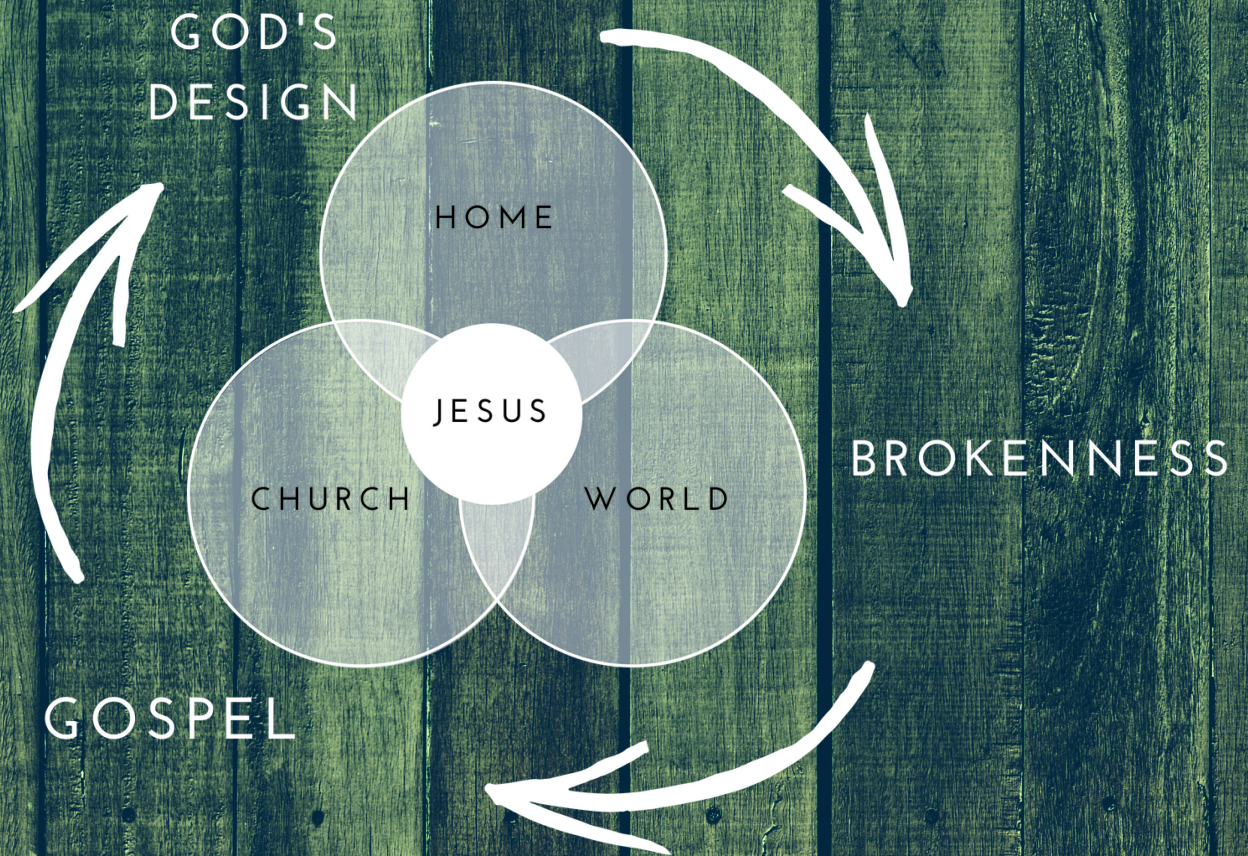


Circles

REACHING OUT WITH
THE GOSPEL



GM Curriculum based on the 3 week sermon series
August 2018

Content Overview

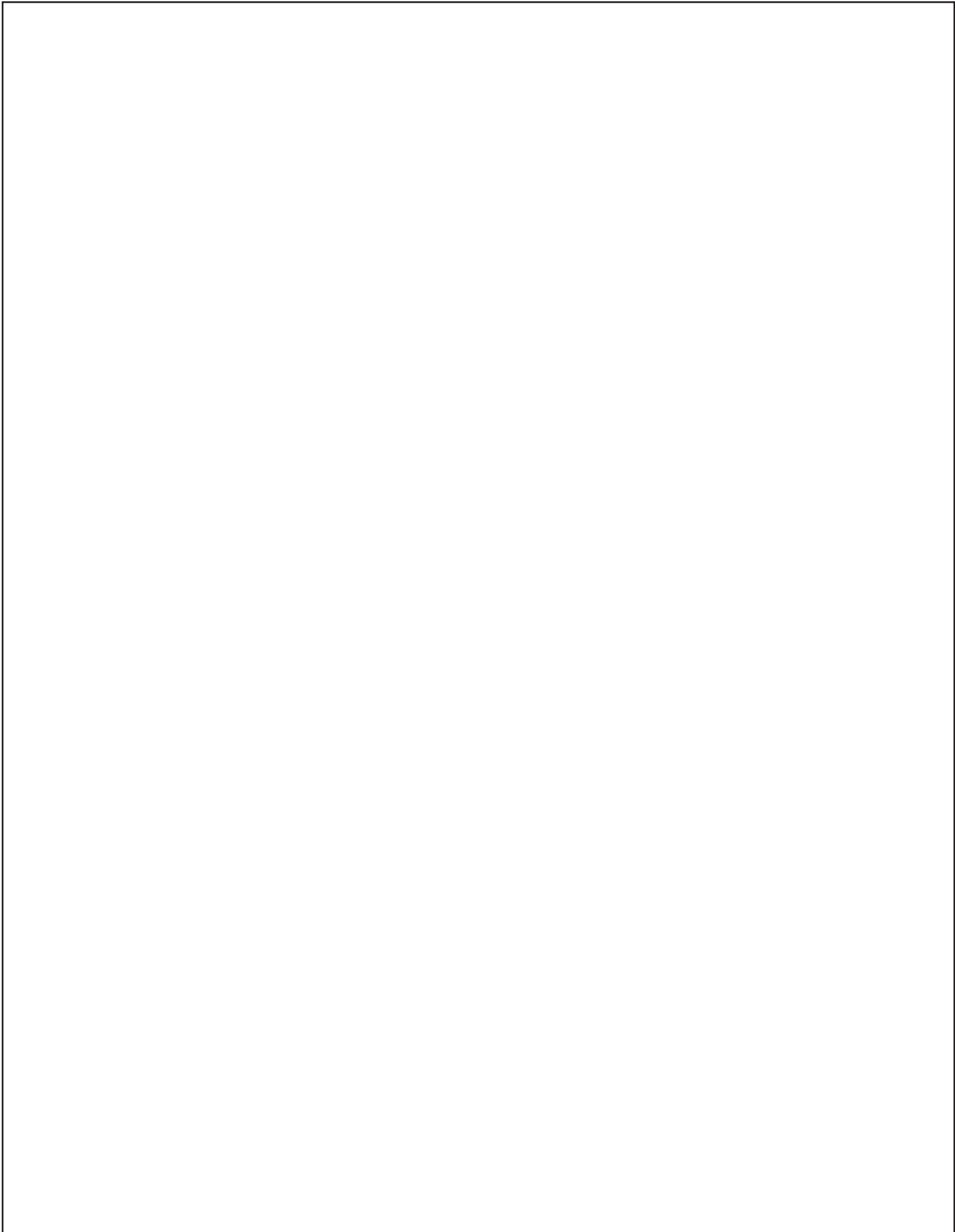
<u>WEEK #</u>	<u>WEEK OF</u>	<u>STORY TITLE (OR CONTENTS)</u>	<u>PAGE #</u>
		GMBC UPCOMING EVENTS	3
WEEK 1	AUG 26 - SEP 1	PHILIP & THE ETHIOPIAN	4 - 7
WEEK 2	SEP 2 - 8	PARABLE OF THE LOST SON	8 - 11
WEEK 3	SEP 9 - 15	PAUL IN ATHENS	12 - 15
		ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS	16
		COMPONENTS & GROUND RULES	17-18
		ADDITIONAL NOTES / PRAYER REQUESTS	19

25	GM Singles BBQ
26	Life Group Kick-off
26	Baptism Service at the Lake
29	GM Youth: 5th Quarter (Kick-off)
31	Parent's Night Out

2	No Evening Service
3	GM Offices Closed
4	GM Men: Golf @ Quicksand
4-8	GM Life Riders to the Colorado Rockies
5	Awana Kick-Off
9	Lord's Supper (Evening Service)
14-16	Casas Por Cristo
14	Life Group / Sunday School Party Night
15	GM Women: Beth Moore Simulcast
16	101: Starting Point
23	102: Next Steps Class
26	GM Youth: See You at the Pole
28	Parent's Night Out
29	GM Men: Burgers & Bullets
30	Parent Dedication
30	GM Annual Business Meeting

2	GM Men: Golf @ Quicksand
10	GM Youth: Fields of Faith
11	Grief Share Class Begins
12	Life Group / Sunday School Party Night
13	GM Life Riders: The Grove
14	Lord's Supper (Evening Service)
20	GM Singles: Bowling
20	CVBA Conference
21	CVBA Annual Business Meeting @ FBC
26	Parent's Night Out
28	Harvest Festival
31	GM Youth: 5th Quarter

3	GM Women: Christmas Family Photo Op
4	Daylight Savings (Fall Back)
4	201: Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts
4	Lord's Supper (Evening Service)
4	Quarterly Business Meeting
9	Life Group / Sunday School Party Night
11	Thanksgiving Celebration
16	Parent's Night Out
17	GM Life Riders: Fredricksburg
21-22	GM Offices Closed
22	Happy Thanksgiving
25	No Evening Service



Acts 8:26-40

²⁶ An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip: 'Get up and go south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is the desert road.) ²⁷ So he got up and went. There was an Ethiopian man, a eunuch and high official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to worship in Jerusalem ²⁸ and was sitting in his chariot on his way home, reading the prophet Isaiah aloud.

²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, 'Go and join that chariot.'

³⁰ When Philip ran up to it, he heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, 'Do you understand what you're reading?'

³¹ 'How can I,' he said, 'unless someone guides me?' So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³² Now the Scripture passage he was reading was this:

He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb is silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

³³ In his humiliation justice was denied him.
Who will describe his generation?
For his life is taken from the earth.

³⁴ The eunuch said to Philip, 'I ask you, who is the prophet saying this about—himself or someone else?' ³⁵ Philip proceeded to tell him the good news about Jesus, beginning with that Scripture.

³⁶ As they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, 'Look, there's water. What would keep me from being baptized?' ³⁷ Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart you may.' And he replied, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' ³⁸ So he ordered the chariot to stop, and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him any longer but went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ Philip appeared in Azotus, and he was traveling and preaching the gospel in all the towns until he came to Caesarea."



COMPONENTS

WELCOME

Honoring others by welcoming & valuing them

OPENING PRAYER

Inviting God's Holy Spirit into our presence

PURPOSE

Remembering why we are here

GROUND RULES

Establishing healthy boundaries for LIFE Groups

ICEBREAKER

Setting the stage for trust, transparency and relationships

CELEBRATION

Recognizing what God has done in our group

TOPIC

Discussing God's Word together

TAKEAWAY

Applying what we have learned to our lives

CLOSING PRAYER

A time to praise God and share our requests and needs

PLACES TO PLAY

Allowing others to lead in LIFE Group the following week by assigning them one of the components

GROUND RULES

CONFIDENTIALITY IS KEY

NO CROSS TALK

DON'T RESCUE

NO FIXING OTHERS

USE "I" STATEMENTS

LISTEN & PAUSE

STAY ON TOPIC

ALLOW OTHERS TO TALK

We are committed to resolving conflict biblically according to **Matthew 18**

WELCOME _____

OPENING PRAYER _____

PURPOSE (WHY ARE WE HERE?) _____

GROUND RULES _____

ICEBREAKER _____

CELEBRATION: Share how our last life group impacted your week?



Lets get started...

Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, was brought before a large council of religious leaders where he spoke the truth about their rejection of and rebellion against God. This sent the men into a tailspin of hatred, and they despised Stephen, stoning him to death. All the while, Stephen was praying for their forgiveness. After Stephen had died, a great wave of persecution began to sweep over the church of Jerusalem. Believers were scattered all over the region. There was one man named Philip who went directly to Samaria, the last place any Jews wanted to go because of the history of prejudice by the Jews against the Samaritans. Today's story begins with God using Philip's obedience to eventually change an entire continent.

H.....

Sometimes we get frustrated with God's leading as if He is demoting us. We tend to think of our spiritual walk as one in which we get rewarded with every new "thing" we do for God. But the truth is God isn't concerned with our status. Philip was successful in his preaching ministry to great crowds in Samaria, but he left it all when God called him to "go to a desert road." Philip, without questioning God, obeyed, not knowing the next step, but he knew God's design and purpose was the ultimate goal. He trusted God to show him the next step as He saw fit. God has not changed, and He still uses His people to accomplish His purpose. How we respond to Him in obedience is the greatest test of our faith.



As you are listening today, be thinking of how you respond to the Holy Spirit when His instructions don't make sense.

KEY VERSE

Acts 8:35

"Philip proceeded to tell him the good news about Jesus, beginning with that Scripture."

SUMMARY

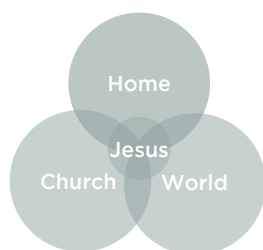
When the Holy Spirit prompts us, we are to respond through obedience

The Holy Spirit is always working, even before we show up

God still speaks to His people through His Holy Spirit

God takes the initiative to involve us in His work and purpose

Who's your
ONE?



LIFECIRCLES

TELL THE STORY: _____

Take it back a page and tell this story from God's Word as best as you can without teaching. You don't have to memorize it word for word. Try not to express opinions or make your own points. Just tell the story.

ACTS 8:26-40

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN



12
MIN

For the following, use these questions or formulate your own.

What was Philip's first reaction when God told him to "go"?



How did Philip meet the Ethiopian where he was at?

What was the Ethiopian's response to the good news of Jesus?

How does it make you feel when someone gives you only a part of the instructions at a time without giving you the whole picture?



What does it mean to you personally to meet someone where they're at?

How do you respond to the Holy Spirit when His instructions don't make sense?



This week be intentional about asking God where He is working, and join Him there.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

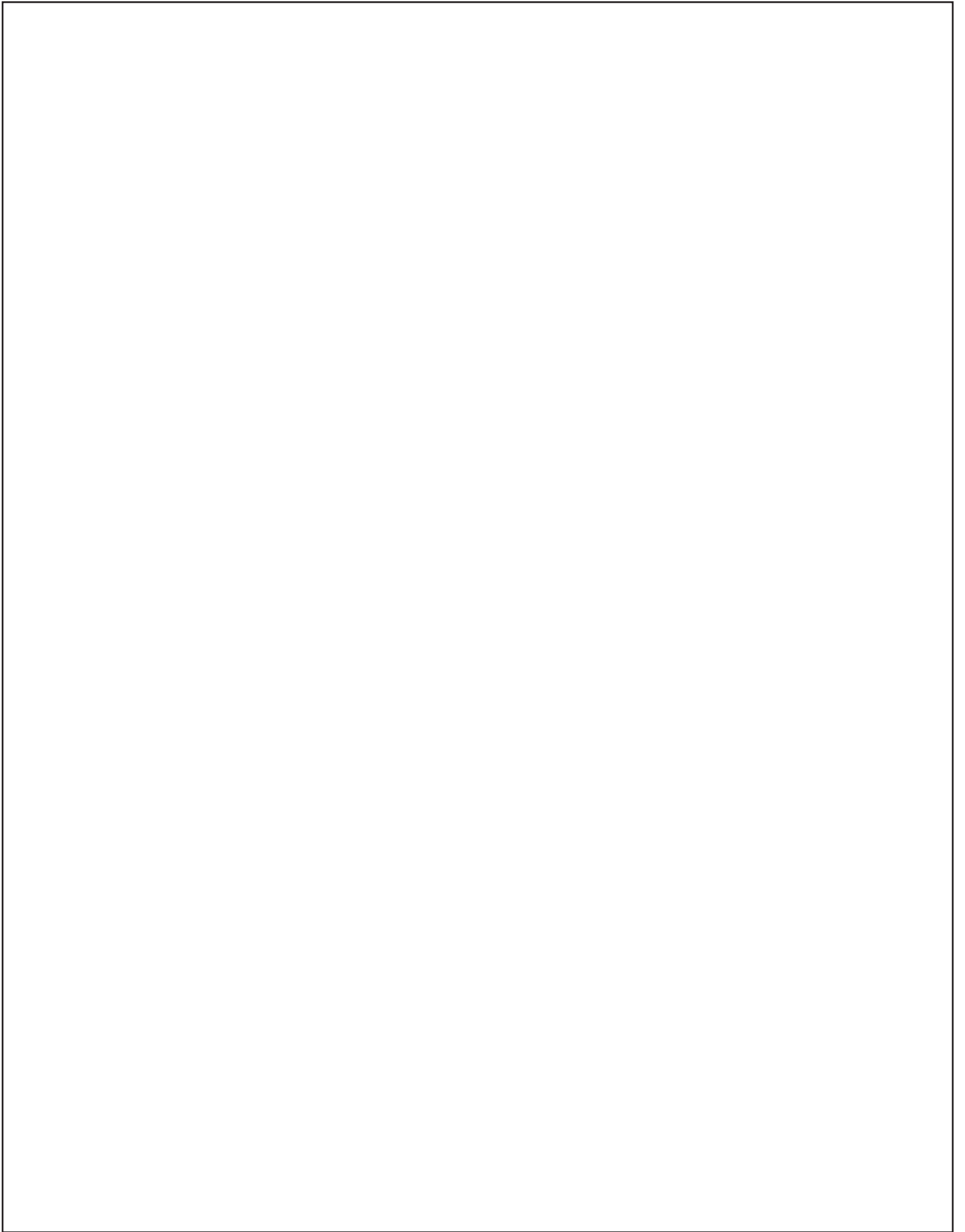
CLOSING PRAYER: _____

45
MIN

10
MIN



REMEMBER TO GIVE OTHERS A PLACE TO PLAY NEXT LIFE GROUP



Luke 15:11-32

¹¹ He also said: 'A man had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate I have coming to me.' So he distributed the assets to them. ¹³ Not many days later, the younger son gathered together all he had and traveled to a distant country, where he squandered his estate in foolish living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he had nothing. ¹⁵ Then he went to work for one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to eat his fill from the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one would give him anything. ¹⁷ When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food, and here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I'll get up, go to my father, and say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. ¹⁹ I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired workers.'" ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father. But while the son was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him. ²¹ The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² 'But the father told his servants, 'Quick! Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Then bring the fattened calf and slaughter it, and let's celebrate with a feast, ²⁴ because this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ 'Now his older son was in the field; as he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he summoned one of the servants, questioning what these things meant. ²⁷ 'Your brother is here,' he told him, 'and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

²⁸ 'Then he became angry and didn't want to go in. So his father came out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he replied to his father, 'Look, I have been slaving many years for you, and I have never disobeyed your orders, yet you never gave me a goat so that I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him.'

³¹ "'Son," he said to him, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"



COMPONENTS

WELCOME

Honoring others by welcoming & valuing them

OPENING PRAYER

Inviting God's Holy Spirit into our presence

PURPOSE

Remembering why we are here

GROUND RULES

Establishing healthy boundaries for LIFE Groups

ICEBREAKER

Setting the stage for trust, transparency and relationships

CELEBRATION

Recognizing what God has done in our group

TOPIC

Discussing God's Word together

TAKEAWAY

Applying what we have learned to our lives

CLOSING PRAYER

A time to praise God and share our requests and needs

PLACES TO PLAY

Allowing others to lead in LIFE Group the following week by assigning them one of the components

GROUND RULES

CONFIDENTIALITY IS KEY

NO CROSS TALK

DON'T RESCUE

NO FIXING OTHERS

USE "I" STATEMENTS

LISTEN & PAUSE

STAY ON TOPIC

ALLOW OTHERS TO TALK

We are committed to resolving conflict biblically according to **Matthew 18**

WELCOME _____

OPENING PRAYER _____

PURPOSE (WHY ARE WE HERE?) _____

GROUND RULES _____

ICEBREAKER _____

CELEBRATION: Share how our last life group impacted your week?



Lets get started...

As Jesus became more and more known around the region, many people would come to hear Him teach, heal, and perform miraculous signs and wonders. Oftentimes there were notorious sinners who came to listen to Him, and many would repent and turn from their sin to follow Jesus. This made the Pharisees and teachers of the religious law complain that He was associating with such despicable people, even eating with them! (Luke 15:1-2) In today's lesson, we see that Jesus responded in the peculiar way of telling stories: The first was a story about a lost sheep; the second was a story about a lost coin; and the third was a story about a lost son; which we're going to hear today.

H.....



Brokenness can mean a lot of things. It can imply that we have imperfections and a messiness to our life. It can be heartbreak. Or it can even mean physical weakness. But brokenness before the Lord is considered a blessing (Mt 5:3). In God's eyes, brokenness is to be broken, crushed and torn in spirit over sin. When we accept Jesus into our life, the Holy Spirit moves in and renovates our soul. He convicts us of the things that keep us from a right standing relationship with Him and begins softening our hearts towards Him, ourselves, and others. In today's story, we will see a broken situation from many points of view, and the Holy Spirit wants to reveal to us how He sees those who are lost and need Him.

As you are listening to the story, be thinking about whom you most relate to, and why.

KEY VERSE

Luke 15:20

"So he got up and went to his father. But while the son was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him."

SUMMARY

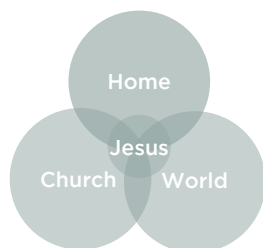
God is always waiting for us with open arms

God desires to restore us in relationship with Him

God can redeem the brokenness of any person, no matter how far they have strayed

God's word is powerful and leads us to change

Who's your
ONE?



LIFECIRCLES

TELL THE STORY: _____

Take it back a page and tell this story from God's Word as best as you can without teaching. You don't have to memorize it word for word. Try not to express opinions or make your own points. Just tell the story.

LUKE 15:11-32

PARABLE OF THE LOST SON



12
MIN

For the following, use these questions or formulate your own.

Identify the characters in this story.



What do we learn about God in this story?

Describe the different types of brokenness displayed in this story.

Whom do you relate to most in this story, and why?



How does this story model true repentance?

In what ways do your actions resemble this when dealing with the brokenness of others?



How can you show the Father's love in reconciliation this week to someone in your life circles?

PRAYER REQUESTS:

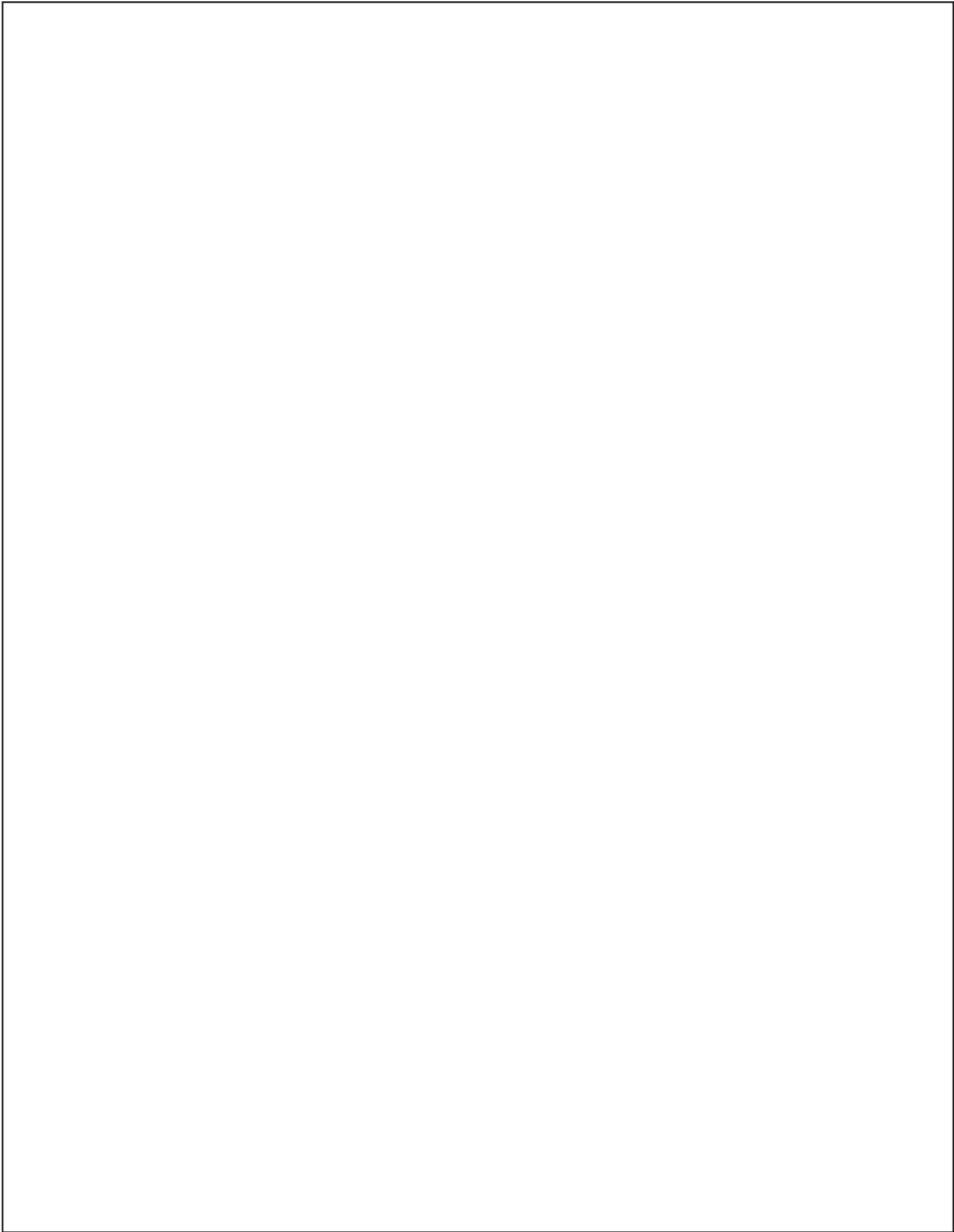
CLOSING PRAYER: _____

45
MIN

10
MIN



REMEMBER TO GIVE OTHERS A PLACE TO PLAY NEXT LIFE GROUP



Acts 17:16-34

¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed when he saw that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with those who worshiped God, as well as in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also debated with him. Some said, "What is this ignorant show-off trying to say?"

Others replied, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign deities"—because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.

¹⁹ They took him and brought him to the Areopagus, and said, "May we learn about this new teaching you are presenting?" ²⁰ Because what you say sounds strange to us, and we want to know what these things mean." ²¹ Now all the Athenians and the foreigners residing there spent their time on nothing else but telling or hearing something new.

²² Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that you are extremely religious in every respect. ²³ For as I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed: 'To an Unknown God.' Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it—he is Lord of heaven and earth—does not live in shrines made by hands. ²⁵ Neither is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives everyone life and breath and all things. ²⁶ From one man he has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. ²⁷ He did this so that they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ For in him we live and move and have our being, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also his offspring.' ²⁹ Since we are God's offspring then, we shouldn't think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image fashioned by human art and imagination.

³⁰ "Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ because he has set a day when he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."

³² When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some began to ridicule him, but others said, "We'd like to hear from you again about this." ³³ So Paul left their presence. ³⁴ However, some people joined him and believed, including Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them."



COMPONENTS

WELCOME

Honoring others by welcoming & valuing them

OPENING PRAYER

Inviting God's Holy Spirit into our presence

PURPOSE

Remembering why we are here

GROUND RULES

Establishing healthy boundaries for LIFE Groups

ICEBREAKER

Setting the stage for trust, transparency and relationships

CELEBRATION

Recognizing what God has done in our group

TOPIC

Discussing God's Word together

TAKEAWAY

Applying what we have learned to our lives

CLOSING PRAYER

A time to praise God and share our requests and needs

PLACES TO PLAY

Allowing others to lead in LIFE Group the following week by assigning them one of the components

GROUND RULES

CONFIDENTIALITY IS KEY

NO CROSS TALK

DON'T RESCUE

NO FIXING OTHERS

USE "I" STATEMENTS

LISTEN & PAUSE

STAY ON TOPIC

ALLOW OTHERS TO TALK

We are committed to resolving conflict biblically according to **Matthew 18**

WELCOME _____

OPENING PRAYER _____

PURPOSE (WHY ARE WE HERE?) _____

GROUND RULES _____

ICEBREAKER _____

CELEBRATION: Share how our last life group impacted your week?



Lets get started...

Paul was a former Pharisee who persecuted Christians, but God dramatically transformed his life. He then spent his life giving all that he had to spread the gospel of Jesus. Paul experienced severe persecution, but that did not stop him from continuing his missionary journies. Paul saw how powerful God's work was as He transformed people through the Holy Spirit. He knew that God was faithful, and he followed the Lord's lead in obedience, even when he did not know where God was leading him. Paul had been imprisoned multiple times for his belief, yet that did not stop him from spreading the Good News.

H
.....

The world we live in is infiltrated with different religions, cults, philosophies, and even some traditional paganism. As you look around your life circles, how do you cope with a society that knows and cares so little about the truth of Jesus Christ? The culture that Paul walked into in today's story may have been a very long time ago, but the concept still holds true in our current society. We live in a world that is consumed by unrecognized idol worship, which is an ignorant worship of an undeserving object. We must turn our eyes to Jesus, recognize the brokenness inside ourselves, and repel all other things in our lives that replace our relationship with the Father. How can we explain the One true God if we ourselves don't even know Him first? In today's story, Paul gives us a great approach to follow when witnessing to others: Use examples, establish common ground, and then move people toward a decision about Jesus. Even if only one person believes, it is worth the effort.



As you are listening today, be thinking about ways in your life you are tempted to water down God's truth to those around you and how you can avoid this in the future.

KEY VERSE

Acts 17:30-31

"Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent,³¹ because he has set a day when he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."

SUMMARY

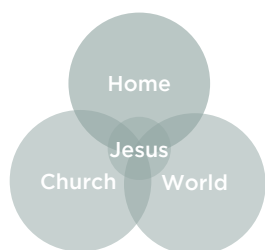
If we seek opportunity to share the Gospel, God will open that door

God is the Creator, not the creation

Don't hesitate to tell others about Jesus due to your fear of their possible response

Although we live in a "Christian" society, most people still do not know God

Who's your
ONE?



LIFECIRCLES

TELL THE STORY: _____

Take it back a page and tell this story from God's Word as best as you can without teaching. You don't have to memorize it word for word. Try not to express opinions or make your own points. Just tell the story.

ACTS 17:16-34 PAUL IN ATHENS



12
MIN

For the following, use these questions or formulate your own.

What upset Paul about Athens, and what did he do about it?



How did he explain the Gospel to the people of Athens?

How did the people respond to the gospel message?

If you had the opportunity to share one or two things about Jesus to a non-believer, what would you say?



Just as Paul used the altar of the "unknown god" as his launch pad to start conversation, what are some starting points you have in your life circles, and how can you use them more effectively?

In what ways are you tempted to water down God's truth to those around you, and how can you avoid this in the future?



What are some specific steps you can take this week to effectively explain the gospel truth to those in your life circles.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

CLOSING PRAYER: _____

45
MIN

10
MIN



REMEMBER TO GIVE OTHERS A PLACE TO PLAY NEXT LIFE GROUP

ICEBREAKER QUESTION IDEAS: (QUICK ONES ARE IN BOLD)

1. **What was your first job?**
2. Tell of a memorable time of cooking in the kitchen?
3. **Act out your favorite animal in 10 seconds.**
4. **What was your favorite pet growing up?**
5. Say a line from your favorite movie (see if group can guess it).
6. Share of an interesting encounter with a police officer.
7. **What is the weirdest job you've ever had?**
8. **What is your worst habit?**
9. **If you could be any item in the grocery store what would you be?**
10. What is your middle name and the meaning behind it?
11. Share of an encounter you had with a famous person.
12. What was your favorite hangout as a teenager?
13. Act out your favorite scene in a movie.
14. What is the worst meal you've ever made?
15. **What is one non-living item you can't live without?**
16. **If you could only eat one thing for dinner (breakfast or lunch), for the rest of your life what would it be?**
17. **What's the last song you listened to?**
18. **Share of two words that describe you best.**
19. What is your biggest phobia?
20. If you were in the Olympics, what sport would it be for?
21. What is one moment in your life that has defined you?
22. **If you could only have one of your five senses, which one would it be?**
23. Share of a time when you laughed at an inappropriate time.
24. (pt 1) If you knew one non-family member had one week to live, what would you do with them? (pt 2) What is keeping you from doing that with them now?
25. If you could be a fly on a wall, where would you most want to be?
26. **What is your favorite soda?**
27. **If you were a magazine, which one would you be?**
28. **If you could be a fictitious superhero, who would you be? Or what super power would you most want?**
29. Greatest peer pressure as an adult?
30. **What is your favorite music genre?**
31. How do you react when people sing "Happy Birthday" to you in a restaurant?
32. When did you last sing to yourself? To someone else?
33. **Who is your favorite singer?**
34. **What is your favorite musical instrument?**
35. What is at the top of your bucket list?
36. How would you describe God to a child?
37. What color best describes you and why?
38. What was the high point of last week? The low point?
39. **What one word would be your theme for the year?**
40. Name one person who has had the biggest impact in your life and why?
41. **If I could visit any place in the world, it would be...**
42. If I had a million dollars to spend for the benefit of mankind...
43. The thing that causes me the greatest satisfaction is...
44. What is your favorite memory as a child?
45. Share something you fear.
46. What's your most embarrassing moment?
47. What would you do with an extra free day off of work?
48. Where would you go if you could go anywhere in the world?
49. **If you could become an animal for one day, which one would it be?**
50. **What is one secret place in your house that you only clean on special occasions (like mother-in-law visiting)?**
51. If you knew your time was cut short, what's one thing you'd change about the way you are now living?
52. If you could be famous, what would you be famous for?
53. If you could go back in time and not return, what would you try to accomplish even if you knew you might change the course of history?
54. If someone were to write a book about you, what do you think the title and theme would be?
55. If your animals could talk, what would they tell you?
56. Which emoji best describes you and why?
57. **What was the make / model / year / color of your first car?**
58. What's your biggest pet peeve?
59. **What's your first name and an adjective that starts with the same first letter, that best describes you? (ie: Carl:Caring)**
60. Favorite Christmas Carol and why?
61. If you could have coffee with anyone in the history of ever, who would it be and why?

COMPONENTS OF A LIFE GROUP

WELCOME

- Makes new believers, visitors, and members feel valued and welcomed
- Begins with our phone calls, continues as they enter our homes, and until they leave
- Establishes a foundation for relationships
- Makes them aware of what's going on and brings focus

OPENING PRAYER

- Invites God's Holy Spirit into our presence
- Prepares our hearts for what God has for us
- Shifts our attention from individual fellowship to the group

PURPOSE

- Express the purpose of why we are meeting as a LIFE Group (to make disciples, reach the lost, connect the unconnected, etc.)
- Helps prepare our hearts and minds for the group
- Must be in alignment with Glen Meadows Vision and Mission

GROUND RULES

- Establishes agreed upon boundaries for a healthy group
- Establishes a safe environment where everyone can share openly and honestly
- Provides biblical guidance for healthy conflict resolution

ICEBREAKER

- Activity that sets the stage for transparency and trust
- Helps create a safe environment and levels the playing field
- May involve low-risk participation
- Game, Testimony, Question, etc
- Celebrating the "wins" and what God is doing through our group

TOPIC/STORY

- This is the "meat" of the group
- Story from God's Word

CLOSING PRAYER

- Re-Focuses our attention to God and His provision
- Personal requests, Group needs, Praise God

PLACES TO PLAY

- Providing others with opportunities to lead by assigning them with components, builds confidence, and models servant leadership and reproducibility

GROUND RULES

WHY GROUND RULES?

Many of us find ourselves cringing when the subject of rules come up. Rules can often indicate limits or restrictions that impede our desired actions. The ground rules we will abide by are specifically designed to give freedom rather than restrictions. It is our desire that through effective ground rules each person will feel the freedom to share from their hearts, feel the assurance of confidence, and experience a group willing to listen. When interacting as a group, we can find ourselves checking out or shutting down for the smallest of reasons. Being aware of our impact on each other is paramount for a safe environment.

CONFIDENTIALITY IS KEY:

We will all do our part to create an environment where everyone can be real, open, and honest with our struggles and victories. What is said in the group stays in the group.

NO FIXING OTHERS:

Try to hear what people are sharing without trying to fix them. If they want your advice, they'll ask for it. If people think that as soon as they share a problem or issue everyone is going to immediately try to fix them (offer advice/solutions), often they simply won't share at all.

LISTEN & PAUSE

Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Don't think about what you're going to say next or how you're going to respond; really listen. After someone shares, give a pause to allow the group to feel the weight of what is being shared and fully consider it before the next person shares. This pause also gives the person time to reflect a little deeper while continuing to share more. Remember, SILENCE IS OK. It gives time for reflection and others to begin sharing.

DON'T RESCUE:

When people are sharing something deeply personal and painful, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation. Often this will cause people to stop sharing and result in not going as deep as they intended. Resist the temptation to rescue people. We must be sensitive to what the Holy Spirit is doing in their life.

USE "I" STATEMENTS:

It's easy to talk about the issues of others; in LIFE Groups we will use "I" statements. We will try to avoid words such as "them," "the church," "us," "we," "he/she," etc. Using "I" statements helps us to focus on what God is doing in our lives and gives us opportunity to self-reflect. This allows maximum potential for effectual change in our lives.

NO CROSS TALK:

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations, texting, or phone calls. Cross talk devalues the person sharing and communicates that they are not as important as what you may be doing. (Be sensitive to those with cell phones—kids, family issues, on-call at work). Remember, when going over the Ground Rules in your group, give those who may be on-call or have children the opportunity to communicate that they may need to take a call or text during group.

STAY ON TOPIC:

Much time and prayer is put into the determination of the biblical direction our church is headed. We must value the importance of that direction in taking it to a heart level in our LIFE Groups during the week. In addition, LIFE Group leaders prepare according to this direction and the topic for each lesson. Rabbit trails may devalue the unity as well as what the Lord is doing in our church body. In honoring each individuals time & schedules, please try to stay on topic with every group question. Rabbit trails can also add time to the end of the LIFE Group and does not honor others in our group who may need to get to their families and/or may need rest for the next day's busy schedule.

ALLOW OTHERS TO TALK:

We all have a story or response to share, making it important that we value each other during LIFE Group. Sometimes we may find ourselves overtalking out of nervousness or even habit. However, to honor each person and their time, we must do our part by keeping our own talk time limited and to the point, giving each person an opportunity to interact.

ADDITIONAL NOTES / PRAYER REQUESTS

Curriculum published by GM Leadership Development Team
Glen Meadows Baptist Church, San Angelo, TX © 2018

