

LEAD SHEET

Outward Week 1

"Open Heart"

November 18, 2012

This Month's Faith Skill Navigate the Bible

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW GOD BETTER READ HIS WORD

Scripture Memorization

Mark 1:17-18 Jesus called out to them, "Come, be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people!" And they left their nets at once and went with him.

GROUP BUILDING

Have students complete a chart in which they block out, or schedule, a typical week. Shown below is a sample chart, which is also found in the lesson workbook. Students should indicate the times they dedicate to homework, going to church, eating breakfast, etc. Allow five to ten minutes to complete the chart.

(When finished, allow students to compare schedules with each other. Have them find out who spends the most time doing what. Award an energy drink to the person who sleeps the most, or perhaps a pack of Smarties to the person who spends the most time studying.)

GETTING STARTED

Perhaps you have heard the question asked, "How do you spend your God-time?" The intention of this question is harmless, although it can lead one to an incorrect understanding of his or her mission. The God we serve cannot be penciled in. He is the creator of the Universe. He is not going to fit into your day planner. God wants your whole life. All of your heart and time should be devoted to Him. As you connect to Him, He will immediately lead you into His mission. So, how is it possible to live out God's mission if your schedule is full of stuff already? Are you just supposed to quit your job and become a monk? On the other hand, should you just give up and be content with putting God in a few weekly boxes? In the next couple of lessons, we're going to talk about how each of us can move outward by following Jesus with everyday, ordinary, and practical actions. Today, we're going to look at our Gospel motivation. Take another look at the weekly schedules you just filled out.

- How is God involved with each time slot?
- Is God your primary focus, or do you have other competing motivations?
- What will it take to let Jesus be the focus in every area of your life?
- How will it be possible to focus on others in each area?

DIGGING IN

As you move outward into mission, your first confrontation will be your motivation. Your motivation must be Jesus! You will not

be able to love others purely without following Him completely. Today we are mostly going to talk about following Jesus into mission.

THE CALL Read Mark 1:16-18

One of the first things you'll notice is that Jesus calls Peter and Andrew immediately into mission. This is the same calling for us today. Therefore, if you are a follower of Jesus you are a missionary.

1. What kind of thoughts do you think were crossing Peter and Andrew's minds when Jesus called them?
2. Why do you think Jesus would call fishermen?
3. What did Jesus call them to do? **(To come and follow Him.)**
4. What do you think most attracted them to Jesus? Was it His message, His personality, or the people He healed?

THE FOCUS

It is interesting to note that Jesus does not call them to be powerful or rich. Rather, He says they are to go out and focus on others. This is our call too, to move outward with a focus on others.

1. What is the hardest thing about focusing on others?
2. Are there any areas in which you are unwilling to allow Jesus or others? **(Refer back to Weekly Schedules.)**
3. Who is someone in your life that models an "outward lifestyle?"

THE MISSION

Another point that you will notice is that Peter and Andrew left everything to follow Jesus. For these two disciples fishing was not only their livelihood, it was all they knew. It was their family business. By dropping their nets and following Jesus, they were departing their loved ones, leaving everything that was comfortable, and heading off on a new mission into the unknown.

1. Why do you think it was important for the disciples to drop their nets?

Verse 18 tells us that the disciples immediately dropped their nets and followed Jesus. Can you imagine this scene if Peter and Andrew had tried to keep their nets? A few miles of lugging cumbersome nets, collecting dirt and miscellaneous items, would have caused quite a scene. They would quickly become weary from the heavy load.

2. Are you carrying nets with you as you follow Jesus?
3. Are you willing to drop everything to follow Jesus into His mission?

Sometimes we can sense Jesus calling us to Him and His mission, but we are unwilling to leave everything behind to follow. Instead, we carry our baggage into our relationship with Him. This baggage (our net) could be a relationship with another person, an issue of pride, or even the desire to have control.

Here's some good news. You do not have to know where Jesus is calling you; you just have to be willing to follow.

MAKING IT REAL

As we choose to follow Jesus, He changes our hearts. Our lives become open vessels to Him. Because of Jesus, we open our homes, open our fridge, and open our schedule.

- What are some evidences that your heart is softening and open to God's mission?
- When was the last time you cried because you didn't know your neighbors?
- When was the last time you cried because your neighbors were going to hell?
- What are some hindrances of having an open heart to God's mission? **(Selfishness, fear, worry, and sin)**

Look back at your weekly schedules completed earlier to answer these next questions. (Give the students time to come up with their own answers for each of the following questions.)

- Where do you spend your time?
- How does this expose where your heart is?
- Some of you might say I spend most of my time at my job and I hate that, so that can't be where my heart is. So, let's come at it a different way: If you get a day off what do you do with it?
- Where you do spend your money? If you get a bonus at your job, or a gift card, where does it go?

Another reason we may not follow Jesus into His mission is that our hearts are hardened towards others. Racism and segregation are major factors in keeping us from an outward lifestyle. One Biblical example that comes to mind is the story of Jonah. He is a prophet of God and one day the Word of the Lord came to him.

Read Jonah 1:1-3

1. What was God asking of Jonah?
2. What did Jonah do instead?
3. Why did Jonah run in the first place? **(he hated Nineveh)**

So, you may call Jonah a self-righteous racist. Most of you know how a big fish swallowed Jonah, and after spending three days in its belly, the fish finally spits him up onto dry land. Then, Jonah reluctantly makes his way to Nineveh. He preaches to the people, warning them of God's wrath. And they repent. You would think this would please Jonah. Instead, he becomes angry because he couldn't stand the thought of God's mercy and love flowing to a people that he deemed unworthy. In chapter 4, Jonah once again shows us a side of himself that is hardened and hateful.

4. Do you find yourself angry when others experience God? Are there any types of people in this world to which you would refuse to open your heart and share your faith?

Optional Prayer Activity

For this activity, you will need to bring a fishermen's net and set it in the middle of the room. (You can pick up a net at any sporting goods store.) With the net in the middle of the room, ask the students to take out a piece of paper and write down their answers to the following questions.

1. What net are you carrying with you as you follow Jesus?
2. What hinders you from opening your heart to the mission of Jesus?

When finished, have everyone wad up his or her pieces of paper, toss them into the net, then sit quietly and pray for about 2 to 3 minutes.

As we go out, let's realize that it is Jesus calling us into mission. He has prepared places and conversations for us this week. Are you open to His calling? Is there any place that you wouldn't go if Jesus asked?

CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)

Have everyone grab on to a corner of the net (or hold hands) and take turns praying for each other. When you are done praying, drop the net and follow Jesus.