

Mission Bible Study July-October

Suggested Structure of the Meeting:

Gathering and Fellowship

Gather and enjoy a meal or snack as you get ready for the Bible Study.

Opening

Ice Breaker question

Bible Study

- **Praise and Worship**
- **Scripture Reading:** There is always a specific Bible text for each study.
- **Notes:** Each study includes background material to help you better understand the text.
- **Open-ended subjective questions:** Questions for which there is no wrong answer. Instead, these questions will hopefully help each participant to think about their life in light of God's love and our calling.

Prayer

Specific prayers related to the study

Additional material

New this year, additional material: songs for worship and videos that can help expand your study.

July 2017

Mission Bible Study
Inviting
John 1:44-51

Ice Breaker: What makes you feel welcomed? How do you prepare to host people in your own home?

Discover Church Mission Statement:

Inviting all people to discover their full life in Christ

Read Scripture: John 1:44-51

We as followers of Jesus are called to invite others to follow him. The verb is the key. We are not called to scare or to threaten or to command others to follow but rather to invite others. In other words, to use Philip's invitation in John 1:46, "Come and see." Our job is not to badger or argue someone into following Christ but rather our job is to invite people into the community of faith and trust that they will encounter Jesus and the life that he has to offer. That is exactly what happened to Nathaniel as he came face to face with Jesus. In his initial encounter, he declares Jesus both to be the Son of God and King of Israel. The wonderful thing is that Jesus pointed beyond this preliminary understanding to an even deeper and profound understanding of who he was and who he was for Nathaniel.

Notes:

- The Gospel of John does not follow the same outline as the other three Gospels. It is the only Gospel that records the calling of Philip & Nathaniel.
- You can break the Gospel down into four basic parts:
 - Introduction: Chapter One.
 - The Book of Seven Signs: John records seven miracles starting with turning water into wine and ends with the raising of Lazarus. Chapters 2-12
 - Jesus' Last Discourse: Chapters 13-17
 - Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection: Chapter 18-21

- John's theme verse is John 20:30-31 *"Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."*
- The only other time that Nathaniel is mentioned in the Gospel is at the very end. He is one of the Disciples that goes fishing with Peter and has breakfast with the Risen Christ.
- Jesus' response to Nathaniel refers to the Old Testament story of Jacob's Ladder: Genesis 28:10-18
- Tradition at the time of Jesus held that the stone that Jacob slept on was the same stone that was in the Holy of Holies of the Temple.
- Jesus' response indicates that the gate of heaven no longer resides in a place, the Holy of Holies in the temple, (Genesis 28:17) but rather in a person, Jesus (John 1:51)

Questions:

1. Who are the people in your life that invited you, to use Philip's words, to "come and see" your Lord and Savior Jesus?
2. What motivates you to invite others to something that you are attending: movie, sporting event, concert, or some other event?
3. Do you feel motivated to invite others to church? Why or why not? Is it different if you are inviting a church member to another event in the congregation outside of worship?
4. Do feel comfortable encouraging others to seek a deeper relationship with Jesus? Why or why not?

Prayer:

Praise and thanksgiving for those who invited us to "come and see". Prayer request that we would invite others to come and experience Jesus. For those who have drifted away from the faith, as well as other personal and congregational prayer requests.

Additional Resources:

- A Song by Michael Card that takes Phillip's invitation, "Come and See" and turns it into a personal invitation for us:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKrQaqcSb0g>
- Here is Video of our text – John 1:44-51
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62iRyZDA7wc>

August

Mission Bible Study All People Revelation 7:9-11

Ice Breaker: With what ethnicity do you identify: German, Italian, Norwegian, Liberian, Togolese, Swedish, etc.? Are there other races in your ethnic makeup?

Discover Church Mission Statement:

Inviting all people to discover their full life in Christ

Read Scripture: Revelation 7:9-11

- The Christian faith is unique; it is not tied to a specific race or language. True, it is born out of Judaism, but from the beginning Jesus' mission was not just to the Jews but to all nations, tribes, and ethnicities. Revelation 7:9-11 is a marvelous vision that heaven will be made up of every tribe and nation. No one will be left out. All people, regardless of race, are welcomed and encouraged to look to the Lord Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
- One of the exciting things about Discover Church is that more and more we are both reflecting that heavenly vision and the neighborhood around us which is a good thing. In our congregation, we have people whose heritage is African, European, Hispanic and Asian. What is important for the Christian faith and our congregation is not our ethnicity, but that we confess Jesus as Lord and Savior and follow him as his disciple.

Notes:

- Until late twentieth and early twenty-first century America, the Roman Empire was the most racially diverse society in history.
- The book of Revelation is both a letter to specific congregations in Asia Minor as well as Apocalyptic Literature.
- Apocalyptic Literature is as much about the unseen spiritual nature of the present as it is about predicting the distant future.
- The Central image that ties the book of Revelation together is the Throne of God and the Worship around the throne.
- This part of John's vision describes what heaven looks like after the Tribulation.

Questions:

1. What is your response to The Revelation vision that every ethnicity, tribe, and tongue will worship together? What do think that will be like?
2. When you are interacting with people of another culture, do you feel comfortable, uncomfortable, or a little bit of both?
3. What are some things that we can do as a small group or as a congregation to make people of other cultures feel welcomed?
4. According to this vision in Revelation, the unity of our faith is not any specific language, ethnicity, or culture, but rather “To our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.” In other words, our unity comes from God made real in Jesus. What does that mean to you? In light of that fact, how should we live our life right now?
5. Below are links to two missions that Discover Church supports; watch and respond.

Prayer:

Praise and Thanksgiving for all the people that God has called to Discover Church. Prayer requests that we might continue to reach out to those who need to hear about the love of Jesus, for the Church that is being persecuted, for our missionaries, and personal prayer requests.

Additional Resources:

- You might want to use as a worship song, He Reigns, by The Newsboys. The song gives us a vision of Revelation 7:9-11.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKTqwBet11>
- Watch one or both of these YouTube videos. These are just two of the many ministries that Discover Church supports.
- The first is Operation Christmas Child. It talks about reaching every tribe and nation. Every fall Discover Church has an Operation Christmas Child campaign. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tuN1at5z75g>
- The second is about Wycliffe Ministry. This video shares their goal of translating the Bible in every tongue and for every tribe. We support Chuck and Cheryl Liesch who serve with Wycliffe Bible Translators. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cl38xsSub2g>

September

Mission Bible Study To Discover Numbers 13:20-33

Ice Breaker: While traveling, have you ever been stuck: canceled flight, car problems, inclement weather, etc? How did you respond? What did you do? How did the problem resolve itself?

Discover Church Mission Statement:

Inviting all people to discover their full life in Christ

Read Scripture: Numbers 13:17-33

- The life of faith is a life of Discovery. God continues to call us on new spiritual adventures. The very nature of an adventure is that there are both challenges and blessings. That was certainly true for the Children of Israel as they left Egypt and traveled to the Promise Land. When they arrived at the edge of the Promise Land, Moses sent the 12 people to scope it out. On that reconnaissance mission, they found both challenges and blessings. It truly was a land flowing with “milk and honey”; grapes the size of apples. At the same time, the inhabitants of the land were terrifying. Despite God’s promise, 10 of the 12 spies did not think they could inhabit the land. They convinced the people not to trust but to complain. There are moments in our own spiritual journey that we discover both the blessings and the challenges. Do we trust God’s promises and move forward to confront the challenges and enjoy the blessings, or like the Children of Israel when they initially reached the edge of the Promise Land, do we turn back in fear?

Notes:

- The book of Numbers describes Israel’s journey in the wilderness from Mt Sinai and the giving of the Torah to just before crossing the Jordan and entering the Promise land
- Numbers 13:17-33 is the first time that God had commanded the Israelites to enter the land and possess it.
- There were twelve spies sent into the land; one to represent each of the twelve tribes of Israel -- Numbers 13:1-12.

- Only two of twelve spies trusted God’s promise that they could take the land. Hoshea/Joshua and Caleb.
- Their journey from Sinai to the Promise Land took only about two months.
- Moses changed Hoshea's name from Hoshea which means, “He Saves,” to Joshua which means “The Lord Saves.”
- The Greek translation of the name ‘Joshua’ is ‘Jesus.’

Questions:

1. How would you describe your own spiritual journey?
 - a. Wandering in the wilderness
 - b. Challenge by Pharaoh’s Army (The enemy)
 - c. Standing on the edge of the Promise Land but afraid to go in
 - d. Crossing the Jordan into God’s Promise
 - e. Other (explain)
2. What are some of the blessings in your life right now?
3. What are some of the challenges?
4. How can God help you to meet those challenges?
5. How can we pray for your spiritual journey?

Prayer:

Praise and thanksgiving for God’s blessings. Prayer requests for our challenges, and that we can follow God’s call as an individual, small group, and congregation.

Additional Resources:

- For worship, you could use “Lay Me Down” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7t2CI43nOU>
- “Children of the Heavenly Father” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1Le7-y9xVI>

October

Mission Bible Study Full Life in Christ Colossians 3:12-17

Ice Breaker: How would you describe how you dress? Are you someone who keeps up with the latest styles? Or do you dress casually and for comfort? Or somewhere in between?

Discover Church Mission Statement:

Inviting all people to discover *their full life in Christ*

Read Scripture: Colossians 3:12-17

- Paul in just about every letter he wrote describes what it means to live in Christ. He uses different analogies and metaphors but the point is the same. Our life has changed. If we trust, God will continue to transform us. Probably one of the best description of a full life in Christ is found in Paul's letter to the Colossians. In that letter, he talks about the power of the Cross and Resurrection. How Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection disarmed the spiritual powers and authorities (Colossians 2:15). He makes it clear that God has freed us. At the same time, Colossians goes on to call us to respond to God's grace by letting God transform us and asking God's help for us to live a new life (Colossians 2:6-7).

Notes:

- Colossians is one of Paul's final letters. It was most probably written during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:30)
- Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon were written about the same time.
- Colossae and Ephesus are in the same general area in Asia Minor (Turkey).
- Philemon was a member of the Church at Colossae.
- Three purposes seem to have been in Paul's mind as he wrote Colossians.
- First, he sought to show the deity and supremacy of Christ in the face of the Colossian heresy (1:18; 2:9).
- Second, he wanted to lead believers into spiritual maturity (1:28; 2:6-7).
- Third, he wanted to inform them about his state of affairs and elicited their prayers on his behalf (4:2-8).
- Both Ephesians and Colossians emphasize that we need to trust the Cross and empty tomb over speculative philosophy.

Questions:

1. At the beginning of the text, Paul describes God's love for us in this way, "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved," How would you describe what God has done for you?
2. How would you define these words:
 - a. Compassion
 - b. Kindness
 - c. Forgiveness
 - d. Humility
 - e. Gentleness
 - f. Patience
 - g. Love
3. Clothing is both intimate and public. There are some pieces of clothing that few see, while there are other pieces that everyone sees. With that understanding, what does it mean to you to clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience?
4. Why do you think it is important to praise God through hymns, songs, and psalms?

Prayer:

Praise and Thanksgiving that we are God's holy people; dearly loved. Prayer requests that we can clothe ourselves in Christ. Personal prayer requests?

Additional Resources:

- For worship, you could use "Draw me Close to You"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAnwBixzuNo>
- For an interesting reading of the text, you can play one of these two videos:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Go7KqyA9LrY>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uh7rnPsexp5M>



Discover Church Mission:

Inviting people to discover their whole life in Christ.

Discover Values:

Discipleship is a priority. Our goal as a congregation is to make disciples. The best definition of discipleship is apprenticeship. An apprentice is someone who studies under a master craftsman to learn a trade by copying his master. Jesus is the master of life. We need to be his apprentices so that we might learn life by copying our master.

Inspired by the Living Word. One of the primary ways we discover who Jesus is for us, is through the written word. As we study, read, and reflect on the written word we encounter the living word -- Jesus. For this reason it is important as disciples that we have a working knowledge of the Bible.

Spirit Charged. We are, as a congregation and as individuals, Spirit charged. We look to the Holy Spirit to energize us with the gifts for ministry. The Spirit is also in charge of us; helping us to follow Jesus. To stay plugged in, we need to be a people of prayer. We tend to underestimate the power of prayer. Prayer is one of the ways that the Holy Spirit teaches us how to follow Jesus.

Culture of Forgiveness. The ground is level at the foot of the cross. We have all been forgiven through the cross. Forgiveness is not easy. Jesus had to go cross to offer forgiveness to us. We need to do the hard work of forgiving one another.

At Discover Church, we practice 4-90 forgiveness. It comes from Matthew 18:22 when Peter ask how many times should he forgive. According to many translations, Jesus says, "seventy times seven." The point is not that we have a point where we can stop forgiving, but rather that forgiveness is a continuous process. Seven times seventy equals 490 so we picture that continuous process of forgiveness as 4-90 degree turns.

Each turn can be a step toward forgiveness. We can't stop at 1-90 forgiveness, which is being nice, nor, in most cases, can we settle for 2-90 forgiveness, which is breaking off the relationship, nor trapped at 3-90 forgiveness, which is pretending to forgive but still holding a grudge. We have to come to 4-90 forgiveness, which is truly forgiving someone to the point that the past hurt actually deepens and strengthens the relationship.

This is the ideal and can only happen through the power of the Holy Spirit (Spirit-Charged). There are times that we might make it to only 1-90 or 2-90 forgiveness. It is at those times we trust in God's Grace to bring us the rest of the way. Learning to forgive is a life-long journey for most of us. It is one of the ways we learn to follow Jesus as his disciples.

Ordinary people serving an extraordinary God. We are a rag-tag lot. As Saint Paul says, we all fall short of the glory of God. Yet we serve an extraordinary God who has reached down to forgive us and use us in amazing ways. By ourselves we are as Luther says, "all beggars," but in Jesus we are adopted children of the King. As Jesus' disciples we must point not to ourselves but to this extraordinary God. We must learn to share our personal faith story.

Vision for world mission. Go into all the world and make disciples. We are called to see the world as Jesus sees it and to act. The harvest is ripe. Discover Church has a long history of actively supporting world missions through short-term mission trips, and missionary support. The mission field is not just over there but right here in the Twin Cities. Jesus commands us to go! Go with the Gospel; we might end up in India or Guyana, or the local coffee shop sharing our faith story with our neighbor.

Ethnically diverse. We live in a multi-ethnic context and we are called to reach out to all ethnic groups, realizing that our ethnicity is important but not ultimate. What is ultimate is that we believe in Jesus and we have been baptized into Christ and have been clothed in Christ. We wear the Jesus Jersey. We are on Jesus' team and have received Jesus' promises.

Rooted in our communities and Reaching out. Jesus commands us to go. Go and share the gospel in word and deed. Sharing the Gospel is not just handing someone a tract and then moving on. It means getting to know the people in your community and in your neighborhood. It is about loving them with the love of Christ. It is about inviting them into God's family and teaching them what it means to follow Jesus. In many ways we come full circle because when we go, we end up at the beginning making discipleship a priority.