



## Week 1 Small Group: Be a Witness

### OPENING PRAYER:

Loving God, through these moments together, help our unbelief. Strengthen our faith in you. Brighten our lights for you. And help us as we encourage one another to shine for you. In Christ we pray, amen.

### Quote

*"Do or do not. There is no try." - Yoda*

### BREAKING THE ICE:

Share a time when you wanted to help someone but were nervous to, or wanted to do something but had doubts. What ended up happening?

### WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Matthew 28:16-20

- Jesus instructs the disciples to go from Jerusalem to Galilee. Why do you think they trusted that Jesus had a purpose for telling them this, even though at this point Jesus has been crucified?
- What are some mountain top moments that the apostles had with Jesus in the past? How might they influence this event?
- What was the essence of Jesus' command?

### NEXT STEPS:

- Share how the following words/phrases resonate with you: Disciples, Doubt, Authority, Empower, Commanded, With Us
- Talk about difficulties we face in following Jesus' instructions to us. Discuss where doubt comes in and the challenge to actually, "Go therefore..."
- Why is exercising our and/or sharing our faith sometimes hard to do? What needs to be done to overcome doubts and be a stronger witness for Christ? Write this down so that you can be reminded of how important it is and what you need to do.

### CLOSING PRAYER:

God, we thank you for these words. Help us to apply them to our lives and to the ministry we do in this church and our service to all the world. Jesus, continue speaking to us so that we can know your will and follow you. Holy Spirit, guide us in a way that leads to hope, love and grace. Amen.



## Week 2 Small Group: Be a Disciple

### OPENING PRAYER:

God, thank you for the goodness in this moment and in this space. Be present among us so that we may lay down our burdens and take up your way. Help us to break the cycles that perpetuate fear, hatred, and pride, and give us a sense of your deep peace. Free us for joyful obedience. Amen.

### Quote

*"For Christians, faith is a precious good, the most valuable personal and social resource. When it is left untapped, the common good suffers, not just the particular interests of Christians." Miroslav Volf*

### BREAKING THE ICE:

Name some of the talents and gifts of your congregants. Remember to think of some of the less obvious, like compassion and hospitality.

### WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Luke 9:23-25

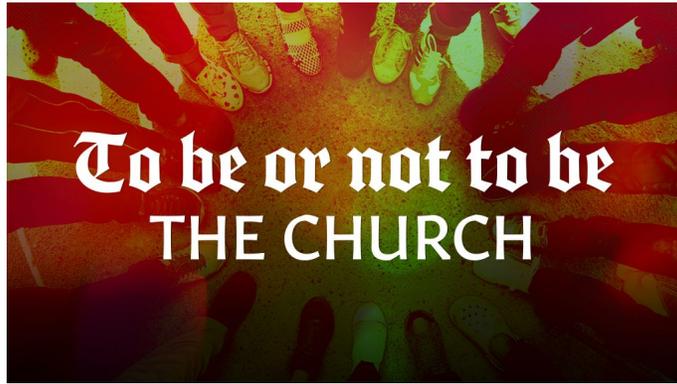
- We are reading this through the lens of knowing about the death and resurrection of Jesus. However, how might these words be heard differently for the first followers of Jesus who did not know what was going to happen to him?
- Why might someone be ashamed of Jesus or his words at this part of his ministry? How might that be an issue today?
- How do you think this passage affected the ministry of the apostles?

### NEXT STEPS:

- Self-denial is about moving away from self-centeredness and the need to maintain control in our life. What obstacles to letting go of self-centeredness and need for control do you experience in life? How can God help you in your daily life?
- In what ways might we desire to "save ourselves"?
- What is the implication of the word "daily" in this passage? How does this affect you?

### CLOSING PRAYER:

God, we thank you for these words. Help us to apply them to our lives and to the ministry we do in this church and our service to all the world. Jesus, continue speaking to us so that we can know your will and follow you. Holy Spirit, stir in us a desire to use our gifts in a way that others will be blessed. Amen.



## Week 3 Small Group: Be Transformational

### OPENING PRAYER:

God of hope, just like the early church, our world is in turmoil. We will look for your answer, in your timing, in your way. We are leaning on you, we will trust in your provision and care for you are always faithful. As we study your word, transform our hearts and minds to be more in line with you. Amen.

### Quote

*"Change starts in your thoughts." Unknown*

### BREAKING THE ICE:

If your local church were to disappear, what would be the effect on your congregation? Your neighborhood? The world?

### WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Romans 12:1-5

- What is God's mercy?
- What does it mean to be a living sacrifice? How is this worship?
- What does Paul tell us about his understanding of church unity? How do sacrifice and unity tie together?

### NEXT STEPS:

- What are some examples of the sacrifice that Paul is talking about evident in your faith journey? What are the challenges to offering ourselves as a living sacrifice?
- What are the ways we are conformed to the world? What is needed to move away from conformity and towards transformation and renewal?
- What are the challenges to church unity?

### CLOSING PRAYER:

God, we thank you for these words. Help us to apply them to our lives and to the ministry we do in this church and our service to all the world. Jesus, continue speaking to us so that we can know your will and love one another fully without strings. Holy Spirit, guide us in a way that leads to hope, love and grace. Amen.



## Week 4 Small Group: The Church of the Pentecost

### OPENING PRAYER:

We have gathered together to grow in our faith and our knowledge of your ways. It is our desire to be people who seek your Spirit. We ask that your Spirit strengthen us to do your will and your work. May we be a church that offers faithful witness and holy sacrifices so all the world may be transformed by your message of love. Amen.

### Quote

*“Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.” Prayer of the Holy Spirit*

### BREAKING THE ICE:

What was one of the most exciting times in your life where you were able to get rid of something old and replace it with something new?

### WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Acts 2:1-21

- What are they saying as they spoke in tongues? How does this change the people’s reaction to what is being said?
- Compare this encounter with the Holy Spirit to other places where the Holy Spirit is present in Acts (Acts 8:14-20, Acts 9:17-20, Acts 10:44-48, Acts 19:1-7).
- Peter claims that the prophecy from Joel 2:28-32 is fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. What are some of the claims of this prophecy? How do they line up with the events of Pentecost?

### NEXT STEPS:

- What words, phrases, images, or descriptions about Pentecost raise questions for you, encourage you, or confuse you?
- The Holy Spirit manifests in many different ways. Have you seen the power of the Holy Spirit at work in your life? In the life of your church?
- After Peter’s testimony, many were motivated to respond. Are you being called to respond to the message of Pentecost? If so, how?

### CLOSING PRAYER:

God, we thank you for these words. Help us to apply them to commit our lives and to you, the ministry of this church and to service to all the world. Jesus, continue speaking to us so that we can know your will and follow you. Holy Spirit, guide us in a way that leads to hope, love and grace. Amen.