



Mission Shaped Living

St Mark's Gillingham

Small Group / Trio material

September—November 2020

Introduction

Welcome to our Mission Shaped Living series which builds on what we learnt about the Acts 2 church and on our discipleship course that we undertook at the beginning of 2020.

It's aim is to help you as an individual live as a missional disciple within the places and relationships of your ordinary everyday life.

What it is not:

A training course for door to door emission or a formulaic evangelism strategy for you to use.

What it is:

An Opportunity for the Holy Spirit to guide you into a pattern of living and relationships. To allow you to be the person Jesus is calling you to be, someone who is able to lead others to follow Him.

Each week will be structured to include 3 sections, each section focused on one of the three relationships each Christian is called to:



UP to God, IN to each other and OUT to those who don't know Jesus

Each of you in your small Group or Trio will be starting your journey in a different place and so everyone's journey and experience will be different. Don't compare yourself with others, rather this is an opportunity to engage with God and grow with him in your own time, in your own gifts and within the context of your own life which is different to everyone else's. You are unique, an individually created piece of God's wonderful tapestry and so we encourage you to embrace each step of your journey with commitment and anticipation to see where the Holy Spirit will take you.

This may all seem very overwhelming so please use this booklet as a tool. Use as much of it or as little of it as you feel able.

Session 1

Being sent



1. In pairs or your Trio, share your journey of faith.

- How did you come to believe in Jesus?
- What difference has He made in your life?

If you are in a small group share with the rest of the group anything you learned about each other or something that particularly encouraged you from what has been shared.

2. Read aloud

Matthew 28:16-20 The Great Commission

¹⁶Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Acts 1:4-8

⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with ^[a] water, but in a few days you will be baptized with ^[b] the Holy Spirit." ⁶Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Discuss—How do you feel about the fact Jesus is calling you to represent Him and to reveal Him to other people?

NB Be honest—even if your response is negative it is important to share how you feel.

3. Recognising your missional context

As we are thinking about how God can use us to share his love—write down the places and people where you spend the majority of your time.

Discuss—Do you enter these places with a sense of being sent by Jesus?

What are the challenges of being a witness for Jesus there?

Again it's okay to admit you struggle with this!

Spend some time praying with one another about what has been shared.



4. Read Luke 10:1-20 Jesus Sends Out the Seventy-Two

10 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two^[a] others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ² He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. ³ Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. ⁴ Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

⁵ "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' ⁶ If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

⁸ "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. ⁹ Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ¹⁰ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ¹¹ 'Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.' ¹² I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

¹³ "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴ But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. ¹⁵ And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades.^[b]

¹⁶ "Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me."

¹⁷ The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

¹⁸ He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ²⁰ However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Discuss—

- What does this teach us about Jesus?
- What do we learn from the passage about the life of mission Jesus has called us to?
- How do you feel about this?

This passage will form the basis of the rest of the sessions for Mission Shaped Living.

2. Confidence and courage v2-3

3. Compassion v8-9

4. Connecting v5-6

5. Continuing v7

6. Conversion v9

In order to fulfil our calling to make disciples it is important that we learn how to do each step!

5. A key sign of us living missionally is that we live with a sense of being sent by Jesus to the places and relationships we find ourselves in.

OUT

Write a prayer that you can pray at the start of every day in the coming week to offer yourself to God to be used to share his love and good news with others that you meet that day.

Try to include:

Opportunities to share His love

Ask for the Holy Spirit to fill you and help you.

Ask for the eyes to see where God is already at work.

Pray that God is already preparing the hearts of those you meet.



Think about where you might put this prayer to help you to remember to pray it each day!

6. Finally

Pray this prayer offering yourself to God as a commitment to saying YES to Jesus' call to be His witnesses.

Lord Jesus Christ, I am no longer my own but yours.

In gratitude for your saving death on my behalf I offer my life to you afresh.

Call me to the mission of your kingdom and open my eyes to the spiritual need of those around me.

Give me your love and compassion for the lost, and strengthen me with your grace to serve them and be a blessing to them.

Send me in the power of your Holy Spirit to witness to the gospel and reveal you to those I meet.

Teach me how to make disciples and where I need to change my attitude, lifestyle and habits.

I freely and wholeheartedly commit myself to this call, knowing that in everything you will give me your inspiration, strength and grace.

Glorious and blessed God, Father, son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it.

Let this covenant now made on earth be fulfilled in Heaven

Amen.

Until next time.....

There are some additional resources that you can use at home if you would like to go deeper in your personal relationship with God. If you don't have time for all of it—perhaps just do the Vision of Salvation exercise at the end of session 1.

Session 2

Confidence

NB: For this session you will need a large piece of paper and some Post-it notes

In the gospel of John Jesus describes himself as 'the way, the truth and the life.' (John 14:6), 'the resurrection and the life' (John 11:25), 'the bread of life' (John 6:25-59) and says that his followers would know 'fullness of life' (John 10:10).

Staying close to Jesus allows his life to overflow from us, and remembering Jesus and being thankful for all that he is and has done for us personally releases joy in our lives. It is these things that allow our witness to be more than a to do list or a must do practice. Our witness becomes an overflow of our love for God which is attractive to others. Gratitude frees us to be generous and keeps alive our desire to share Jesus with others. Let us start this session therefore by talking about the things we are grateful for.



Share with others:-

1. How you have been this week.
2. How you got on praying the daily prayer you wrote?
3. Did you notice a difference?
4. Do you have a story of God answering prayer this week - or of being missional in any way?

In the box below write down all the reasons that Jesus is 'good news' worth sharing?

A large, empty rounded rectangle with a red border, intended for writing down reasons for sharing Jesus as 'good news'.

On a large piece of paper compile a group list of all the reasons you came up with.

Share with others what you are grateful to Jesus for today.

Spend some time in worship now, thanking Jesus/God for all that he is and for all that he has done in your life. You may want to sing some worship songs, use the names of God as a way of thanking him—for example Jehova Rafai—the God who heals. You could conclude by saying the te deum—a traditional prayer of praise.



You are God, we praise you:
You are the Lord: we acclaim you;
You are the eternal Father:
All creation worships you.
To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,
Cherubim and Seraphim, sing in endless praise:
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
The glorious company of apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.
Throughout the world, the holy Church acclaims you:
Father of majesty unbounded,
Your true and only Son, worthy of all worship,
And the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.
You, Christ, are the King of Glory
The eternal Son of the Father.
When you became man to set us free,
You did not spurn the Virgin's womb.
You overcame the sting of death,
And opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.
You are seated at God's right hand in glory.
We believe that you will come and be our judge.
Come then, Lord, and help your people,
Bought with the price of your own blood,
And bring us with your saints to glory everlasting.
Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance.
Govern and uphold them now and always
Day by day we bless you.
We praise your name forever.
Keep us today, Lord, from all sin.
Have mercy on us, Lord have Mercy
Lord, show us your Love and Mercy
for we put our trust in you.
In you, Lord, is our hope:
and we shall never hope in vain.
[Amen.]

Read John 4:1-26, 39-42

Jesus Talks With a Samaritan Woman

4 Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John—² although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.³ So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

⁴ Now he had to go through Samaria.⁵ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph.⁶ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

⁷ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"⁸ (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.^[a])

¹⁰ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

¹¹ "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?"¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

¹³ Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

¹⁵ The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

¹⁶ He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

¹⁷ "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband.¹⁸ The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

¹⁹ "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet.²⁰ Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

²¹ "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.²² You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

²⁵ The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

Many Samaritans Believe

39 Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." **40** So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. **41** And because of his words many more became believers.

42 They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

Discuss—

What do we learn from Jesus' example of sharing His good news?

What difference does encountering Jesus make to this woman?

What is your response to this passage?

One of the striking things from Jesus' example was that he took time to sit and talk with the Samaritan woman and then stayed in her village for two days. Jesus had a reputation for 'eating with the sinners and tax collectors' (Mark 2:16). While he is sitting with her he is listening to what the Holy Spirit is revealing about her and he responds to this in how he speaks. Praying for someone whilst we are with them and asking God to lead us and show us anything he wants us to understand about that person is one of the ways that witnessing stops being done 'to' someone and becomes something we do 'with' Jesus, who loves this person so much.

OUT

This may feel challenging to some but we are going to spend some time now listening to God for each other. And allowing the Holy Spirit to lead our thoughts and feelings.

There is no pressure—just have a go and trust that God is prompting your thoughts and is leading you.

In pairs or your Trio sit in silence together for two minutes. In that time ask God with your heart and your mind:

1. What specifically do you love about this person?
2. What encouragement do you want me to bring them? (This could come as a feeling, an image, a bible verse or simply a word or a line of thought.)

At the end of the two minutes share with each other what you felt God was saying to them. Remember there is no pressure, and there are no right or wrong answers.

The other part of Jesus' example is that he spent time with people and shared food with them. I know that it is difficult at the moment but who do you spend time with at the moment who is not a Christian? Or who did you spend time with before Covid 19 and haven't really been in touch with recently. Why not call them, or arrange to meet up—at an appropriate social distance obviously! Don't do it with an agenda other than to love and bless them. But whilst you are speaking to them or with them, pray silently for God's blessing on them and ask him if there is anything God wants you to understand about them or share with them.

Take some time now to think, pray and plan about who you could do this with, then share with one another your thoughts and pray together about it.

Until next time.....

There are some additional resources to help you go deeper in the other booklet—again no pressure but if you have time for at least one thing this week then take a look at 'A Focus for Prayer'

Session 3

Courage

In Luke 10, when Jesus sent the seventy-two out on mission, he sent them ahead to specific villages where he was planning to go. These villages are the equivalent of our workplaces, sports teams, colleges, families etc., the places Jesus is sending us as his representative. He knew his disciples would need courage, which is why he warned them they were being sent out 'like lambs among wolves' (v3). He didn't want them turning back when it became challenging, so he prepared them for it. Like them, we need to be prepared for the fact that leading others to follow Jesus will not be easy, but we are sent by him and he goes with us by his Holy Spirit who gives us courage.



Share:

How you have been this week with others.

Did you manage to meet up with someone and pray and listen to God for them and bless them whilst they were with you?

Are you still praying your prayer every morning?

Reflect on the past week, what are you especially grateful for?

This week we are thinking about having the courage to be involved in mission. Courage is not the absence of fear, rather it is the awareness of the challenges that face each of us in sharing God's love and good news and being willing to hear God's call and to trust him as we step forward. Hebrews 12:3 says 'Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.'

Jesus himself was fearful yet trusted God and courageously chose the cross for us.

Take a moment to pray together and thank Jesus for the cross and ask that his example will strengthen you to have the courage to be a witness for him.

Share:

1. What experiences have you had of sharing your faith with non-Christians in the past?
2. What are the things that give you confidence in the gospel and in sharing your faith?
3. What things reduce your confidence?

Some examples might be:

I don't know how to start a conversation about faith.

I worry about being rejected

I think that I won't be able to answer difficult questions

I am worried about spoiling a friendship

I don't want to come across as one of those judgmental/crass Christians!

I don't know how to make the Christian faith relevant to people

I don't have any close friendships with people who aren't Christians

God's solution to the first disciples fear was to promise them he would be with them and fill them with the Holy Spirit. When this happened at Pentecost they changed from hiding away in a room together to spilling on to the streets of Jerusalem and telling the good news to everyone around them.

UP

Read Acts 2:1-13 The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

2 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues^[a] as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,^[b] ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

And John 16:7-15

⁷ But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ about sin, because people do not believe in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

¹² "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you."

Discuss:

What do these passages teach us about God's Spirit and what he will do?

What do they teach us about how to live in relationship with the Holy Spirit?

Spend some time in praise and in prayer asking God to empower you with His Holy Spirit. You may like to start with a time of sung worship.

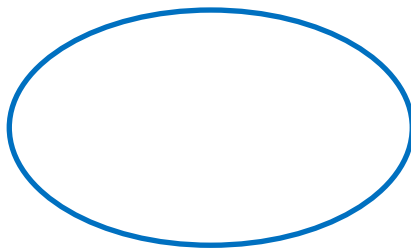
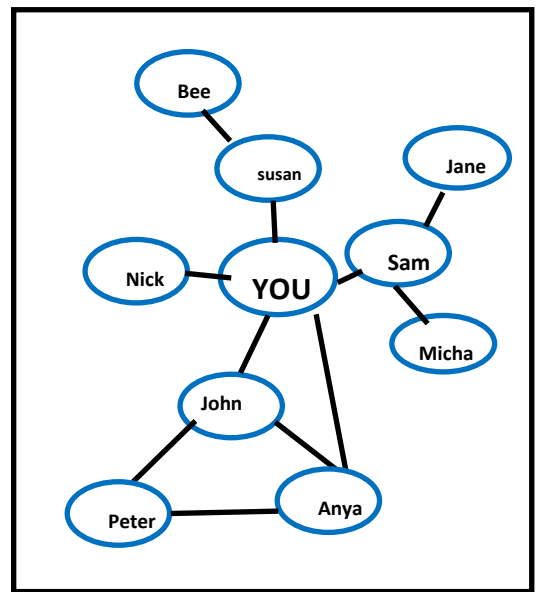
OUT

Jesus sent the seventy two out in pairs to various villages. Mission Shaped Living is based on the premise that wherever we are today Jesus has commissioned us to reach the people we are in contact with. Our families and colleagues are our 'villages' and so today we are asking the question 'Who have I been sent to?'

To answer this question you are going to draw a picture to plot your key relationships.

On the following page—put your name in the circle in the middle of the page—draw a line and a circle to represent those closest to you who don't know Jesus and then further lines for people that then link to them. There is an example in the top right corner to help.

My Relationship Map



Share with each other about your relationship map—who are the people on it and where do they fit in your life?

From this list pick 5 people who you have regular contact with who you could witness to and who you want to pray for to come to know Jesus.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Commit to pray for them each day to come to faith. You can pray for each of them every day or simply name them all to God each day and pray in depth for one per each day. Perhaps put their names alongside your daily prayer so you remember to pray for them each day.

How to pray for them.

You could simply pray the Lords prayer over them each time (This is what John Sentamu the previous Archbishop of York does!)

Or you could try this one:

Heavenly Father, I thank you that you love X and that you long for them to know you. I pray for them in the name of Jesus Christ that you would pour out your Holy Spirit upon them and convict them of their sin and reveal Jesus to them. I ask you to stir up a spiritual hunger within them and take the blindness from their eyes. I pray that you would bless my friendship with them and that you would use me to draw them closer to you. Please show me your heart for them and what you are asking me to do as your ambassador. Direct their steps so that they come into contact with other Christians and speak to them through the circumstances of their life. I pray that they would come to faith in Jesus. Amen

Or you could write your own prayer for them.

Until next time.....

Don't forget the additional resources to help you if you want to go deeper. Even if you don't have much time, please do try to look at the Mission Styles Exercise before next week.

Session 4

Compassion

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

The compassion of Jesus is described by the gospel writers on a number of occasions. We too are called to be compassionate—to share the compassionate love of God with those we meet. The work of evangelism can be summarised in three actions—Prayer, Care and Share! In this session we will consider how caring for others can demonstrate God's love to them.



Share with each other:

How you got on praying for your five people daily.

Are there any signs of God answering your prayers?

Are there any other stories of God using you in mission?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:^[a] The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin^[b] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The work of mission is a ministry of love and compassion. Paul says that his work comes from Christ's love motivating him, and he then presents it as a work of reconciliation—as being used to repair the broken relationship between people and God. We can do this because we have come to know God's love for us. We are brand-new people and each of us has a story to tell of how Jesus has transformed our lives. He call us as ambassadors of Christ, , this is why what we are talking about is so important.

Write your name in the banner at the top of the next page—above the heading 'Ambassador of Jesus Christ'



AMBASSADOR OF JESUS

Discuss:

What does an ambassador do?

What does this communicate about our role on behalf of God's kingdom in this world?

Imagine you are introducing yourself in this way: “_____ An Ambassador of Jesus Christ.’
No matter what else we might say about ourselves in our different roles, this is what the Bible says our title is.

UP

Read Philippians 2:1-11

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature ^[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature ^[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Spend some time thanking Jesus for his humility and his willingness to endure the cross for you.

Read Luke 15:1-10

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. ² But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

³ Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴ “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ ⁷ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

The Parable of the Lost Coin

⁸ “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins^[a] and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ ¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Discuss what this teaches us about:

God and how he feels towards people who don’t know him?

His active response in looking for those who are lost?

What does it mean that people are lost?

When we care about something that we love, we are active in searching. What does this say about how we should approach our desire for people to come to Jesus?

How then should we respond?

Spend some time praying and asking God to give you his heart for the people he has sent us to.

OUT

In Luke 10 Jesus talks about healing those who are sick. He didn’t just speak about the kingdom, he showed God’s love in action. Our sharing of Jesus with others must come from a genuine love for them.

What do you know about the five people you have started to pray for? Do you know how they take their coffee or tea? What about their families? How much do you know about their lives before you came to know them? What do they care about most and love to do?

Pick one of your five people and write down everything you know about them and their lives, including what needs they have that you could help meet in order to show God’s love to them.

Why not text that person (or one of the other four that you are praying for) now.

Say that you were thinking about them, offer to help with something or just check how they are and if there is anything particular you could pray for them!

Before you hit send—pray in pairs or your trio for the recipients—that God would prepare their hearts to receive the text. Then hit send.

Do you have a story of praying with someone outside of a church context that you could share? What happened and how did it go? NB—this doesn't have to be a success story!

When someone shares a need you can say that you will be praying for them—but it is so often much better to offer to pray for them at that moment! **Share why you think this can be important?**

Finally—we are going to practice praying for one another to help us get used to praying with others so that it doesn't feel so strange when you offer to pray for a person outside the church.

There are some simple steps you can take:

- Ask permission 'Can I pray for you?' and if they say yes then as 'can I pray for you now?' If they say no you may need to move on by saying well I will be praying for you when I get home, or each morning, and ask them to let you know if the situation changes!!
- Pray very short prayers and use non religious, simple language.
- Use the name of Jesus so people know it is a Christian prayer.
- Pray with your eyes open so it looks like a natural conversation.
- If you want to lay a hand on them ask first.
- If you are praying for physical healing command healing in the way Jesus did—remember you have the authority and you don't need to shout.

A simple prayer might be:

Father God, thank you that you love X and that you care about (their problem)

Please ...(what ever they have asked for) and send your Holy Spirit to do this.

And please be close to them and let them know your love and peace.

In Jesus name. Amen

In pairs or your Trio share a genuine need that you have and take it in turns to role play and to pray for one another. Share your need and let the other person(s) pray for it and then swap.

Pray as a group for opportunities to pray for others this week.

Session 5

Connecting

Being a witness for Jesus involves speaking for him, having conversations about faith with people, asking questions, and telling stories. When Jesus was preparing the seventy two disciples to go out, he talked them through the different reactions that people will have. The really good news from Luke 10:1-20 is that Jesus says we only have to stay and share with people who are open to this. Because the passage describes the disciples bringing a blessing of 'peace to this house' and people receiving this peace (v5-6), we can call these receptive people a 'person of peace'.

The problem is that we don't know how people will respond before we start to share with them and whether they are a person of peace. So this session is designed to help us think about how we can 'connect' with people spiritually in a simple way that is our equivalent of saying 'peace be with you'. When we have done this, we can see whether they are open to us taking the conversation further and beginning a journey of faith with them. Isn't it liberating to remember we don't have to keep sharing the gospel with people who don't welcome it!!



Share with others—

How has your week been?

Have you had a reply to your text message from the last session?

How did you get on taking the opportunity to bless, serve or pray for someone?

Remember to celebrate each others stories about witnessing—even if they went horribly wrong!!

And if you haven't done anything this week - why do you think that is?

- lack of opportunity
- lack of time?
- lack of motivation (in which case ask again for God's heart for the people you know who are lost?)

There is no condemnation but sometimes we have obstacles which get in the way (we may not even recognize them!) and it's good to move them out!

The bible is one great rescue story as God's love for us causes him to seek out people who are lost and separated from him.

What is your favourite rescue story from a book or film?

Why do you find that particular story inspiring?

Read Luke 15:1-7

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. ² But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

³ Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴ "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' ⁷ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

UP

You may like to listen/sing to 'Reckless Love' by Cory Ashbury or 'And Can it be'

Then spend some time in prayer and praise to God as you thank Him for your salvation and pray for those who are spiritually lost.

Read Luke 10:1-11

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two^[a] others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. ² He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. ³ Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. ⁴ Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

⁵ "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' ⁶ If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

⁸ "When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. ⁹ Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ¹⁰ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ¹¹ 'Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.'

Discuss:

What does this passage tell us about what Jesus says we can do in his name?

What might the equivalent today be of saying 'peace be with you' or 'the kingdom of God is here'?

This strategy of Jesus is really helpful. It can be summarized as:

- Speak a blessing of peace on someone
- if they reject it, walk away
- If they accept it, stay with them.

It really is that simple. Today we might call it 'asking questions and telling stories' For example:

- Can I pray for you?
- Do you feel close or far away from God?
- What has been your spiritual experience in the past?
- Tell Stories of what God has done in your life?
- Tell the gospel story?
- Invite them to a Service or event or Alpha course...

Do you know if any of the five people you are praying for is 'A Person of Peace'?

How do you know?

It may be that some of the people you are praying for are not ready to receive the good news of Jesus. Remember the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:1-23. If so then keep praying for them, and keep throwing seed until it finds good soil.

OUT

Jesus continually asked questions and told stories, today we will think about telling YOUR story.

Read Luke 8:38-39

³⁸The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹"Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.

Sharing your story can help your family, friends and people you meet to understand the difference Jesus has made to your life and that he can do the same for them. It can be your 'big' story of coming to faith but it can also be a testimony of what God has done in your life recently.

The best way to be ready to share your story is to practice telling your story in those simple sections:

1. What your life was like before you met Jesus
2. How you encountered Jesus
3. How your life has changed since

It helps to keep the story simple , don't include lots of unnecessary detail.

To focus on Jesus and not just on you,

To avoid religious jargon that people don't understand

Be honest—real stories connect with people so tell the truth about yourself.

Keep it short—2 minutes or less is perfect!

Spend some time now thinking about your story. Use the following three boxes to make notes.

Section 1: Begin with the phrase *'There was a time in my life where...'*

Explain a time when you didn't follow Jesus or if you were brought up in a Christian home then when your faith was not a personal one.

Section 2: *Then.....*

Explain how you came to faith in Jesus or how your faith came alive.

Section 3: *And now.....*

Explain the difference Jesus has made to your life.

Now take some time in pairs or your Trio to share your story with each other. The person listening should time the story as you try to keep it under two minutes.

Keep practicing your story so it seems natural when you are able to share with someone.

Pray with each other and ask God to give you the opportunity and courage this week to share your story.

It could be one of your five. You could tell them that you are in a Christian group that meets weekly and that you have been asked to share how you became a Christian with someone out side the group—can I share with you? Especially if you think that person is a ‘Person of Peace’! Or a longtime friend whom you have never shared your story with before.

Until next time.....

If you have time this week—don’t forget to use the additional resource guide to go deeper. And if you don’t have time for it all do try to look at the section entitled ‘Understanding how your story Connects’.

Session 6

Continuing

Jesus instruction to the seventy-two was that when their blessing of peace was received they were to stay in the home where they were welcomed. They were to eat the food offered, declare that God's kingdom was coming to the household, and to heal the sick. Jesus was explaining his strategy. We are to keep searching for and blessing people until we find one who is ready to receive him. Then we stay with them and help them in their journey of coming to faith in him. This requires spiritual discernment and lots of practical steps, persistent prayer and patience. Jesus is the good shepherd who knows how to lead people back to the Father. We need to learn what our part in that journey is.

Share with each other:

How you are

What you are grateful for this week

How you got on sharing your story with someone

Any other stories you want to share.

Every step forward no matter how little is a step in the right direction!

IN

The next step in mission is 'continuing'. Jesus tells the seventy-two that when they have found their 'person of peace' they should stay with them and share food with them. The work of evangelism is a long-term process that involves sharing our lives with people and helping them to take steps towards faith in Jesus. Think of it like stepping stones across a stream. We are offering ourselves to God to help encourage our 'person of peace' to take another step forward.

So when someone responds positively to our steps to bless them and we discover their openness to God, we know they are a 'person of peace'. We now have to stay with them and help them on their journey.

Read Psalm 34:1-10

- ¹ I will extol the LORD at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.
- ² I will glory in the LORD;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
- ³ Glorify the LORD with me;
let us exalt his name together.
- ⁴ I sought the LORD, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.
- ⁵ Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.
- ⁶ This poor man called, and the LORD heard him;
he saved him out of all his troubles.
- ⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him,
and he delivers them.

UP

Taste and see that the LORD is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

⁹ Fear the LORD, you his holy people,
for those who fear him lack nothing.

¹⁰ The lions may grow weak and hungry,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

What aspect of God's goodness are you most thankful for today?
Pray together and thank God for his goodness.

Read Luke 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

⁹ Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Jesus was renowned for attending meals and parties with people who weren't law abiding Jews. Jesus shared a meal with Zacchaeus. Why do you think he did that?

What do you think Jesus and Zacchaeus talked about that could have made such a dramatic impact on him?

What can we learn from Jesus example?

The key to staying with your person of peace is regular time with them in which you share life and enjoy a deep friendship. Whilst this may be difficult at this time, it is possible to be in regular contact, to check in on and have 'life' conversations even if you can't easily do fun things together. You can even encourage them to actively pursue faith by reading the bible together or joining in some online services or an online Alpha course.

Have you ever invited a friend to a church event/evangelistic course? How did that go?

What helps people to be ready to accept such invitations?

What do you understand by the phrase 'Don't say people's "no's" for them'?

Why can we be tempted to do this?

Take some time to pray over one of two of the names on your list and ask God to show you what he is leading you to do next.

OUT

It may not be a great revelation—it could even seem like common sense, like—I haven't seen or made contact recently so I'll give them a call and arrange to meet up or to have a chat. Or it could be an idea to lend them a particular book or send a particular You Tube talk. Or something practical like baking them a cake, or helping out with a particular job that needs doing.

When we love people we act intentionally to show our care for them. The way we show our desire to help someone to come to faith in Jesus is to reflect on where they are on this journey and to pray 'What can I do next Lord'? You are asking God to guide you in how you can proactively encourage them on their journey of faith. Everyone's journey to faith in Jesus is unique and personal and so your job is not to force them through a process but rather to intuitively sense what you can do to help them take the next step. Sometimes that might just be to wait and love them, sometimes it might be right to challenge them to take the next step of faith. In order to know we need to ask and be guided by God.

Thinking back to what God said when you prayed about someone on your list. Take the time now to text them and do what it was God showed you was the next step. It could be an invitation to meet up or to attend something or an offer of practical help.

Suggest a concrete plan of how and when this might happen.

Say that you were praying for them and check if there is anything specific they would like you to pray.

This may feel risky and awkward but we need to learn and grow in this together. When we step across social boundaries and introduce spirituality into our friendship, it can be difficult but it can open people up to God so it is worth the risk.

To finish spend some time together praying for and asking for God's blessing on that person and for a positive outcome.

Until next time.....

If you have time this week—don't forget to use the additional resource guide to go deeper. And if you don't have time for it all do try to focus on the 'Spiritual Assessment Exercise' to see where you think your friends are at.

Session 7

Conversion

The key point of this session is:

If your friend was ready to come to faith, would you know how to explain the gospel simply and help them surrender their lives to Christ?



Share with each other:

How you are?

How did the invitation to meet up/help go, how did your friend respond to last weeks text?

Do you have any other missional living testimonies to share?

Remember—even if the outcomes were not positive you are moving forward and it is good to share and allow others to pray for you.

Thinking about your testimony and how you came to faith share with others

- how long from when you first heard about Jesus did it take to come to a place where you knew you were following him?
- Was there a clear moment or was it a process?
- What were the key factors in your coming to faith?

Coming to faith is a work of the Holy Spirit and it is important to realise that there is no one way, although here are some commonalities that help in the process.

- One to One conversations and prayer with a Christian friend
- Attending an alpha course
- Attending an evangelistic event that has a clear call to faith
- Becoming a regular attendee at a Sunday service or involvement in a missional community or small group.

And often it is a combination of the above!!

Get one person to read aloud Psalm 46:1-10



- ¹ God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
- ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
- ³ though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging. ^[c]
- ⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
- ⁵ God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.
- ⁶ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
- ⁷ The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.
- ⁸ Come and see what the LORD has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.
- ⁹ He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields ^[d] with fire.
- ¹⁰ He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."

Listen to the words—what verse particularly connects with you ?

Prepare a prayer that flows from that verse, perhaps thanking God for saving you or a prayer asking God to help you speak about him.

Then take turns to pray out loud and join your prayer with everyone else.

The key to coming to faith is to begin consistently engaging with faith and God in one of the ways listed in the previous page. You can help your friend to come to faith by consistently meeting up and reading gospel stories about Jesus together. You will notice that the Bible study sections of Mission Shaped Living are kept simple. The reason for this is so that when you come to read a gospel passage with a 'person of peace' you can follow the same simple pattern of questions. The three kinds of questions we ask are:

- What does this tell me about Jesus (and therefore God)
- What does this tell me about people and human life?
- How do we need to respond to this?

These questions are not restrictive and they shouldn't limit you from following up with other questions as you discuss a passage. The following are 'Seven Stories of Hope', gospel passages that are great for those developing an interest in faith.

The woman who wept at Jesus' feet (Luke 7:36-50)

Accepted by God: Luke 18:9-17

A hole in the roof: Luke 5:17-26

Two lost sons: Luke 15:11-32

Death and Forgiveness: Mark:15:16-39

New Life, new purpose: Matthew 28:1-20

Which soil are you?: Mark 6:1-20

To practice doing this Read Luke 15:11-32—The two lost sons.

Use the questions on the previous page to discuss the passage—then pray at the end depending on how each person has said they need to respond.

At the end of this discussion consider

- How would you feel asking a friend to read and discuss a passage like this with you?
- How do you think having a discussion around the Word of God can be more beneficial than having a general issue based discussion about faith?
- what feel hard about it and what feels easier than having a general conversation about faith?

A key part of the process of coming to faith is understanding what Jesus has done for us and how his death relates to our need for God. We have to be able to explain the gospel in an understandable way, so we are going to look at a tool called 'The Three Circles'.

OUT

If you have access to the internet then look at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5W8ynRMr59k> for an example of how the three circles gospel presentation works. And skip the description below!

If not read on!

It is a really simple tool to learn and it starts with the things that people understand (the good in our world and also our shared experience of pain and brokenness) as well as addressing the issue of sin.

The diagram is essentially 3 circles and the first demonstrates the brokenness of the world. You would start by drawing the circle and saying something along the lines of:

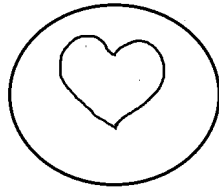
'We live in a broken world. When we look around, or watch the news we see messed up stuff everywhere. Bad things happen to people, murder, theft, depression, war and suffering, famine, sickness. If we are honest we have all experienced this brokenness to some extent. Through illness, relationship breakdown, financial pressures, addictions. *For me I have had* (add your personal examples at this point!) *There are things we have done too that cause others pain. I have done lots that caused pain to others like.....* (again add personal examples here)



Circle 1—Broken world

I am sure you can think of some for yourself as well. When we see brokenness in this world it can often make us think there can't be a God who loves us.

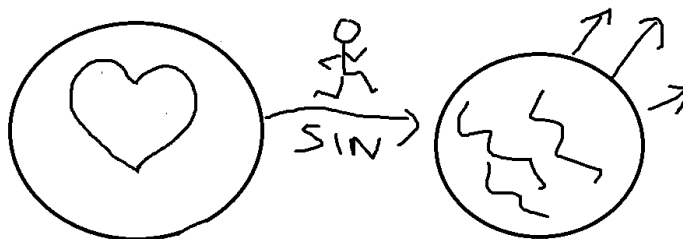
But alongside the pain we also see goodness and beauty. It might be the miracle of a child being born, the love we share with someone, how moved we are by a piece of music or art, or someone overcoming their pain with grace, or the beauty of a sunrise, or even the intricacy with which science shows the this world is designed. There are definitely amazing things in this world. And that's because we can still see evidence of God's design for this world when he made it, it was good and the plan was that we would live with him in this world forever.



Circle 2—God's creation

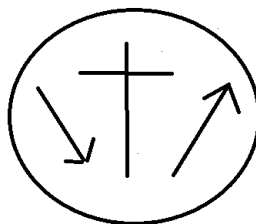
How do we hold together the two realities of pain and brokenness and God's love for us? The way Christians understand it is that God created this world for good and for us to know his love but we thought we knew better than his design and turned our backs on Him, we rejected God's plan and love for us. We call this selfishness and rejection of God 'sin'.

So we find ourselves in the midst of sin and brokenness, often we want to get out of it but we can't. We try all sorts of things to 'fix' that sense of brokenness, we party and numb the pain with alcohol, or buying things to make us feel better, we try to be successful, earn lots of money, seek new relationships which make us happy for a little bit. Sometimes we even try going to church or following a religion. But nothing works for very long and we are pulled back into that sense of restlessness and lack of fulfillment. *There was a time in my life when.....* (own examples here)



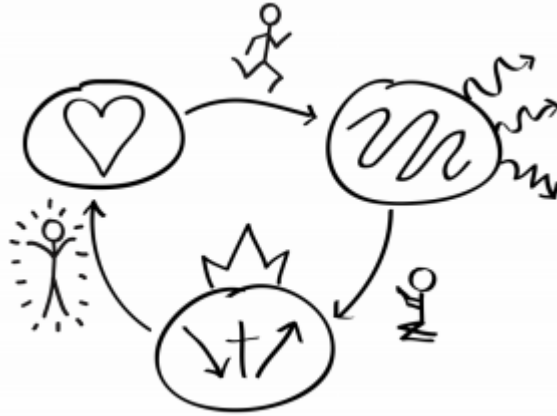
Link to explain the relationship between these circles

God knew we were in this mess and he didn't want to leave us like that, so he came in the form of his only Son Jesus. He lived a perfect life and revealed God's love to us by loving people who were broken and rejected, healing the sick, and setting people free. He then allowed himself to be killed on a cross to pay for all our sin and brokenness and then he came back to life in order to make a new kind of life possible for all of us.



Circle 3—Jesus

He said that if we turn and believe in him, putting our trust in him and following him with our lives, then we could be set free from our brokenness and sin. In him we cross over into a new life where we discover God's love and good design for us



That's what Jesus has done for me (share your story)

Then ask—'Where do you think you are in the picture? (Over here, on God's design, or are you over here, feeling a bit stuck in sin and brokenness?)

Where would you like to be?

Is there anything stopping you from turning and believing in Jesus?

If you watched the video—rejoin here!!

Now take some time to practice drawing the diagrams, first copying and then from memory.

Now take some time to present the Three Circles to others in your group. Imagine you are in a coffee shop using a paper napkin to present this to a friend.

It is important—just as with our story—that we are comfortable doing this from memory if we are to use it with others. It doesn't have to be the Three Circles—any other way of sharing the gospel is fine—but it helps to know it well in order to present it to others—with or without diagrams! What is vital however, is that at the end of any gospel explanation—that we ask the questions as this helps us to know what is going on with them, where they are, and when they are ready to put their trust in Jesus.

Think about who you might share this with this week. If you can't think of a non Christian then perhaps ask one of your Christian friends if you can share with them as a practice.

We probably all need to work on this if we are going to be ready to explain the gospel simply and clearly when we have the opportunity so let's keep practicing!

To finish

Pray with one another, thanking Jesus for his gift of salvation and for the opportunity to share this good news with others.

Until next time.....

Practice the Three Circles and have a look particularly at the Bible passage and questions in the extra resources booklet.

Session 8

Mission Shaped Living

1 Peter 3:15 says

‘In your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.’

This describes a life devoted to Jesus as Lord and an attitude of being ready to share that he is the one who gives us hope. The aim of Mission Shaped Living has been to give us practices and tools which will enable us to be ready to witness for Jesus in our everyday life. As we come to the end of the course, it will be important to plan how we can continue to grow in confidence in this lifestyle.

Share:

How are you?

Did you get the use the Three Circles tool with anyone.



In pairs or your Trio practice drawing and sharing the Three Circles from memory.

This is the last session of Mission Shaped Living.

Share:

What are you grateful for from the Mission Shaped Living Journey?

What has been your biggest insight/step forward?

Read Matthew 13:18-23

¹⁸ “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

Here Jesus tells a story about the miracle seed of the kingdom. The seed contains everything necessary to save and transform a person’s life, but there is an issue with the soil the seed lands on—the state of the hearts and minds of those who hear the gospel. In Luke 10 Jesus talks about the harvest being plentiful, which is a picture of many people being prepared for the gospel, ready to be saved. But Jesus says there is a problem: there aren’t enough labourers out in the fields. It is important to remember that you are called by God to sow seeds wherever you are.

Remember as well that this passage says that 3/4’s of the soils do not bear fruit and produce a harvest and so it is important not to be discouraged—God has some people of peace out there who are ready—we just have to sow seed and be aware of how people respond.

Spend some time praying and thanking God that he has given you the gospel seed to sow.

Read Acts 2:1-12



When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues^[a] as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,^[b] ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

As the gathered community called by God to share in his mission we need to acknowledge that we need the Holy Spirit to empower us in our witness.

Spend some time now praying and asking God to fill you afresh with his Holy Spirit. You can do this by all praying at one—or by one person praying for all. Once you have stopped praying sit in God’s presence a while and wait for the Holy Spirit to come and touch you all.

Read Acts 2:38-47

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” ⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Discuss:

What did the early church reveal about God?

What aspects of the early church’s life challenge you?

How do you need to respond to this passage?

What we have shared together on Mission Shaped Living has tried to reflect the following values:

- Hearing the vision for mission each time we gathered
- Sharing lives of vulnerability, testimony and accountability
- Being fueled by prayer and the Holy Spirit
- Staying committed to living out our faith and supporting one another to do this.

According to Matthew 28:18-20 we are to make disciples and teach them how to follow Jesus. If we are going to keep living missionally we will need to keep these elements in our lives.

OUT

Spend some time now planning how you could do some mission work together.

The following are four suggestions but you might have others.

1. Host a social event

Have a low key social event that would fit with a number of the five people that you have been praying for. Plan it, pray for it and then see how your friends respond to the invitation.

2. Offer to pray for people in your local community

Together go out into a central shopping area of the community or door to door in some of the streets surrounding you. In pairs, approach someone or knock at a door and explain you are from a local church and that you want to bless people, and then ask—'what could we pray for you?' If people aren't sure how to answer you can ask 'If God were to do a miracle for you, what would you ask him to do?' Then pray for them and see what God does. You could also ask 'At this moment in your life, do you feel near or far from God?' and then see where the conversation leads.

3. Treasure Hunting

Meet as a group, (or see note below) ready to go out into the streets of your local area. Pray together and ask God to give you an understanding of people he wants you to share his love with. We call it 'treasure hunting' because people are God's greatest treasure and the revelations given by the Spirit are like clues. These clues may be that in prayer you see a person with a particular characteristic or type of clothing for example and God may give you understanding of what the person is going through (sick relative, they've lost their job etc.) or God may give you a location to visit. Take these clues and prayerfully look to see how God guides you as you go. When you meet someone you feel God wants you to talk to, find a way of explaining that you were praying and felt God lead you to them because he loves them. If you offer a word and it doesn't mean anything to them, they won't mind, but if you find someone God has prepared then God's kingdom can come to that person in a wonderful way.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY 5th DECEMBER 2020

This is a day where we will meet as a church at 10am and do some Treasure Hunting together

4. Host and evangelistic evening or course.

After all of your prayer and sharing with your five friends, why not plan an event to help people come to faith? It could be that you host a meal or coffee morning with someone giving a testimony at the end with a presentation of the Three Circles and a prayer for salvation. Or you might want to run an Alpha Course in a home that you could invite everyone to.

Once you have planned what's next, agree to keep each other accountable and to check in to see how each of you are doing in your Mission Shaped Life.

Finally

As a final act together to complete the course why not share a meal together (*you will need to bring your own food or why not go for a meal out together and bless a local business*) and then pray the prayer offering yourself to God again together.

Lord Jesus Christ, I am no longer my own but yours.

In gratitude for your saving death on my behalf I offer my life to you afresh.

Call me to the mission of your kingdom and open my eyes to the spiritual need of those around me.

Give me your love and compassion for the lost, and strengthen me with your grace to service them and be a blessing to them.

Send me in the power of your Holy Spirit to witness to the gospel and reveal you to those I meet.

Teach me how to make disciples and where I need to change my attitude, lifestyle and habits.

I freely and wholeheartedly commit myself to this call, knowing that in everything you will give me your inspiration, strength and grace.

Glorious and blessed God, Father, son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it.

Let this covenant now made on earth be fulfilled in Heaven

Amen.

