



LIFE Group Discussion Guide

October 5, 2025

Matthew 28:18-20 / Acts 1:8 /
Revelation 7:9-10

CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

When Jesus rose from the dead, He didn't just tell His disciples, "Stay safe" or "Keep this good news to yourself." He gave them a mission: *"Go and make disciples of all nations."* (Matthew 28:19) That mission wasn't just for pastors, missionaries, or "super-Christians." It was for *every* follower of Jesus—including teens.

Sometimes we think missions means flying across the world, but it starts right where you are—at school, on your team, at your job, or even in your friend group. Every day, God gives you opportunities to live on mission: showing kindness when others aren't, standing up for what's right, inviting a friend to youth group, or simply sharing what Jesus means to you.

And here's the best part: you're not doing this alone. Acts 1:8 says God gives us His Spirit so we can be His witnesses. That means even when you feel nervous or unqualified, God's Spirit gives you the boldness and strength you need. Missions isn't about being perfect—it's about being available.

So here's the question: are you willing to say to God, "*Use me*"—whether that's across the street, at your school, or one day in another country?

OPENING

Icebreaker:

- If you could visit *any country in the world*, where would you go and what would you do there?
- Transition: *God's heart is for every person in every country to know Him. Missions is about being part of His plan to share Jesus everywhere—from our school and neighborhood to the other side of the world.*

Prayer: Ask God to help us see people the way He does.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

- **Matthew 28:18–20** – Jesus sends us out.
- **Acts 1:8** – We are His witnesses here and to the ends of the earth.
- **Revelation 7:9–10** – A picture of people from every nation worshipping God.

BIG IDEAS

1. **God's Mission is for Everyone.**
2. **You Don't Have to Be "Older" to Be Sent.**
3. **The Church is God's Team for Reaching the World.**
4. **The Goal is Worship—helping others know and love Jesus.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **When you hear the word "*missions*", what do you think of?**
 - Going on a mission trip, helping people in need, telling others about Jesus.
 - Some may think it's only for adults, but it's for teens too.
2. **Why do you think Jesus told His followers to go everywhere and tell everyone?**
 - Because everyone matters to Him.

- God's love isn't just for one group of people—it's for the whole world.
- 3. What are some ways we can be "on mission" in school, sports, or friendships?**
- Standing up for someone being picked on.
 - Choosing kindness instead of gossip.
 - Inviting friends to youth group.
 - Praying for classmates who don't know Jesus.
- 4. What makes it hard to tell people about Jesus?**
- Fear of rejection or being made fun of.
 - Not knowing what to say.
 - Feeling like we don't know enough about the Bible.
- 5. Do you know anyone who doesn't know Jesus? How can you pray for or encourage them?**
- Yes—friends, classmates, maybe even family.
 - Pray for open hearts.
 - Look for natural ways to show love and share about Jesus.
- 6. How can we help with missions around the world—even if we can't travel right now?**
- Praying for missionaries.
 - Writing letters or sending encouragement.
 - Helping raise money for mission trips or projects.
 - Learning about other cultures and praying for kids your age.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 1. What's one way you can show Jesus' love at school this week?**
- Sit with someone who's alone at lunch.
 - Speak kindly when others are being rude.
 - Offer to pray for a friend going through something.
- 2. Who is one friend you can pray for and maybe invite to church/youth group?**
- Encourage them to name someone specific. (Ex: "My teammate," "my cousin," "a friend from class.")
- 3. If our youth group planned a mission trip, would you go? Why or why not?**
- Some may say yes (to help, grow closer to God, experience another culture).

- Some may be nervous (money, being away from home, not sure they're ready).
- 4. **What's one creative way we (as a group) could support missionaries right now?** (Examples: write letters, raise money, pray, FaceTime with them.)
 - Fundraising car wash or bake sale.
 - Making encouragement videos for missionaries.
 - Hosting a "prayer night" just for missionaries.
- 5. **How can we remind each other to actually *do* these things—not just talk about them?**
 - Share prayer requests for specific friends and check in weekly.
 - Celebrate when someone takes a step of faith (big or small).
 - Hold each other accountable — "Who did you invite this week?"

PRAYER FOCUS

- **For Friends:** Ask God to give us courage to share Jesus with people we know.
- **For Missionaries:** Pray for their safety, boldness, and encouragement.
- **For the Nations:** Pray for kids and teens in other countries who need to hear about Jesus.
- **For Ourselves:** Ask God to make us bold and ready to be "on mission" every day.

CLOSING THOUGHT

You don't have to wait until you're older to live on mission. God can use you right now—in your school, on your team, in your friend group—to make Jesus known.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead as we resume the series on Acts next week.

October 12, 2025 --- Acts 12:1-25

COMMENTARY

Matthew 28:18-20

28:18 Verses 18–20 bring us to the climax and conclusion of Matthew. Jesus is passing the torch to his disciples, even as he promises to be with them forever—spiritually, not physically—to empower them for future mission. Jesus

can make the claim of v. 18 only if he is fully God, inasmuch as the whole universe is embraced in the authority delegated to him. And yet he is still in some sense distinct from his Heavenly Father, so that Matthew can use the divine passive in speaking of his having “been given” this authority. Clear allusions to the heavenly Son of Man figure of Dan 7:13–14 appear here. Christ’s exaltation, as the result of his resurrection, means that one day “every knee” will bow and “every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil 2:9–11), whether or not they do so voluntarily as part of his redeemed people. Because of this authority, Jesus has the right to issue his followers their “marching orders,” but he also has the ability to help them carry out those orders.

28:19a The main command of Christ’s commission is “make disciples” (mathēteusate). Too much and too little have often been made of this observation. Too much is made of it when the disciples’ “going” is overly subordinated, so that Jesus’ charge is to proselytize merely where one is. Matthew frequently uses “go” as an introductory circumstantial participle that is rightly translated as coordinate to the main verb—here “Go and make” (cf. 2:8; 9:13; 11:4; 17:27; 28:7). Too little is made of it when all attention is centered on the command to “go,” as in countless appeals for missionary candidates, so that foreign missions are elevated to a higher status of Christian service than other forms of spiritual activity. To “make disciples of all nations” does require many people to leave their homelands, but Jesus’ main focus remains on the task of all believers to duplicate themselves wherever they may be. The verb “make disciples” also commands a kind of evangelism that does not stop after someone makes a profession of faith. The truly subordinate participles in v. 19 explain what making disciples involves: “baptizing” them and “teaching” them obedience to all of Jesus’ commandments. The first of these will be a once-for-all, decisive initiation into Christian community. The second proves a perennially incomplete, life-long task.

“All nations” translates *panta ta ethnē*. The two main options for interpreting *ethnē* are Gentiles (non-Jews) and peoples (somewhat equivalent to ethnic groups). The former translation is popular among those who see either Jesus or Matthew as believing that God once-for-all rejected the Jews. Matthew’s most recent uses of *ethnē* (24:9, 14; 25:32) seem to include Jews and Gentiles alike as the recipients of evangelism and judgment. God is not turning his back on Jewish people here. What has changed is that they can no longer be saved simply by trusting in God under the Mosaic covenant. All who wish to be in fellowship with God must now come to him through Jesus.

28:19b Without further qualification, baptism will most naturally refer to that which John and Jesus have already practiced (see under 3:1–17; cf. John 3:26; 4:1–3). “Them” (*autous*) shifts to the masculine pronoun from the neuter peoples (*ethnē*) and therefore implies a shift from groups to individuals (as in

25:32). Hence, the missiological debate about the validity of group conversions cannot be settled by any appeal to this text. “In [or into] the name” means declaring allegiance to or becoming associated with the power and authority of Jesus. The singular “name” followed by the threefold reference to “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” suggests both unity and plurality in the Godhead. Here is the clearest Trinitarian “formula” anywhere in the Gospels, and it is therefore often accused of being a very late development and not at all something Jesus himself could have imagined. But this view misjudges both the speed of the development of New Testament theology (cf. Jesus as God already in Acts 3:14–15—unless by circular reasoning this passage is also dismissed as late because of its high Christology), as well as how technical a formula this is. Acts 2:38 demonstrates that other baptismal formulae were also used in the earliest stages of Christianity. Jesus has already spoken of God as his Father (Matt 11:27; 24:36), of himself as the Son (11:27; 16:27; 24:36), and of blasphemy against God’s work in himself as against the Spirit (12:28).

28:20a Teaching obedience to all of Jesus’ commands forms the heart of disciple making. Evangelism must be holistic. If non-Christians are not hearing the gospel and not being challenged to make a decision for Christ, then the church has disobeyed one part of Jesus’ commission. If new converts are not faithfully and lovingly nurtured in the whole counsel of God’s revelation, then the church has disobeyed the other part. Key implications for preaching appear here. There must be a balance between evangelistic proclamation and relevant exposition of all parts of God’s Word, including the more difficult material best reserved for the mature (cf. 1 Cor 2:1–5 with 2:6–10). So, too, the ministries of the church overall must reflect a healthy balance of “outreach” and “inreach.” Individuals who have differing gifts should be encouraged to expend most of their energies developing their strengths, whether evangelizing or nurturing, speaking or serving. Nevertheless, Jesus calls all Christians to be both witnesses and disciplers.

Jesus’ words further demonstrate that Christian ethics and morality should first of all focus on Jesus’ teaching, even though the Old Testament still remains relevant, as one sees how it is fulfilled in Christ (Matt 5:17–20), and even though the rest of the New Testament remains relevant as further explanation of the significance of Christ and his teachings. But the testimony of the Gospels and the commands Jesus issued (of which more are found in Matthew than in Mark, Luke, or John) must comprise the central core of Christian faith and proclamation.

28:20b Matthew closes his Gospel with Jesus’ promise to be spiritually present with his followers until the end of this age, that is, until his return, when he will once again be present bodily (although “the end of the age” might be an idiom roughly equivalent to forever). John describes how Jesus had explained this provision in much more detail as the ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 13–17).

Acts 2 will describe the decisive moment of the fulfillment of this promise at Pentecost. Matthew chooses to leave his readers here. The disciples represent everyone in the church to which he writes and, derivatively, everyone who professes to follow Christ in any age. The Lord is now risen! He calls his people to become disciple makers, and he promises to be with them irrespective of their successes or failures. Verse 20b forms an inclusio with v. 18, which indicates the central focus of Jesus' closing words. Despite the Great Commission, Matthew wants to end his Gospel centering more on Christ's attributes than on the disciples' task. Verses 18–20 link back with 1:23 to frame the entire Gospel with references to Immanuel—God with us. In Jesus, God remains with us for now and eternity! What more do we need to persevere in Christian living? We must go out and obey his commission. But the final word of the Gospel remains Christ-centered. Even when we fail, he remains faithful.

Acts 1:8

1:8. Some have suggested that this key verse may contain a threefold table of contents of the book of Acts: Jerusalem, Acts 2:42–8:3; Judea and Samaria, Acts 8:4–12:24; ends of the earth, Acts 12:25–28:31. We cannot know if Luke had that kind of division in mind, but the book unfolds in a fascinating manner somewhat along that pattern. Notice that the call to witness is not limited to any select group of people, since it spreads from the apostles to the 120 believers and on throughout the pages of Acts. Nor can we restrict it only to service in our own churches or to some kind of “professional ministry.” Every believer should be a “world Christian,” able to function for the Savior from the other side of the street to the other side of the world.

Revelation 7:9-10

7:9-10. One of the great themes of Scripture is God's election. The 144,000 clearly portrays this as we have already seen. Equally prominent—and the perfect complement—is the theme that God's people are vast in number. Consider Genesis 22:17, in which God promised Abraham, “I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.” This second theme is evident here. That they are beyond number exaggerates for effect, for God numbers them and calls them each by name. Clearly these are multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multilingual—people from every nation, tribe, people and language.

John describes them as in heaven before the throne and in front of the Lamb, so his location since the beginning of vision two (Rev. 4:1) has remained unchanged. Perhaps this multitude has dislocated the living creatures, elders, and angels that used to occupy “center stage,” although John doesn't offer specific information about this. They are wearing white robes—explained in verse 14—and holding palm branches. Palm branches were the ancient

equivalent of balloons at a party, a mark of joy and festivity, palm branches appear only twice in the New Testament: once when a great crowd of Jesus' followers welcomed Him into Jerusalem (John 12:13); and here where another but greater crowd worships Him around His heavenly throne.

Revelation 7:10 contains the first words spoken in heaven by an assembly of redeemed people. (The worship in Rev. 5:13 is offered by all created beings.) Their first praise is for full salvation. Salvation from sin. Salvation from all sorrow and sadness. Salvation from the trials that they endured. Such salvation is wholly God's; they cannot take credit for it. God Almighty on His throne, by His sovereign grace, and Jesus the Lamb by His redemptive work have provided full salvation.