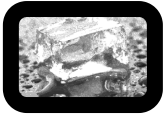




Life Group Discussion Guide

The Big Ideas:

Bless & Connect



Icebreaker (5 min)

Goal: Horizontal - to appreciate more about each other



Play two or three rounds of "Taboo" together. If you don't have the actual game, just come up with three or four key words, and make a list of 10 words that people will not be allowed to use to describe or explain the key words. Make sure someone is monitoring the "Taboo list of words" so that people are "buzzed" whenever they use the forbidden words.

Segue - This game is fun because it forces us to explore round-about ways to describe common ideas. The rules of the game take the most obvious descriptive words and puts a fence around them making those words "off-limits" or a "taboo."

This week's discussion will encourage us to embrace how the incarnational rhythms of life that Jesus demonstrated ignored the taboos that prevent us from blessing and connecting with people.



Worship (5 min)

Goal: Vertical -to draw attention to spiritual reality!



Share something meaningful from your week like: *(Some groups may use music to facilitate worship!)*

- > What did you notice about your prayer life this week?
- > Is there one person that God has impressed on your heart that you need to be praying for?



Study & Discuss (25 min)

Goal: Depth -understanding and applying truth to our reality.

Rhythm #3: Blessing

Read Luke 10:25-37

- ▶ **What is the significance of Jesus connecting the "Shema" (statement from Deuteronomy 6:5) with the principle of Leviticus 19:18 to become what Christians refer to as the "Great Commandment?"**

Historical Context:

Jesus summarizes all of the Old Testament (the Law and Prophets) by saying that God's desire for humanity is to love Him with all of our capacity and to love our neighbor as well as we love

ourselves. This still leaves us with the question “How do you define who your neighbor is?” Jewish teachers had been debating the question presented in Leviticus 19:18 for hundreds of years. Despite the many references throughout the old testament that seem to clearly expect God’s people to treat non-Jews as neighbors, the cultural norm was for Jews to apply this principle only to fellow Jews. (see Leviticus 19:33-34, Genesis 12:2&3, Zechariah 8:13) This typically made it easy for Jews to treat non-Jews with the “eye-for-an-eye” principle of Deuteronomy 19:21.

A priest should be someone very sensitive to what is important to God - why would a priest pass by a “half-dead” man? (Numbers 6:9-12; Ezekiel 44:25-27)

A Levite was a Jew from the tribe with the responsibility of taking care of the Temple. They were a special tribe chosen by God - they should be very sensitive to what is important to God - why would they avoid a “half-dead” man? (Numbers 19:16)

The story Jesus is telling was probably a predictable story genre that would be told to demonstrate the failure of the official Jewish leaders in light of the Pharisees (someone who believed that the Law of Moses needed to be lived out strictly and consistently) who were generally more respected than most of the priests. It’s kind of similar to our jokes that start off, “a priest, a pastor and a rabbi walk into a bar...”

What do you think of the reaction to Jesus’ surprise ending from the crowd when he makes the hero a Samaritan? (Samaritans were despised by Jews because they had allowed themselves to intermarry with Assyrians - polluting the cultural purity that they valued.)

What do you think Jesus was saying to the listening crowd?

Why do religious people often struggle with Jesus making it look like compassion for people is more important than maintaining standards of purity?

What cultural differences or “taboos” are most likely to distract you from seeing people with compassion? (i.e. a woman who wears a “Niqab” (Muslim head scarf and veil), tattoos/piercings, lifestyle choices like promiscuity, homosexuality, alcohol, drugs, wealth, homelessness, etc)

Can you think of a time when you saw a need and did something to fill that need? What do you remember from that experience? Was there anything that made you hesitate? How did people respond? How did it make you feel? Share your thoughts with your group.

Why is it sometimes easier to treat a stranger with compassion than it is someone who you have lived next door to for a long time?

Try and think of at least one person in your everyday life that you have a hard time feeling compassion for. What could you do this week that would demonstrate your compassion for them?

Rhythm #4: Make a Connection

Mat 9:9-12

Why was it such a big deal for Jesus to be at Matthew's house?

Why would a good Jew avoid such a scenario?

What was Jesus saying about the worries of the Pharisees?

Do you find yourself in "Matthew party" environments very often where there are more people who don't know Jesus than do? How do you handle those environments? Do you resent them or look forward to them?

What is required for a Christ-follower to become eager to develop relationships with people who don't know Jesus?

Would you continue to pour time and energy into a friendship with someone who has made it clear that they don't want anything to do with God?

