide noted:

Jesus said he spoke in parables so that "looking they may not perceive, and listening they may not understand" (Luke 8:10). This may seem odd if we think that the primary goal of the teacher is to explain things clearly so that the learner can understand.

- (2) Can our desire to make things clear and simplify be an hindrance when it comes to spiritual formation, Bible study, theology? If so how?
- (3) How can parables help listeners (us) grasp and experience the deeper truths about the Kingdom of God?

Luke 10:38-42- Mary sat at Jesus feet as a disciple

- (1) Jesus said, "Mary has chosen the better part." What does that mean? What is the better part?
- (2) What does it mean to sit and Jesus feet, as Mary did? What are some ways we can sit at Jesus' feet as a disciple?
- (3) What distracts you from spending time at Jesus' feet, learning, study the Bible, listening for God's guidance?
- (4) Have you ever felt mesmerized by a teacher, a teaching, a Bible study, or other learning experience.
- (5) How would you respond: "We know what we need to do. We just need to do it. Sitting at Jesus' feet, learning is a waste of time. We need to get to work."
- (6) Use the Lectio Divina method for a prayerful reading of the passage (see attached). Suggest that class members listen from Mary's perspective as a disciple learning from Jesus. At the conclusion ask: "Do you gain any insights into discipleship, teaching, and learning?"

Luke 24:13-35 – Jesus teaches on the Road to Emmaus.

- (1) How long would it take to walk the seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus?
- (2) Road to Emmaus exercise
 - (a) Read, or enlist someone to read Luke 24:13-35, deliberately. Listen for all the ways you see teaching and learning taking place. What teaching methods does Jesus use? When and how do learning and insight happen? When the disciples come to recognize Jesus and learn, what happens next? Provide copies of the passage and pens and invite class members to circle, underline, and make notes (see attached).
 - (b) As a group list all the different ways Jesus teaches and learning takes place.
 - (c) After class members have had plenty of time to offer their ideas you may wish to add thoughts from the attached list from the full chapter.
- (3) Discuss the quote by Christian educator, Thomas Groome:

I see the risen Christ portrayed here as the educator par excellence. He begins by encountering and entering into dialogue with the two travelers. Rather than telling them what he knows, he first has them tell the story of their recent experience and what their hopes had been. In response he recalls a larger Story of which theirs story is part, and a broader Vision beyond what

theirs had been. We might expect the typical educator to tell them what “to see,” but he continues to wait for them to come to their own knowing. He spends more time in their company. Surely the dialogue on the road carried over into their table conversations. Eventually, in their table fellowship together, they “came to see.” Thereupon they set out immediately to bear witness to what they now knew. (Religious Education: Sharing our Story and Vision, New York: HarperCollins, 1980, 136).

Experiential Learning Cycle

For any of the passage Use the experiential learning cycle, as presented by John Hendrix (John D. Hendrix, *Nothing Never Happens: An Experiential Learning and the Church*, Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2004), as an outline for the class:

- (1) Experience (“Hook”): “A point of *interest*, related to the learner's experience, expressed in an unusual way, which gives *immediacy* to the content”-
 - For example: Ask, “How have you learned the most important lessons in your life?”
- (2) Exegesis (“Book”): “An accurate, precise exegesis of a biblical word, passage, or theme that proclaims the *principles* of the Scripture and *informs* the content.”
 - Engage in a carefully study of the passage considering its context, meaning, background, and Luke’s purpose, seeking to let the scripture speak for itself, seeking to set aside biases.
- (3) Reflection (“Look”): “The biblical content *reflected* on and held “in solution” with needs, *life situations*, and *personal biography*, which provides intimacy and *intensity* with the content.”
 - For example: Ask, “How does your life experience relate to the biblical story?” and “Where do you see yourself in this story?” Allow time for quiet reflection before dialogue.
- (4) Application (“Took”): “A short, straight 'punch' to motivate learners in the *practice* of Scripture, which gives *involvement* with the content.”
 - For example: Ask, “How can you be more open to a variety of ways of teaching, learning, knowing?” and “How is God calling you to be a disciple of Jesus?”

Lectio Divina Shared in Community

(https://www.saintandrewsabbey.com/Lectio_Divina_s/267.htm)

(A) Listening for the Gentle Touch of Christ the Word

(The Literal Sense)

1. One person reads aloud (twice) the passage of scripture, as others are attentive to some segment that is especially meaningful to them.
2. Silence for 1-2 minutes. Each hears and silently repeats a word or phrase that attracts.
3. Sharing aloud: [A word or phrase that has attracted each person]. A simple statement of one or a few words. No elaboration.

(B) How Christ the Word speaks to ME

(The Allegorical Sense)

4. Second reading of same passage by another person.
5. Silence for 2-3 minutes. Reflect on "Where does the content of this reading touch my life today?"
6. Sharing aloud: Briefly: "I hear, I see..."

(C) What Christ the Word Invites me to DO

(The Moral Sense)

7. Third reading by still another person.
8. Silence for 2-3 minutes. Reflect on "I believe that God wants me to today/this week."
9. Sharing aloud: at somewhat greater length the results of each one's reflection. [Be especially aware of what is shared by the person to your right.]
10. After full sharing, pray for the person to your right.

Note: Anyone may "pass" at any time. If instead of sharing with the group you prefer to pray silently, simply state this aloud and conclude your silent prayer with Amen.

What the Emmaus Road Can Teach Us About Teaching

- The learning experience is a journey that takes time. In this story they walked seven miles (verse 13), which would take about two hours at a somewhat brisk pace of 17 minutes per mile. At the end of the journey they spent more time together at a home. Sometimes learning, especially transformational learning, takes time for reflection. Parker Palmer says that, “To teach is to create space where obedience to truth is practiced” (*To Know As We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education*, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1966).
- The two disciples engaged in dialogue: “they were talking and discussing” (14).
- Whether the disciples were aware of it or not, their learning experience took place in the presence of the risen Christ. When we study the Bible and dialogue about faith issues as a community, it is helpful to do so with an awareness that we do so in the presence of Jesus the “way and the truth,” and to be held accountable by Christ's presence.
- Jesus acted as a mentor to the two disciples. A mentor is one who guides in the issues of everyday life through personal conversation and example. A mentor walks with another.
- Teaching occurred on the road and in a home. Christian education is not confined to a church classroom, but happens in the church hallways and parking lot, in the fellowship hall and sanctuary, at home around the kitchen table, in the workplace and at our places of recreation.
- Jesus asked questions. He asked questions that did not require a “yes” or “no” answer, but helped the disciples share their experience and what it meant to them: “What were you discussing,” “What things [took place]?” (17-19). He listened to the disciples’ answers and asked follow up questions. He allowed the two disciples to think and discover answers on their own. Sharing our stories and attempting to work out their meaning with words can help us process the experience. Part of the effective teacher's role is to listen.
- Jesus did ask one question, expecting an affirmative answer, to make an important point, “Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” (26)
- At one point during the journey and in the midst of the teaching experience, Luke tells us, “They stood still” (17). Sometimes amid our walking, talking, and questioning, it is helpful to pause, reflect, analyze, meditate, ponder, and process what we've been hearing and thinking about. Sometimes, when teaching, we need to stop and stand still for a moment or two. As the Psalmist intoned, “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).
- Jesus said that the two disciples were foolish and slow to believe (25). They lacked understanding, and not only that, they were slow to comprehend when given the information that could have informed them. This may sound harsh of Jesus to say, but it sometimes takes a jolt to shake us out of our set ways of thinking. We all come to the learning experience lacking understanding. That is why we need teaching. We have our blind spots. We are resistant to change at times. We live in bubbles of our own perspectives and need to see the world through the eyes of another and most importantly through the eyes of Christ. I'm hearing a Brandon

Heath song in my head right now, “Give me Your eyes for just one second, Give me Your eyes so I can see, Everything that I keep missing, Give me Your love for humanity” (Lyrics © Peermusic Publishing, Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC, ESSENTIAL MUSIC PUBLISHING). Note that later in this passage Luke tells us “their eyes were opened” (31). Learning is an eye-opening experience.

- Jesus offered correction and clarification. Learning is most effective in an environment where learners feel comfortable sharing differences, and ideas can be questioned and challenged.
- Jesus interpreted the scriptures (27). From “Moses to the prophets,” would have been a reference to the Hebrew scriptures or the Christian Old Testament.
- The teaching experience engaged the emotions. The disciples looked sad, upon remembering the events surrounding Jesus' death (17). Later, after their eyes were opened, we can imagine their excitement when they recalled how their “hearts burned within [them],” and when they hurried back to Jerusalem to tell the others what they had experienced. Jesus introduced his reply to the two, calling them foolish, with the exclamation “Oh” (25), a term “which implies strong emotions” (See I. Howard Marshall, *New International Greek Testament Commentary: Commentary on Luke* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1978, 896, and the use of “Oh” in Luke 9:41). Do not be afraid of emotions when teaching. It may be the emotional impact associated with what our mind acknowledges to be true that motivates us to real change in behavior and attitudes.
- As with the story of Mary and Martha, the Emmaus Road story brings out the importance of inviting Jesus in. The two disciples “urged him strongly” to “stay with us” (29). When we urgently seek the presence of Christ and invite him into our educational encounters, our eyes may be opened to learn from him.
- The experience was filled with symbolic images. At the home in Emmaus, it is written that, “When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them” (30). This language is similar to that used at Jesus' Last Supper with the twelve (22:19) and the Feeding of the Five Thousand (9:10-17). These images were rich in meaning for Jesus and the two disciples, for the early Christian community, and have continued to be so for Christians throughout history until today. Symbolic visual images and rituals can enhance the learning experience in ways words alone cannot.
- Breaking bread at the table symbolizes worship and community for Christians, another reminder of worship and the community as whole as an important setting for Christian education.
- Learning is not just a private personal endeavor but occurs in community, through the mutually accountable relationships of a Christian community that studies, prays, ministers, and worships together seeking to discern God's vision. Not that the majority is always right when it comes to the will of God, but a Christ-centered learning community can help correct our excesses and reveal our blind spots.
- This educational experience engaged all of the senses. The smell of baked bread filled the room. They touched the bread as they broke it and passed it to each other. Of course, they used their senses of sight and hearing as they watched and listened to all of the activity and sounds. They tasted the bread as they ate it. This is the bread that Jesus said represented his body broken for

humanity. When we teach, we might think about how to meaningfully engage as many of the senses as possible. Some learn better through hearing (auditory), others visually (visual), still others through touch (tactile). Plus, engaging all of the senses can help all of us no matter our preferred learning style.

- This learning experience led to, and included, immediate action. After learning that they had been in the presence of the risen Christ, within the same hour, they made the seven-mile return journey to Jerusalem (which might have taken them an hour and ten minutes at ten minutes per mile jog or about an hour and half at a very fast thirteen minute per mile walk). In Jerusalem they shared the good news of what they had learned with the eleven disciples, Jesus is alive and appeared to them on the road (33-35). When we teach, we hope that students apply what they learn and live out of their new understandings of God's kingdom. Christian teachers seek to facilitate a transforming encounter with the living Christ that leads to new ways of acting, thinking, and feeling.

Teaching Suggestions – Prayer (Session 5)

Following are some teaching options you could choose to use with your class along with your own ideas.

Scripture Focus: Luke 10: 38-42, 11:1-4 (Luke’s version of the Lord’s Prayer)

Overview

After sharing a story that ends with Jesus imploring the listeners to “go and do,” Luke describes a scene at the home of Martha and Mary, where Martha is reprimanded for her busyness and Mary praised for sitting and listening. Luke moves back and forth between the action of the Samaritan and Martha and the quiet attentiveness of Mary toward Jesus. There is a time for action and a time for prayer.

Mary is commended for spending time sitting quietly at Jesus’ feet. She has often been used as an example of prayerfulness in the spiritual life.

Next Luke, presents his concise version of Jesus’ model prayer. While we may tend to think of this as the prayer of an individual, note that the prayer is a community prayer using “us,” “our,” and “we.” This prayer is short but packed with meaning and can be thought of as the mission of the church.

As in each of these sessions, the key question is, “What does this study teach us about what it means to be a disciple community, loving God and neighbor?”, specifically, “How can we as a disciple community (First Baptist Church) love God and neighbors through prayer?”

Open

Move to the left or right

Invite class members to participate in this highly scientific psychological study. Ask class members to stand in the middle of room and then choose to move to the left or right of the room depending on their choices. Or, have class members remain seated and point to the left or the right of the room. Class members must choose one or the other (forced choice). Note that this is not a highly scientific psychological study. Have fun with it. Also this has nothing to do with politics 😊.

<u>Move your the Left</u>	or	<u>More your the Right</u>
Read a book		Play a game
Pray		Serve
Day of rest and relaxation		Day of fun activities
Pet the dog		Walk the dog
Listen to music		Sing
Chess		Checkers
Cat		Puppy

Watching the flowers grow	Planting the flowers
Park bench	Walk in the park
Dramatic movie	Action movie
Cup of tea	Cup of coffee
Locked in your room for a day	Locked out of the house for a day
Stop doing this	I kind of like this

Did you go more often
to the Left or to the Right?
Mary? Martha?

If you went to the left more often are you more like Mary?
If you went to the right more often are you more like Martha?

Are you More Like Martha or Mary?

- When entertaining guests in your home do you find that you are more focused on tasks such as getting the food prepared, the home ready, or making sure everyone has what they need, or are you more focused on talking and listening to your guests and learning how they are doing? Or both?
- When going on a trip with a family or friends, are you more focused on packing the car, making sure you have everything you need, and following the directions or are you more focused on interacting with everyone in the car? Or both?
- (Instead of either of these questions you might create a scenario that better fits your class members)
- Are you more like Mary or Martha?

Sitting at Jesus' Feet

- Describe a time when you have felt especially close to Jesus.
- Describe a time when you have felt God speaking to you.

What is Prayer?

What is prayer? What does prayer mean to you?

Study

Lectio Divina

Prayerfully read the scripture passage (Luke 10:38-42) using the Lectio Divina method (see attached guide).

Questions

- Can we give Martha some love? Was Jesus too hard on Martha?
- What did Jesus mean when he said, "Mary has chosen the better part?"
- The Lord's Prayer:

- What is included?
- What is the deeper meaning behind each line of the prayer?
- Is anything missing?
- Is the Lord's prayer all we need?

Emphasize

Using your own study and the material provided, provide background and context and emphasize the main points in the story.

1. Much can be explored here about the balance of action and prayer in the Christian life by thinking about Martha and Mary and Jesus' words, "Mary has chosen the better part."
2. We often think of prayer as asking God for things. An important aspect of prayer, as we learn from Mary, is listening. Prayer is enjoying God's presence and listening to God.
3. In American culture we tend to be individualistic. We may think of the Lord's prayer as the prayer of an individual but the wording is, "us," "our," and "we," instead of "me," "my," and "I."
4. The Lord's prayer is packed with meaning. It could be considered a mission statement for the church. Explore the depth of each line in the prayer.

Reflection: What does prayer mean to our church and to me?

Questions

- Name a time and place where you felt blessed and affirmed by Jesus. How did that feel?
- Are you more like Martha or Mary?
- What does it mean to pray alone as a part of a community—the body of Christ?

Guided Prayer Experience (Luke 10:38-42)

Using the attached guide, lead the class members in a prayer experience to help them encounter God through the story.

Application: So what now?

Given what you have learned from this Bible Study and given our uniqueness as a disciple community, what now? How will we think, feel, or live differently as a result of God's call through this Bible study?

Contemplative Prayer

Lead the class in a contemplative prayer experience. The practice of contemplative prayer is simple but can be quite difficult. Our minds are not easily quieted and tend to race from one thought to the next. Here are some suggestions for a group engaging in contemplative prayer: (1) Sit up straight in a comfortable position with eyes closed or focused on a point on the floor or table in front of you. Attempt to free your mind of distractions; (2) Do not approach contemplative prayer with any agenda other than to be with God. (3) When practicing contemplative prayer, it can be helpful to use a sacred word. Any word that reminds you of God's presence can work, for example: God, Jesus, love, grace, or peace. The word is not to be repeated continuously, but is repeated only when our mind is distracted.

Whenever our mind begins to wonder, we start trying to figure God out, or we find ourselves initiating the conversation with God, saying our sacred word can bring us back to the center of God's presence; (4) Decide on a period of time for the prayer and invite the class to spend that time simply being still in God's presence; (5) Say, "Amen," and invite the class to discuss the experience.

Walk the Labyrinth

Plan a time to walk the Labyrinth as class or as individuals. For those Marha's who prefer action, it can help them (us) focus on listening and spending time with God while still moving.

Practice a variety of ways of praying

- Choose from the daily reflections on prayer
- Choose from the book, *Fifty Ways to Pray*: (See Keith Stillwell to borrow a copy)

The Lord's Prayer in Luke

Close in prayer by saying together the Jesus' model prayer as recorded in Luke. Provide copies of the prayer to each class member.

Lectio Divina

Lectio divina, an ancient Christian practice of prayer and scripture reading, is a prayerful reading of scripture or divine reading of scripture. Traditionally, *lectio divina* consists of four steps, or readings, of a passage of scripture:

(1) Read (*lectio*): Hearing the Word

- Read the Bible passage.
- In silence listen for the word or phrase in the passage that speaks to you.
- Be alert to your senses. What sights, sounds, textures, tastes, and smells does this passage elicit?
- Resist the urge to analyze or critique the passage.
- After reading the passage (or hearing it read) listen to God in silence.
- In group *lectio divina*, group members may share their words or phrases at this time without comment or discussion.

(2) Reflect (*meditatio*): Reflecting on the Word

- Read the passage a second time. You might choose a different translation (and in a group process a different reader) for each step.
- Ask God to speak to you through this passage and the word or phrase God placed on your heart. Meditate on what God is saying to you.
- After reading the passage (or hearing it read) a second time, listen to God in silence.
- In group *lectio divina*, group members may share briefly (in a sentence or two) how they heard God speaking to them.

(3) Respond (*oratio*): Prayers of Response to the Word

- Read the passage a third time.
- What response is being called forth from you in this passage? What is God calling you to think, feel, do, or be? How will you respond to God?
- After reading the passage (or hearing it read) a second time, respond to God in silent prayer.
- In group *lectio divina*, group members may share briefly (in a sentence or two) how they responded to God.

(4) Rest (*contemplatio*): Resting in the Word

- Read the text a final time.
- Allow the word to rest deep within you. Enjoy God's loving presence. Reflect on the entire experience.
- Rest in silence
- In group, *lectio divina*, group members may freely discuss the experience.

(5) Return (*incarnatio*): Putting the Word into Action

- Given this encounter with God, how will you now live? Maybe you will want to decide on one small thing you will do now as you return to the world; to your life?
- Pray silently
- Go live the word.

Guided Prayer experience on Luke 10:38-42

Psalm 1- Listen prayerfully to this Psalm

Think of all the things that distract you right now...

- Things in the room
- Noises
- Things on your mind
- Your “to do list” – things you need to get done
- Worries
- Fun things you will be or want to be doing

Take a few moments to allow yourself to be distracted, restless

Feel free to close your eyes or look around and squirm in your chair

Now sit up comfortably in your chair

Imagine that you are sitting at Jesus’ feet

Focus on Jesus as one by one you begin to set aside your distractions

Until, as much as possible you are focused on just being in Jesus’ presence.

Take a few moments to clear your mind and sit at the feet of Jesus who loves you unconditionally.

Then enjoy being in Jesus’ presence for a few moments.

Now listen to Jesus.

What would Jesus want to say to you right now?

What is Jesus teaching you?

Imagine what would Jesus would say to you

Going back to your earlier distractions, is there anything about your distractions that you would want to ask Jesus about. If so ask and listen for what you feel Jesus is saying about your distractions.

Or simply, is there anything you think Jesus would have to say about your distractions?

Say a prayer of thanks to Jesus for the time you just spent together.

The Lord's Prayer in Luke (Luke 11:2-4)

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread.

And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.

Amen.

Teaching Suggestions – Missions (Session 6)

Following are some teaching options you could choose to use with your class along with your own ideas.

Scripture Focus: Luke 10: 29-37

Overview

The session focuses on missions as a way the church loves neighbors. The parable of the Good Samaritan, is not only a call to help the hurting neighbor, but also a reminder that our neighbor may be the Good Samaritan that helps us. Jesus turned the story upside down by making the Samaritan the hero and putting the listener (us) in the ditch. The kind of neighbor love that Jesus taught is built on mutual relationships of giving and receiving. Neighbor love recognizes the gifts in others.

By making the hated Samaritan the hero of the story Jesus makes a strong statement that loving neighbors includes those who are of different race, culture, religion, social status, and even enemies.

As in each of these sessions, the key question is, “What does this study teach us about what it means to be a disciple community, loving God and neighbor?”, specifically, “How can we as a disciple community (First Baptist Church) love God and neighbors through missions?”

Open

Won't You Be My Neighbor

Play a video clip of Mr. Rogers' singing “It's a Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood” (available on YouTube). If that is not possible, read the lyrics or sing them as a class.

It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood
A beautiful day for a neighbor
Could you be mine?
Would you be mine?

It's a neighborly day in this beauty wood
A neighborly day for a beauty
Could you be mine?
Would you be mine?

I have always wanted to have a neighbor just like you
I've always wanted to live in a neighborhood with you

Let's make the most of this beautiful day

Since we're together, might as well say
Would you be my, could you be my
Won't you be my neighbor?

Questions

- Lead class members to share their personal stories with questions like:
 - What was it like growing up in your neighborhood?
 - Who was your neighbor?
 - Who was a neighbor to you?
 - In what ways have you experienced limits placed on neighborly love by others or by yourself?
 - Who has been excluded from neighborly love?
 - What recent experiences—positive or negative—have you had with neighbors?
 - Did anyone exclude you from their love?
 - Share your own stories as you feel it is appropriate

- What do you think of when you think of a Good Samaritan?

- Have you ever needed help and the help came from an unexpected person?

Good Samaritan or Mary

In the imaginary conversation with the Good Samaritan and Mary. The Good Samaritan was eager to jump in and save people who were drowning, helping with the most immediate need in front of him. Mary eventually wanted to find out why so many people were drowning and seek to get to the root of the problem. Are you more like the Good Samaritan or Mary? Are you more suited to address immediate needs (emergencies) or to get to the root of the problem and address the systemic issues that lead to human need? Is one approach more important than the other?

Study

Emphasize

Using your own study and the material provided, provide background and context and emphasize the main points in the story.

1. How Jews and Samaritans felt about each other
2. Jesus story telling technique: The twists in the story- the listeners changing perspective
 - a. Two Jewish leaders whom the average Jewish person, perhaps, looked on with a mixture of annoyance and respect.
 - b. The third person is expected to be the hero, with whom Jesus audience would identify.
 - c. But when Jesus names the hated Samaritan, they have no choice but to identify with the half-dead man on the side of the road.
 - d. The ending is a surprise
3. The Samaritan offered extravagant care: list
4. Missions is receiving and giving in mutual relationship

Questions

- Why did the priest and the Levite walk by on the other side of the road?
- What would you do?
- Who are the Samaritans today?
- List all of the ways the Samaritan cared for the man on the side of the road.

Read the Cotton Patch Gospel

Clarence Jordan in his *Cotton Patch Gospel* rewrites this parable, setting the story and characters in the south during the 1960s civil rights movement. Read the *Cotton Patch* version of Luke 10:30-35 (available from Keith Stillwell) and discuss.

Reflection: What does this story mean to our church and to me?

A Simple Dramatization of the Parable

Ask for a volunteer to play the half-dead man. This person will sit near the door and try to look half-dead. Ask the rest of the class to exit the room, then return to the room one at a time, pause as they enter to look at the half-dead man, walk by on the other side and return to their seats.

Debrief the experience with these questions: “What were you thinking? How did it feel?” Be sure to include the passers-by as well as the half-dead man.

Godly Play Questions

Godly Play asks some interesting questions about this story:

I wonder if the story would have been any different if all of the people in the story were women, instead of men? Children instead of men?

Listening to the Poor

The student guide to this session shared a quote about a church mission trip. Read the quote and invite class members to respond:

One church group we hosted at VOC [Voice of Calvary] had worked hard all week renovating a house for a low-income family. After dinner, each household member gave a brief testimony, then one of our Black members talked for fifteen minutes on God's concern for racial reconciliation. After he finished, there was a long pause before one volunteer spoke up: “Thanks for the food, but I'm tired, and I came here to serve Christ, not for Black and White. So I'm going to leave.” Soon other group members joined him in making it clear that they had come to do ministry, not learn about racial reconciliation. For another hour, we tried to point out the contradiction in their commitment but made no headway. As they left the house, we felt devastated.

They had come to do something for the poor. But they weren't willing to listen and learn from the very people they considered themselves serving, only to tell and do.

Your Neighbors

Think of the past week (or month)

- Who was a neighbor to you?
- Who passed you by when you were lying on the side of the road?
- Whom did you see lying on the side of the road and you stopped to help?
- Who did you see lying on the side of the road and you walked on by?

Application: So what now?

Given what you have learned from this Bible Study and given our unique gifts as a disciple community, what now? How will we think, feel, or live differently as a result of God's call through this Bible study?

Describe Asset-Based Community Development (Daily Reflections)

Think about the missions you have been involved with or the missions our church is involved with: Is this approach used? How could it be used? What would it look like if we practiced Asset-Based Community Development?

“Go and do likewise”

Plan to get involved in missions with your church family this week or month:

Soup Kitchen: Mondays, 9:30

Clothes Closet: Wednesdays, 6:00

Medical Clinic: Contact Keith Felton

Emma Quire Center, Owsley County: See Keith Felton for information on how you can get involved there.

Other?

Your Neighbors

Think about your neighbors (people who actually live in your neighborhood, co-workers, people you meet as you go about your daily activities). Are there those with whom you have difficulty relating, maybe because they come from a different backgrounds or culture than you, your interests are not the same, or perhaps they have a difficult personality? How can you be a neighbor to these people with whom you have difficulty relating? Are there groups in your community that you do not interact with much? Could you, and would you, make an effort to reach out to any of these groups?

The Servant Song

Play the Servant Song in closing. Notice how the song speaks to the themes of the parable of the Good Samaritan: mutual service, care, traveling on a journey.

The Servant Song (David Haas)

Will you let me be your servant
Let me be as Christ to you
Pray that I might have the grace
To let you be my servant too

We are pilgrims on the journey
We are travellers on the road
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load

I will hold the Christ light for you
In the night time of your fear
I will hold my hand out to you
Speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping
When you laugh, I'll laugh with you
I will share your joy and sorrow
Till we've seen this journey through

Will you let me be your servant
Let me be as Christ to you
Pray that I might have the grace
To let you be my servant too

Teaching Suggestions – Witness (Session 7)

Following are some teaching options you could choose from to use with your class along with your own ideas.

Scripture Focus: Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:3-8; Luke 4:16-21

Overview

When we think of bearing witness, we may think of sharing a plan of salvation. However, to witness is to invite people to become of part of the community of the Kingdom of God. To join a way of life as God intends.

The good news to which we are called to bear witness, the good news that we share, is Jesus (Luke 4:16-21). Certainly, Jesus' death and resurrection is a very important part of the Good News to share, but the whole life of Jesus is the good news we proclaim.

If we are inviting people to join a community under the reign of God, then we are interested in all of Jesus' life and teaching. We want to learn all we can about what the Kingdom of God is all about.

Open

Questions

- Who shared the Good News with you?
- How did you learn about Jesus' life and teachings?

Study

Emphasize

Using your own study and the material provided, provide background and context and emphasize the main points in the passages.

1. Jesus told his disciples that they would be his witnesses (Luke 24:48, Acts 1:8). They were witnesses to his life and teaching--to his death and resurrection. They were to share a witness to all of these things.
2. While Jesus' death and resurrection were very important parts of the story or the good news that they were to share, they were to bear witness to the whole life and teachings of Jesus (Luke 24:44-49, Acts 1:3-8). When they were looking to find disciple to replace Judas, it was important that they had been with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry.
3. Before Jesus' ascension into heaven, he spent 40 days with them, "speaking about the kingdom" (Acts 1:3). The Kingdom of God or reign of God is life as God intends. The kingdom is a

community of followers of Jesus' life and teachings. Discuss the characteristics of God's Kingdom.

4. The church is a witness of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The church bears witness to life as God intends (God's Kingdom) in all we do: worship, study, mission, prayer, service, business meetings, church budget, hallway conversations, church supper, in how we welcome people, everything we do is a witness—a message.

Questions

- What does it mean to be witnesses? For Jesus' disciples in the New Testament? For us today?
- What is the Good News that we are to share?
- What are the characteristics of the Kingdom of God—of life as God intends? (draw on your memory and that of your class as to the teachings of Jesus about what life is like under the reign of God. Much more about the Kingdom of God that we bear witness to, can be found in the larger chapter on "Witness." See the six points under the section headed, "The Kingdom of God is...")

Reflection: What does this story mean to our church and to me?

Quotes: You Shall be my Witnesses

Choose some of the quotes from the full chapter, listed on the attached handout, "You Shall Be My Witnesses." You may want to provide copies. Read some of the chosen quotes invite the class to respond. How are these quotes examples of bearing witness?

Question

- What does it mean to bear witness to Christ's life, death, and resurrection?
- What does it mean for a church to bear witness to Christ's life, death, and resurrection?

Application: So what now?

Given what you have learned from this Bible Study and given our unique gifts as a disciple community, what now? How will we think, feel, or live differently as a result of God's call through this Bible study?

Testimony

Share your testimony of how you came to be a follower of Jesus, invite class members to share their testimony, enlist a class member in advance

The Community is a Witness

Think of the various functions and activities of the church. Discuss how each can be a witness (or give a false impression of God's intent):

- Worship
- Bible study

- Prayer
- Missions
- Care
- Church supper
- Ministry team meetings and business meeting
- Church budget
- Hallway and parking lot conversations

To Whom Do We Bear Witness

Think about your relationships: Family, friends, co-workers, people you meet going about your daily tasks: grocery store, gas station, places of recreation, restaurants, other. List them.

How can you bear witness with these people? How can our church bear witness with these people?

Representing the Kingdom of God

Read the story, Representing the Kingdom of God, (attached) and discuss.

- When it comes to representing the life of Christ are there advantages to being in the minority?
- How can we as a church represent the Kingdom of God even without words?

You Shall Be My Witnesses

- (1) If the Good News is the presence of the kingdom of God, then “evangelism” is much more than “saving souls.” Evangelism means sharing and showing to the world how to realistically, faithfully, and creatively respond to the real needs of a world laboring under ongoing rebellion. Evangelism means living according to the ways of the kingdom of God and inviting others to join us on the way. Evangelism is not selling Jesus, but showing Jesus; evangelism is not mere telling about Christ, but about being Christ. (Lee Camp, *Mere Discipleship: Radical Christianity in a Rebellious World*, Grand Rapids Michigan: Brazos Press, 2008, 192)
- (2) For from Jerusalem there went out into the world, men, twelve in number, and these illiterate, of no ability in speaking: but by the power of God they proclaimed to every race of men that they were sent by Christ to teach to all the word of God; and we who formerly used to murder one another do not only now refrain from making war upon our enemies, but also, that we may not lie nor deceive our examiners, willingly die confessing Christ. For that saying, The tongue has sworn but the mind is unsworn, might be imitated by us in this matter. (Justin Martyr, early Church Father, *First Apology* 39)
- (3) The practices of the church bear witness to the kingdom: prayer, missions, worship, care, and teaching. These key functions of the church and others are demonstrations of kingdom life. As a community we offer praise and thanksgiving to God in worship thereby showing to the world where our loyalties lie. Our sacred symbols and symbolic acts in worship—communion, baptism, the cross, Bible, and others—embody and share the message. Kingdom people talk to God and listen to God and hold up the concerns of the world in prayer. When we engage in missions and care for one another, we continue the work of Christ who taught us to love our neighbors. The task of teaching shows that we continue to follow and learn from Jesus as disciples. All of these functions proclaim in concrete and symbolic ways, what it means to be a Christian community. (Keith Stillwell).
- (4) What would our evangelism look like if we considered a stranger—someone not like us, someone who did not believe like us, someone whose life was very different than ours, someone whose opinions were strange to us, someone whose appearance or language or economic status was foreign to us—as a guest of Christ? Or even as Christ himself? What would our evangelism look like if we saw our role as that of host? (Phill Nall and Mark Price, *Hospitality Evangelism: Sharing the Bread of Life, Leaders Guide*, Atlanta, GA: Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, 1999, 4).
- (5) All things being equal, effective evangelism is a result of listening. It is unlikely that we will hear God’s voice unless we have contact with God, God’s people, and the rich diversity of God’s world. Moreover, it is unlikely we will share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others or do anything about the conditions that adversely shape their lives unless we have listened to them. People will pour themselves out to those who have loving hearts and ears to listen (Paul R. Dekar, *Holy Boldness: Practices of an Evangelistic Lifestyle*, Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2004, 81).

Representing the Kingdom

The church is called to represent the kingdom. I once heard an African-American woman on the radio telling her story. I wish I remembered her name and the context. She was a child when her parents moved into an all-white neighborhood—the first black family in that neighborhood. She told of how her parents pushed their children to be “better than good.” They were expected to excel in school. It was very important how they comported themselves. They kept an immaculate lawn and house. She said that she used to think her parents were just high achievers, but later she realized that they were being “representational.” They felt the pressure of being the only black family and thus representing all black families. They wanted to give no reason for others to criticize them.

Churches in communities, where Christians are in the minority, often feel that same pressure to represent Christ and all Christians—to counteract negative or inaccurate stereotypes of Christians held by non-Christians. Our church partners with a church in a Muslim country. They are officially recognized and are free to gather and worship, but it is against the law to proselytize a Muslim. To American Christians this might seem like a restriction that would make the church’s witness impossible, but not to our partner church. They believe that they have a witness in the way they love their Muslim neighbors, by the way they conduct their business honestly, by the way they treat each other, by the joy they express, by their faithfulness to Christ in Bible study and worship, and by singing through open windows. All of us who have visited our partner church come away impressed with the power of their witness without words. The mission of every church in every setting is to represent Christ and Christianity to world that is watching.

Teaching Suggestions – Care (Session 8)

Following are some teaching options you could choose from to use with your class along with your own ideas.

Scripture Focus: Luke 10:29-37; Luke 4:18-19; Acts 6:1-6 (and a number of other passages demonstrating the ministry of care in the life of Jesus and the church)

Overview

Beginning with “seeing” and “having pity” the Good Samaritan then shows care for the man on the side of the road through at least eight caring actions. This story Jesus shared in answer to questions about loving neighbors (Luke 10:29-37)

Jesus’ mission statement, announced as he was beginning his ministry, is all about care—care for all people who need care—for the poor, the captives, the blind, the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19).

All throughout Jesus ministry, everywhere he went, all along the way, Jesus cared. He cared all kinds of people in all kinds of situations: people considered unclean, the sick, women, the vulnerable, even with criminals while dying on a cross.

The early church organized to care for others by establishing roles in the community, like deacons.

Open

Prayer: Identify those in Need of Care

List specific people in need of care that your class members are aware of. List many different situations in which people need care. Pray.

How Our Church Cares

List all (or at least some) of the ways our church shows care.

When Have You Been Cared For?

Invite class members to share about a time when they were the recipient of care from the church community.

Study & Reflection

Emphasize

Using your own study and the material provided, provide background and context and emphasize the main points in the passages.

1. Discuss all the ways the Good Samaritan cared for the man in the ditch, beginning with “seeing” and having “pity.” Care begins when you “love your neighbor as you love yourself.”
2. Jesus’ own mission statement was all about care.
3. Jesus cared for all kinds of people in many different situations. Some of the people Jesus cared for were considered unclean and untouchable. There are many life situations where our neighbors need care today. Some of our church members, friends, neighbors, strangers in our community and world are forgotten, ostracized, and considered “unclean.”
4. Jesus cared “on the way.”
5. The early church organized by naming deacons (servants) to provide for the widows who were neglected at meals and provide other ministries.

Good Samaritan Video

The video portrays the extensive care given by the Good Samaritan. Watch the video:

<https://vimeo.com/251750484>

- How did you feel watching the video?
- Ask God to help you see people in need of care.
- Commit to showing care to others as God leads.

Care in the Life of Jesus

James Stillwell presents a number of situations in the life of Jesus when he showed care. Choose some of these situations to discuss as a class:

- (1) Jesus’ mission statement, announced at his home town synagogue as he began his public ministry, was all about care: care for the poor, prisoners, the blind, the wounded, and those burdened by debt (Luke 4: 18, 19). How can my church or small group make an impact on the various groups mentioned by Jesus? Brainstorm!
 - The poor:
 - Prisoners:
 - The blind (and others with disabilities):
 - The wounded (physically, psychologically, sociologically, spiritually):
 - Those burdened with debt: (forgiving debt was supposed to be the literal meaning of proclaiming the year of Jubilee):
- (2) Jesus was willing to stretch and touch the “unclean.” Luke 5:12-14
 - What people-groups have sometimes been treated as “unclean” in the lives of people or churches?
 - Peter had an experience where God directly told him not to avoid Gentiles (Acts 10). Later, Paul had to confront Peter for not being willing to share table fellowship with Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-14). What was the solution in Acts 6 when a certain ethnic group was being neglected?
- (3) Read Luke 5:17-25
 - What do you notice about the paralyzed man?
 - Who are the “four to carry you” that you could call at 2 am if you had an emotional emergency?
 - Forgiveness is mentioned in the passage. How is it true that sometimes we need someone else to help carry us to a place of forgiveness?

- How do you resolve the paradox of Galatians 5:2, which tells us to carry one another's burdens, and Galatians 5:5, which tells each of us to carry our own?

(4) Read Luke 8:26-39.

- Who do we tend to react when someone enters our space and appears to be out of control?
- What can be one outcome when someone experiences dramatic healing that positively affects their mental health? (Luke 8:35)
- How does the 12th Step of Alcoholics Anonymous (pass this teaching on to others) relate to Jesus' word to the formerly demonized? (Luke 8:39)
- What do you notice about the past of one of Jesus' closest female disciples (Luke 8:2)?

(5) Luke 8:40-56 tells two stories about women: one at the onset of puberty, and the other who was dealing with an ongoing issue of nonstop menstruation.

- The young girl in the beginning of the passage was likely at the common age of child marriage, and was likely "scared to death" that her life as a little girl would soon be over. How did Jesus deal with the young girl after she was healed?
- There is a need in our day for caring ministry for those who have lost their innocence too young, whether by sexual abuse, child trafficking, child marriage, or other such trauma. What can you or your church do to make a difference in such situations?

(6) The woman with the "issue of blood" was courageous more than we in the modern world realize. She was willing to make Jesus ceremonially unclean in order to find healing for her condition, for the laws of Leviticus would have prevented him from having physical contact with her. (Lev. 15:10)

- Ask yourself, "Am I a safe person, for someone to open up and share with me shame-filled details about their life?"
- Also, "Do I know a counselor I can recommend who is trained to deal with people's intimate life details they might not be ready to share with others?"
- What resources are available to people in your community who need counseling or health care, perhaps at a reduced financial cost?
- What places can people find where they can get help in a safe way from difficult situations, such as a women's shelter?

(7) Care in the same place or at the same time as liturgy or instruction (Luke 13:10-17, especially verse 13)

- Can care happen at the same place or the same time as the place or time for worship or your faith community's religious education?
- What sort of healing interactions can happen when your faith community is gathered for worship or instruction? How can worship itself be healing?

(8) Jesus cared for others even in the midst of his death on a cruel, Roman cross. See John 19:25-27.

- How can we interact with others even in their time of dying to help them to cover such important bases as Jesus achieved in that moment?

The Role of the Deacon

Ask: "What is the role of the Deacon?"

Use Acts 6:1-6 and the material in the Student Guide, written by Dr. Keith Felton, to discuss the role of the deacon.

Application: So what now?

Given what you have learned from this Bible Study and given our unique gifts as a disciple community, what now? How will we think, feel, or live differently as a result of God's call through this Bible study?

Donkey or Stallion

James Stillwell makes an interesting suggestion:

"Some have found it helpful to think of 'pathways of life' in order to develop caring relationships in your whole life. The idea is to go to the same restaurant, the same post office, the same grocery store, etc., in order to develop relationships in order to care for people more effectively....

Perhaps that is one reason why [Jesus] rode at a donkey's pace rather than galloping into town on a stallion. He was able to slow down to touch and heal someone who was 'on the way.'"

- James asks: "How can you more intentionally structure your life to be a blessing to others?"
- Name some times when you rode through the day on a stallion and times when you rode a donkey.

Care in a Variety of Life Situations

James Stillwell provides a thorough list of situations in which persons may need care (See attached). Look over the list with your class. Select some of the situations and discuss how the church could care for persons in those situations.

Who Do We Care For?

- Care of families of expectant mothers, babies, and young preschoolers
- Care of families that include elementary age children and their caregivers
- Care of families of teens
- Care of college students, students away, those in military or other times of service
- Care of single adults in need of community through all the stages of life
- Care of married couples in their marriages through the stages of marriage
- Care of those going through marital separation or divorce
- Care of those adjusting to remarriage and stepfamilies
- Care of widows and widowers
- Care of senior adults and those who are aging
- Care of the dying and those in Paliative care
- Care of those who are sick and / or hospitalized
- Care of those struggling with mental illness
- Care of all who desire confidential and professional counseling
- Care of those who desire to be married, engaged couples, the newly married, including those who are cohabitating
- Care of those who have experienced miscarriage, death of a child, or infertility
- Care of all those who are grieving
- Care of those undergoing job loss or under-employment
- Care of LGBTQIA persons of all ages
- Care of the parents of LGBTQIA
- Care of those addicted to substances
- Care of those in relationship to those addicted to substances
- Care of those who are in or coming out of abusive relationships
- Care of those coming out of the military or who have experienced the trauma of being first responders
- Care for refugees and displaced persons from other countries
- Care for those dealing with food insecurity.
- Care for those dealing with environmental disaster in their neighborhoods
- Care for victims of rape and sexual assault
- Care for prisoners and inmates and those being released
- Care for families dealing with dysfunctional family members
- Care for persons with disabilities
- Care for the homeless
- And others

Teaching Suggestions – Leadership (Session 9)

Following are some teaching options you could choose from to use with your class along with your own ideas.

Scripture Focus: 1 Peter 2:9-10, Romans 12:1-8, Luke 10:27

Overview

“Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum on which to place it, and I shall move the world” (Archimedes). Long levers than can move the church toward becoming the missional church God intends:

- (1) Loving God and neighbor is where leadership begins. This is our greatest commandment and God’s mission for the church.
- (2) What is the Church? The church is not a business, government, educational institution, or sports team. The church is “*a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people*” 1 Peter 2:9), and “*the body of Christ*” (Romans 12:4-5).
- (3) All Christians are Called and Gifted for Ministry. Every Christian is a minister and given spiritual gifts to carry out that ministry.
- (4) Discerning God’s Vision Together: The church is neither a democracy nor a dictatorship. The church is led by God, so together, as a community, we continually discern God vision and mission.
- (5) The Kingdom of God. When we are faithful to God’s Kingdom call, we provide a glimpse of what God’s future Kingdom will look like (a sign), we offer a small taste of that Kingdom now (a foretaste), and we act as the hands and feet God uses to bring the Kingdom to the world (instrument).
- (6) The Relationship of the Church to Culture. Cultural values such as, individualism, consumerism, competition, power, and numerical growth, are adopted by churches, at times, without evaluating them in light of the life and teachings of Christ.
- (7) Community. The church cultivates Christ-like community which can be challenging at times in a culture that values individualism and independence.
- (8) Think Systemically. Churches that look for overly simplistic answers to perceived problems without taking into consideration the multifaceted system as a whole, may not get to the root of the issues the church faces in our everchanging world.
- (9) The Missional Church. The *church* does not have a mission. *God* has a mission. The church is God’s mission to the world. Everything we do is a part of God’s mission.
- (10) Discipleship. Jesus said, “Take up your cross and follow me.” If we use an attractional model, where the ultimate goal of the church is to attract people, then we may be tempted to make church sound as easy and attractive as possible.
- (11) Organizational Structures and Decision-making processes. Well intentioned churches, who love their neighbors and diligently seek God’s leadership can still be hindered by ineffective organizational structures and decision-making processes.

Open

Question

You meet someone in the community and they ask, “Tell me about your church?” What do you say?

Study

Emphasize

Using your own study and the material provided, provide background and context and emphasize the main points in the passages.

- (1) You may have heard the expression, “We don’t know where we’re going but we’re making good time.” Going really fast in the wrong direction is not very helpful. If our models for the church, if our understanding of the nature and mission of the church is out of line with God’s intent, then a church could be making good time (working hard) in the wrong direction. Our models influence our goals, methods, and outcomes.
- (2) A biblical model for the church can be found in 1 Peter 2:9-10 and Romans 12:1-8. The church is
 - a. A chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people
 - b. The body of Christ
 - c. A connected community—a family
 - d. All members are ministers; every part of the body is important
 - e. Members minister out of their unique spiritual gifts
- (3) The church is not: a business, educational institution, government, sports team. These models could lead a church be focus on numbers for the sake of numbers, entertainment, winning, or customer service, instead of God’s mission.
- (4) The church is a sign, foretaste, and instrument of God’s Kingdom. When we are faithful to God’s Kingdom call, we provide a glimpse of what God’s future Kingdom will look like (a sign), we offer a small taste of that Kingdom now (a foretaste), and we act as the hands and feet God uses to bring the Kingdom to the world (instrument).
- (5) The church doesn’t have a mission. The church is God’s mission to the world.

Reflection: What does this story mean to our church and to me?

Organizational Models

Consider each of the following organizational models in turn. If the church were copy that model, what would it look like? How would the church act? What would its goals be? Etc.

- (1) For Profit Business
- (2) Government Agency
- (3) Sports Team
- (4) Educational Institution
- (5) The Body of Christ

How is the church as God intends it different from the first four organizational models?

Reflection Questions

- (1) What difference does it make in the life of the disciple community when we are fully devoted to God in thought, word, feelings, and action?
- (2) What difference does it make in the disciple community when we offer hospitality and love to all neighbors without discrimination?
- (3) What difference does it make in the disciple community when we understand our true identity and model our church after the biblical images of a Holy Nation, Royal Priesthood, God's Own People, and the Body of Christ?
- (4) What difference does it make in the disciple community when all members see themselves as ministers called and gifted by God and are fully engaged in God's mission?
- (5) What difference does it make when the disciple community prayerfully discerns God's vision together with a passion for carrying out that vision?
- (6) What difference does it make if the disciple community embodies life as God intends in word and action?
- (7) What difference does it make when the disciple community understands its cultural context, appreciates the culture, and acts as salt and light in the culture?
- (8) What difference does it make when the disciple community cultivates Christ-like community through service, fellowship, worship, prayer and Bible study with the Body of Christ and with those we might view as strangers?
- (9) What difference does it make when the disciple community understands that it is God mission to the world in everything it says and does?
- (10) What difference does it make when the disciple community takes up its cross and follows Jesus, learning from Jesus' teachings and engaging in God's mission?

Give me a Lever Long Enough

Eleven "levers" were described in the *Student Guide* and *Putting it into Practice* and listed in the "Overview" above.

- Which of these "levers" if understood and implemented more fully could make the biggest difference in our church fulfilling God's mission?
- Are there others you would add?
- Which of these are the biggest strengths of our church?

Loving God and Neighbor

Does our church place more emphasis on Loving God or Loving Neighbor or both equally?

Building on Our Strengths

Thinking about the functions of the church covered in this series: Community, Worship, Teaching, Prayer, Missions, Witness, Care, Leadership.

- Which are the strengths of our church?
- How might we build on those strengths?
- What are some areas we might improve?

Bulletin Board

The bulletin board in the glass case in the hallway next to the sanctuary has some important things to say about the church and is kind of what this whole series has been about. A copy is attached in case you would like to provide copies:

CONSUMER CHURCH

Church is seen as a dispenser of religious goods and services.

People come to church to be 'fed,' to have their needs met through quality programs, and to have professionals teach their children about God.

I Go to Church

MISSIONAL CHURCH

A body of people sent on a mission.

They gather in community for worship, encouragement, and teaching from the Word in addition to 'feeding' themselves throughout the week.

I Am the church

Discuss the meaning of the bulletin board:

- What does a Consumer Church look like? What are its goals? What does it do? How is it organized?
- What does a Missional Church look like? What are its goals? What does it do? How is it organized?
- What is the difference between "I go to church" and "I am the church"?
- Do you agree that we will never change the world by going to church but only by being the church? If so, why? If not, why not?

Application: So what now?

Given what you have learned from this Bible Study and given our unique gifts as a disciple community, what now? How will we think, feel, or live differently as a result of God's call through this Bible study?

God's Calling for FBC Frankfort

- What are the unique gifts of our church?
- Given our unique gifts as a church and your understanding of Jesus' example and teachings, what is God's mission for us specifically?
- What are some specific actions are church could take to carry out God's mission?
- How can you personally be a part of God's mission through the church? What are the spiritual gifts God has given you to help the church carry out God's mission?

CONSUMER CHURCH

Church is seen as a dispenser of religious goods and services.

People come to church to be 'fed,' to have their needs met through quality programs, and to have professionals teach their children about God.

I Go to Church

We will never
change the
world by going
to church

We will only
change the
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the church

MISSIONAL CHURCH

A body of people sent on a mission.

They gather in community for worship, encouragement, and teaching from the Word in addition to 'feeding' themselves throughout the week.

I Am the church