



Week 4 Leader Guide



We pray that our group members would discover the vital role that community plays in being Jesus to the Far Away. Our hope is that each group would then identify steps to live out its unique role as part of God’s mission to redeem the world.

3-5
minutes



In our sermon this week, we saw that as we become more like Jesus, we will be Jesus to the Far Away. We no longer live for ourselves, but we live for the lost.

- What is one thing you learned about God or about people from Sunday’s message?
- How does becoming more like Jesus change our perspective on our purpose?

30-35
minutes



READ THIS:

As Christians, we know we’re supposed to be spreading the good news about Jesus. God is mercifully calling more worshippers for his Son, Jesus. We’ve heard that being a missionary is a part of our identity – that it isn’t something that we just opt into if we choose. We’ve also heard that contagion (evangelism) is all about deed and word – we need to be verbally sharing this great hope as well as living it out. How does merely being a faithful worker inform somebody that a man who died on a cross 2,000 years ago is their only hope?

Well, how do we do it? I think an inspection of a few passages of Scripture will give us clarity and hopefully a sense of excitement as we think about engaging the world.

ASK SOMEONE TO READ THE PASSAGE:

The Invitation: Matthew 4:18–19

As He was walking along the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea, since they were fishermen. “Follow Me,” He told them, “and I will make you fish for people!” Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

If you've been a part of Christian circles for very long at all, you've heard this verse used to motivate you to evangelism. Jesus is inviting Peter and Andrew (and us) to follow him. The door we walk through to follow Jesus, is the same door we walk through to start living our lives for the sake of bringing others to him. That's a great and important message. But we usually miss something very strategic in this passage.

ASK THIS:

- Who is Jesus talking to in this passage? What is their profession?
- How would you describe the way they caught fish? **Leader Tip:** If you catch huge amounts of fish for a living, you probably don't do it with a rod and a reel. So we must erase the image of a singular dude with a fishing rod. The correct image is of a group of five guys wrestling the nets out into the water. Then five guys wrestle the nets back in. This kind of fishing won't happen without the community of fishermen.
- How does this impact the way that Peter and Andrew would fish for people?

ASK SOMEONE TO READ THE PASSAGE:

The Difference: The Community Apologetic (John 17:20-23)

20 I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

ASK THIS:

- What is Jesus specifically praying for here?
- What will be the effect (the "so that") of his answered prayer?

READ THIS:

Jesus is here praying that the Father would grant us believers one-ness "so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (v.21). In fact, the glory that Jesus has given to us is our oneness, "so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me" (v.23). Our communities, as we depend on the apostles' teaching and love each other, will tell the world that Jesus is the Father's Son and that the Father has adopted us into his family!

There may be better and more logical arguments, but, in God's providence, there are none more persuasive. Most people come to faith through the influence of the community apologetic. In Rodney Stark's *The Rise of Christianity*, he showed that the Christian community grew from practically zero people in 33 AD to over 33 million in just 300 years! This didn't happen through huge preaching events, but rather through gospel communities ("LifeGroups") infused in cities, living life together for all to see. In fact, in the epistles, we don't have even one command to "make sure people are sharing their faith!"

So what does it look like for a group to live this out?

WATCH THIS 14-minute video and take notes on what you observe:

<https://youtu.be/lc4tsw3kCok> entitled "What Does Missional Community Life Look Like?"

1. How does this group display the community apologetic?
2. What group of people do you think your group is specifically being sent to reach?
3. Why do you think this group in the video sees reaching others and multiplying groups as a joy, rather than a burden?
4. What are some practical first steps we can take to grow as a result of this video?



DIGGING DEEPER

One of the best rhythms that we can start as a group is to meet regularly in a “third place.”

Your group needs to create a neutral space to go to that isn't the Sunday event and not your Bible study. You want a place where you can bring your lost friends that doesn't demand that they have to scale a barrier of Christian lingo and perceived preconditions. This is informal, casual and non-committal. They need to see and relate to Christians in a natural and relaxed (though deliberate) environment. They need to feel that your group really enjoys the just pleasure of being together. Your group's third place is the place for this.

Your third place will be determined by your mission. You have to ask the question, “Where can I bring an outsider that will be a natural place for them to meet and enjoy my Christian friends?”

- As a LifeGroup, where can you gather regularly and naturally? Is it at a park? A restaurant? A fun sport? The community pool? A coffee shop? A bowling alley? A pool hall?
- When would be a regular time your group could meet there?



CLOSING THOUGHT

Close in prayer asking God to give us a bigger heart that will lead to sacrificial obedience to reach the lost.

Psalm 119:32- “I will run in the way of your commandments when you enlarge my heart!”