



Small Groups for a Purposeful Presence: Week 1 – Our God Stories

Our world is in need. There is no time to “do” church as usual. Jesus is interrupting you and your church to be part of a movement to transform the world. Use these lessons to encourage and empower all of your congregation to engage in making disciples.

Focus: “Today, it is not enough to say that we love Jesus; we need to be ready to share the why and how our relationship with the Lord is hope to others.”

Opening prayer:

God of all nations, we invite you into this place. Jesus, we light this candle as a sign of your presence. Spirit of wisdom and understanding, enlighten us. We pray that we keep our hearts and minds open to new ideas and that we may grow in our understanding of your ways. Amen.

Quote:

Our Jesus-commissioned, Holy Spirit-empowered, God-ordained mission is still on the schedule as of today, and no matter where or with whom we find ourselves, we are all called to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world – and that requires LOVE! Genuine Jesus-centered love. Rev. Rachel Billups

Breaking the ice:

Share about a person or a group of people, maybe a congregation that has nurtured you. What was your early encounter with this person(s) like?

Wrestling with the word:

Read Luke 5:1-3

- Peter is doing his everyday thing, and Jesus comes by and interrupts his life. How do you see God interrupting your life and creating a story worth telling?
- Sharing your God story is as easy as: before Jesus my life...then, after Jesus my life... How has Jesus changed you?
- People are looking for connections and not information. It is important to tell the “why” in your faith story; this is why I do what I do. Can you name a “why” in your faith journey?
- People are looking for us to be real. They need us to share both the good and the bad – the broken and the beautiful. However, it’s not always easy to be this vulnerable, especially as leaders. What are the parts of your story that are hard to tell? How might sharing your struggles make a difference?

Next steps:

- In Christ we are saved, and saved every day, so you will always have a fresh story to share.
- When was the last time you shared about a God encounter?
- What keeps you from noticing God’s presence in your story? What holds you back from sharing with another?
- How are you as an individual creating environments where people will grow and thrive in their God purpose.

Each of you are invited to consider how to share in 90 seconds why Jesus matters that you could share with a neighbor or a colleague.

Closing prayer:

Thank you, God, for interrupting our lives and stepping in. We come to you humbly and offer up our stories for you to use to transform this world. Give us eyes to see the people who are looking for hope; give us direction in sharing a story that points to your love; give us compassion to come alongside a hurting world. In Jesus name, Amen



Small Groups for a Purposeful Presence: Week 2 – Disciples Make Disciples

John Wesley said, “The world is my parish.” This lesson looks at how we are called to go beyond our doors and programs to make disciples.

Focus: *No matter whether your church has 5, 10, 50, 100, 1,000 or 5,000 disciples, God wants and is ready to use your church to transform the world.* Rev. Rachel Billups

Opening prayer:

God of all nations, we invite you into this place. Jesus, we light this candle as a sign of your presence. Spirit of wisdom and understanding, enlighten us. We pray that we keep our hearts and minds open to new ideas and that we may grow in our understanding of your ways. Amen.

Quote:

“People are longing for community; unfortunately, they are not finding it in the church building. But we are the church, so let’s be church and bring the church to people.” Rev. Rachel Billups

Icebreaker:

Share a time when someone has opened up and shared their story? How did it feel? Did it change you in any way?

Wrestling with the word:

Read Luke 5:1-3

- How did Jesus engage with the community in this scripture?
- What are some other instances in the Bible where Jesus goes out to the people, instead of inviting them into the synagogue or temple?
- How might you relate to the ordinary people in these scriptures?

Next steps:

- What does revival mean to you?
- What is the difference between a movement and an institution? Where are you making space for people to tell their stories?
- People are longing for community. Unfortunately, they are not finding it in the church building. But we are the church, so let’s be church and bring the church to people. How are you partnering with God in reviving your family, your community and the world?
- We are called to make disciples. However, too often we create programs instead. This is an opportunity to engage with people in the ways and places they are already coming together. How does your neighborhood gather? Do you know what is happening on Sunday mornings outside your church?
- In the gospels, when people encounter Jesus, they are excited to share their story with others. What is happening in your life or the life of your church that excites you? Who are you sharing this with?
- What is the resource God has given you to share? A dinner table? A fire pit? A spot at the local pizza place? How might you use this to impact your neighbors?
- How will you make building relationships a priority for yourself and your congregation?

Closing prayer:

We thank you for the people that you have placed in our paths. We admit we are often unsure of how to connect; show us how to care in a way that makes a difference. Help us to love our neighbors in a way that leads to revival. In Jesus name, Amen.

Note: All quotes are from Rachel Billups’ presentation on Nov 2, 2019, at Central Region Church Conference.