

Discussion Guide

Discover Your Mission Now

Series Overview

Many today long to belong. Yet they find it hard to make friends. Jesus call us His friends. He asks us to offer His friendship to others. During Lent we'll see how the best way to make friends for God is by being friendly! Discover simple ways to help everyone find their Best Friend! It's as simple as B.L.E.S.S Each week this guide will focus on a particular story from Jesus' life that demonstrates his mission and how he fulfilled it through B.L.E.S.S.ing others.



Wk 1 – The Jesus Mission - Big Idea

We reach, restore and reproduce the Jesus mission like Jesus did with the woman at the well. She was brought back to God, restored in her community, and became a source of others finding their way back to God.

Ice Breaker

Have you ever taken a personality profile or quiz like Life-Map, Meyers-Briggs or Strength Finders? What have you learned about yourself from these types of tests?

Reach Restore and Reproduce. These are three components to the Jesus Mission. God has not only called us as a community to Reach people who are far from God, Restore His dream for the world and Reproduce the mission in others – He has given this mission to each of us.

Reaching people who are far from God requires Christ-followers to develop intentional relationships with people outside traditional church settings. This can be done in our current social settings or might require us expanding our social circles by getting involved in our communities or simply inviting our neighbors over for dinner.

Restoring God's dream for the world is not only done by partnering with NGO's or missionaries in foreign countries. Restoring God's dream can simply be done with the conversations we have with those closest to us or with the places we choose to shop or the ways we talk about and view those who are different than us. Living lives of restoration isn't about volunteering, it's about being agents of reconciliation and justice in every facet of life.

Reproduction happens when we engage in relationships with the intention of investing in them what others have invested in us. It really can be as simple as a monthly check-in over coffee or an invitation for a friend to join you to learn more about what Reaching and Restoring looks like in your life.

We can only accomplish the Jesus Mission as a community if we are living it in our own lives.

1. Which R; Reach, Restore, Reproduce, comes most natural for you? Which one do you find the most challenging in your life? Why do you think that is?

It might seem daunting to imagine that we have the ability to reach those who are far from God, restore God's dream for the world and reproduce the mission in others. Jesus, in his own life, shows how the three R's can be accomplished through one encounter with a stranger at a well.

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Read John 4:8-12

8 "It was noon, and after Jesus' disciples had gone into town to buy some food, a Samaritan woman came to draw water from the well. Jesus asked her, "Would you please give me a drink of water?" 9 "You are a Jew," she replied, "and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink of water when Jews and Samaritans won't have anything to do with each other?" 10 Jesus answered, "You don't know what God wants to give you, and you don't know who is asking you for a drink. If you did, you would ask me for the water that gives life." 11 "Sir," the woman said, "you don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep. Where are you going to get this life-giving water? 12 Our ancestor Jacob dug this well for us, and his family and animals got water from it. Are you greater than Jacob?"

REACH

2. Have you ever had an encounter with a stranger that led to an unexpected connection or friendship? Maybe you met at your kid's sporting event or perhaps a mutual friend introduced you.

Possibly the most important parts of this story are the differences. Jesus is a man and a Jew. The woman was a Samaritan and alone. It was also the middle of the day, not the typical water fetching time; possibly giving some insight into the woman's lifestyle.

3. There are clearly barriers between Jesus and the woman at the well. What are some social barriers in today's society?

Reaching people who are far from God requires us to get out of our comfort zones. It also might mean being around people whose actions or behaviors give off clues to significant addictions or habits in their lives we aren't comfortable with.

Jesus could have, and probably should have, ignored the woman, but instead He defied societal "rules" and his encounter with her changed her life and many others, possibly an entire community.

4. Is there anyone in your life that you could identify as "the woman at the well"? Maybe someone you see often but don't know, or someone who is clearly a social outcast that you would be uncomfortable speaking to? What are the barriers between you?

As we continue to read about Jesus' encounter with this woman, we see that he doesn't stop at reaching her – he gives her an opportunity to be restored, and she accepts!

Continue reading in John 4 with verses 13-30

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again. 14 But no one who drinks the water I give will ever be thirsty again. The water I give is like a flowing fountain that gives eternal life." 15 The woman replied, "Sir, please give me a drink of that water! Then I won't get thirsty and have to come to this well again." 16 Jesus told her, "Go and bring your husband." 17-18 The woman answered, "I don't have a husband." That's right," Jesus replied, "you're telling the truth. You don't have a husband. You have already been married five times, and the man you are now living with isn't your husband." 19 The woman said, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. 20 My ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you

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Jews say Jerusalem is the only place to worship.” 21 Jesus said to her: ‘Believe me, the time is coming when you won’t worship the Father either on this mountain or in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans don’t really know the one you worship. But we Jews do know the God we worship, and by using us, God will save the world. 23 But a time is coming, and it is already here! Even now the true worshipers are being led by the Spirit to worship the Father according to the truth. These are the ones the Father is seeking to worship him. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship God must be led by the Spirit to worship him according to the truth. 25 The woman said, “I know that the Messiah will come. He is the one we call Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” 26 “I am that one,” Jesus told her, “and I am speaking to you now.” 28 The woman left her water jar and ran back into town. She said to the people, 29 “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! Could he be the Messiah?” 30 Everyone in town went out to see Jesus.

RESTORE

Restoring God’s dream for the woman at the well was not just about her making a new friend in Jesus. Jesus’ relationship with this woman gave her a confidence and passion that empowered her to embrace a new role in her community. As soon as Jesus revealed to this woman who He was, she began to live out a new role in her home town. Instead of the outcast adulterous woman, she was actually stepping into restoration and leading her whole community in finding God.

- 5. How have you seen your relationship with God restore God’s dream for your life?**
- 6. How are you currently working to restore God’s dream for the world in your family? Community? The world?**

Finish reading the story in John 4:30, 39-42

30Everyone in town went out to see Jesus. 39 lot of Samaritans in that town put their faith in Jesus because the woman had said, “This man told me everything I have ever done.” 40 They came and asked him to stay in their town, and he stayed on for two days. 41 Many more Samaritans put their faith in Jesus because of what they heard him say. 42 They told the woman, “We no longer have faith in Jesus just because of what you told us. We have heard him ourselves, and we are certain that he is the Savior of the world!”

REPRODUCE

In this story Jesus shows the heart of reproduction. It is when one life that has been reached and restored begins reaching out and seeing God’s dream restored in others’ lives. The woman at the well was so deeply impacted by her encounter with Jesus that she wasted no time demolishing social barriers to invite others to have encounters with Him as well.

- 7. Have you ever had the opportunity to help someone find their way to God? What was that like?**

Reproducing the Jesus Mission is the engine of the church and the key to accomplishing the Jesus Mission and helping people find their way back to God!

- 8. Remembering your answer from #1, what is one thing you can do this week in Reaching someone who is far from God, Restoring someone to community, Reproducing the Jesus mission in another?**

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Reach, Restore and Reproduce. This is the Jesus Mission. The next several weeks we will be covering five important practices you can put into place in your daily life that will help. They are:

- B - Begin with Prayer**
- L - Listen**
- E - Eat**
- S - Serve**
- S - Story**

Next Steps

- Read other encounters Jesus has with people in the Bible. Note some of the other barriers Jesus crossed to reach those who didn't understand who He was.
- Ask God to help you see and understand what His dreams are for this world starting with your own life and the life of your family.
- Take someone out for coffee this week to simply see how they are doing.

Session 1 - Leader's Tips (numbers correlate to the Group question numbers)

1. Encourage your group to identify which of the three R's they are more wired to focus on. Most people are more comfortable with one of the three, or have a harder time with one. Be prepared to go first to bring a better understanding of how the question can be answered.
2. Help the group understand a "stranger" doesn't mean someone random off the street. Some of us can talk to those kinds of strangers easily, but others need to be in a familiar and neutral environment in order to get to know new people. Those are still strangers!
3. Barriers can be everything from social (different group from you), economic, race, moral (different beliefs), etc.
4. If your group is having a hard time answering this question, challenge them to think about all the people they come in contact with in a day. Who do they brush past? Who makes them uncomfortable? Who do they avoid? Why? How can they move past this?
5. If this is difficult to understand, we're simply looking to talk about how God has restored our lives. Restored relationships? Restored health? Restored faith?
6. Many people are currently actively working to restore God's dream in some way. Encourage people to celebrate the little things – like how they are raising their children or the ways they are fighting for their marriages or serving in church, their community.
7. Some people might not realize that they have helped if they didn't actually pray a prayer with someone. Encourage your group to think of people God used them to help better understand who He is.
8. Encourage your group to think creatively and simply. Small steps are critical. If you'd like set up accountability within your group for the remainder of the small group discussion.