

GROUND RULES

The following are a few ground rules to help us in our small group discussions:

Transparency: It's difficult to love someone as God called us to do without really knowing them in a deep and meaningful way. We're going to encourage you to share from your heart – to let down your walls, so that others can really know you. This isn't just struggles and fears, but also the positives – dreams, hopes, answered prayers, etc. We understand that's easier for some and we'll respect your boundaries.

No Convincing: Share your opinions – a difference in opinion is welcome. However, please don't try to convince others to your way of thinking.

Listen: Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Hear what's being said – don't be thinking about what you're going to say next or how you're going to respond – really listen.

Pause: After someone shares, give a pause to allow the group to feel the weight of what was just shared and to fully consider it before the next person shares. This also provides the person sharing with the opportunity to continue with their thought without feeling rushed.

Don't Fix: Let's try to hear what people are sharing without trying to fix them. If they want your advice, they'll ask for it.

Don't rescue: When someone is sharing something deeply personal and/or painful, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation. Often this will cause people to stop sharing and results in their not going as deep as they might have gone. Resist the temptation to rescue people.

No Cross-talk: Be considerate of others as they are sharing - don't be having side conversations.

Use "I" Statements: It's easy to talk about the issues of the church or other people on your team, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use "I" statements rather than "them", "the church", "us", "we", etc.

Personal Application: It's important that we all use this time to consider where we're at on any given subject or issue and what God would have us do. How am I walking this out in my personal life? How does this affect my ability to lead others? What is my part of the issue and/or solution? What changes does God want me to make?

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts Chapter 1

The Biblical record: 1:1-11

Sermon: Getting Our ACTS together

Memory Verses: Acts 1:8

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group. Background of Acts. Second book in Luke's personal letters to Theophilus. It tells the "rest of the story" about God's plan to rescue humanity.
2. Transition to this week's story. Jesus has resurrected and appeared to the Apostles over a 40 day period. He asked them to remain in Jerusalem, where they will receive the promised Holy Spirit.
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. Think about a time you have been called to give a testimony or to be a witness for something you saw or did. What was the main emphasis you were to focus on? Were you about to do that?
4. Tell the story. Do as best you can. Don't stop to teach or make points. Just tell the story. Don't attempt to memorize but to learn the story and just share it.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What happened first?
 - b. What happened next?
 - c. What happened next?
 - d. Was anything left out?
6. As discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What did you learn about God from this story?
 - b. How does that related to who you are?
 - c. Does this change how you see the world?
 - d. What will do this week as a result of learning this story? Why?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. Do you see yourself as a "witness" of God's dramatic and wonderful plan?
 - b. What do you want to tell others about this plan?
 - c. How will you explain the resurrection to a non-believer?
 - d. How do you sense a need for God's Spirit to help you in your spiritual life and in your witness for Christ?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts Chapter 2

The Biblical record: 2:37-47

Sermon: **The Gospel**

Memory Verses: Acts 2:38-39

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. How did Jesus return to heaven?
 - b. Why is this important?
2. Transition to this week's story
 - a. The Apostles were obedient to wait in Jerusalem for what Jesus had promised.
 - b. It was the Day of Pentecost when they received the Holy Spirit.
 - c. Miraculous things happened. Many were amazed and other mocked.
 - d. Peter spoke to the people.
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. Think about a time when you felt really passionate about something.
 - b. Was there anything that would have stopped you from your goal?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What happened first?
 - b. How did these people react to the sermon?
 - c. What happened next?
 - d. Why is this important for us?
 - e. Was anything left out?
6. As discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What is God doing in this account?
 - b. What did the people do that was impressive?
 - c. When they were baptized what did God do?
 - d. Why is this important to you?
 - e. What is God doing in your life at this time?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. How is your church fellowship like or unlike what we just learned?
 - b. How could you help make it more like what we just learned?
 - c. How will this example affect how you get involved in the church?
 - d. What aspect of the life in the early church do you most desire for yourself?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts Chapter 3

The Biblical record: Acts 3:1-10

Sermon: **The Church At Work**

Memory Verses: Acts 3:6

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. Once the first sermon was preached and people responded things started to happen.
 - b. People wanted to know more as they saw how these believers in Jesus acted.
 - c. All of those people were baptized and then they were telling everyone.
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. Describe a time when you found yourself without money.
 - b. Do you think you have ever dismissed God's working in your life as a coincidence or a "lucky break?"
 - c. As a cripple what would you write as a diary entry for a typical day?
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. What would you write when Peter grabs your hand?
 - b. How often do we give a "hand up" instead of just a "hand out?"
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. After the healing what happened?
 - b. What happened when the man looked at Peter?
 - c. What happened next?
 - d. Was anything left out?
6. As discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. How is Jesus healing some crippled area of your life?
 - b. What does God want you to do about His healing?
 - c. What do we learn about God from this passage?
 - d. What is The Holy Spirit doing during this encounter?
 - e. What part did the man have in this healing?
 - f. What part did God have in this healing?
 - g. What part did Peter have in this healing? How about John?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. Who is God healing through you?
 - b. How is Peter's response a "model" for your responses to needs?
 - c. Could God heal through you? Why or why not?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts 4 Convictions of a Witness

The Biblical record: Acts 4:1-31

Sermon: **Persecution and Proclamation**

Memory Verses: Acts 4:12

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. The man who was healed created quite a stir.
 - b. What was the reason for this “unrest?”
 - c. What did we learn about God's purpose in healing someone?
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. Describe time when you felt right about breaking a law?
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. When was the last time you had a run-in with the law?
 - b. If you were a reporter what headline would you write about the clash between Peter/John and the Sanhedrin?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What started these events?
 - b. Why is this important?
 - c. What happened next?
 - d. Was anything left out?
6. Ask discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - b. How is God's Son involved?
 - c. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
 - d. What aspect about the Holy Spirit is most striking to you from this account?
 - e. How did the believers behave? Why is this important?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. Under what circumstances should a Christian disobey civil or religious authorities?
 - b. What is the closest you've come to being persecuted as a Christian?
 - c. Comparing your spiritual life to a ‘gas tank’ what does your gauge read?
 - d. How can we pray for you this week about your relationship with Holy Spirit?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts Chapter 4:32-37 “Everything?”

The Biblical record: Acts 4:32-37

Sermon: **Intern Celebration Service**

Memory Verses: Acts 4:33

Pray

1. Briefly review last week’s story – catch up with group.
 - a. The persecution lead to proclamation of Jesus even more!
 - b. People prayed and God acted!
2. Transition to this week’s story.
 - a. Luke gives a summary account of what was happening in the church.
 - b. Luke records that “everything” was shared with those in need!
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. What group have you sensed the most unity? A team? A family? Bible study?
 - b. How does vers 32 describe your relationship with others in the church?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What makes this so remarkable?
 - b. What do you learn about Barnabas from this account?
 - c. What happened next?
 - d. Was anything left out?
6. As discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. How does this account compare to Acts 2:42-47
 - b. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - c. How is God’s Son involved?
 - d. Is God’s Spirit active in this report?
 - e. What do you need to do to act more like these people?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. What will you do this week to demonstrate that you are concerned about others?
 - b. What is necessary for you to feel “one heart and mind” with others in the church?
 - c. If you needed to go to someone with a financial need who would that be? Why?
 - d. Whom do you know with an urgent need?
 - e. How can we help meet that need?
 - f. What will we do about this need?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts Five

The Biblical record: Acts 5:1-11 Ananas and Sapphira

Sermon: Challenges from within The Church

Memory Verses: Acts 5:29

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. Have you ever been told to **not** do the right thing?
 - b. How large did the Church grow according the chapter 4?
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. In chapter four we find the first Church sharing possessions as any one had need. Barnabas sold a piece of property and gave it to the Church.
 - b. This example of compassion and personal sacrifice was an encouragement to the congregation and to those in need.
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. What religious practice did you once do just because everyone else did it that way but you have since outgrown?
 - b. When have you told the truth even though it wasn't easy?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What happened next?
 - b. Was anything left out?
6. As discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What did Ananias and Sapphira have to gain by lying about the amount of money they gave?
 - b. Why do you think God punish ANanias and Sapphira so severely?
 - c. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - d. What do you think God's attitude towards us "getting ahead"?
 - e. How is God's Son involved?
 - f. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. Have you ever tried to fool God? What happened?
 - b. How have you experienced the "fear of the Lord"?
 - c. In your personal or professional life in what situations are you most tempted to be dishonest, unethical or lack integrity in some way?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts Six (6) The First Deacons Selected

The Biblical record: Acts 6:1-7

Sermon: Serving One Another Acts 6: 1-11

Memory Verses: Acts 6: 9c-10 “These men began to argue with Stephen, but . . .”

Pray

1. Briefly review last week’s story – catch up with group.
 - a. Did you find your self checking your speech a bit more carefully this week in light of the Biblical account of Ananias and Sapphira?
 - b. How did God supply you with strength or wisdom to handle the situation?
2. Transition to this week’s story.
 - a. What responsibility at home or at work would you gladly give up? Never give up?
 - b. Does growth of a congregation always imply the need for more workers? Why is this so?
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. Given Acts 2:44-45 and Acts 4:32 how could the widows be neglected?
 - b. How big of an issue is this?
 - c. What is the primary “deaconing” task?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. How did the Apostles resolve this problem?
 - b. What happened next?
 - c. Was anything left out?
6. As discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - b. Why did they give so much attention to a “seemingly minor task”?
 - c. How is God’s Son involved?
 - d. Is God’s Spirit active in this report?
 - e. Why did they choose men “full of The Spirit and wisdom”?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. How can you require high credentials and offer great blessings for the minor tasks?
 - b. What would it mean if we did a better job of doing these two things?
 - c. Are all “Deacons” required to preach and be martyred for their faith? How are you willing to follow Stephen in these matters?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts Seven (7)

The Biblical record: Witness of Sacrifice Acts 7:1-8:1

Sermon: **Stick to your Story** Acts 7:1-3

Memory Verses: Acts 7:54-56

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. The deacons we called to deal with the Widows.
 - b. Immediately Stephen is preaching the Good News about Jesus
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. Who was the best “story teller” in your family?
 - b. Why did you like to hear them tell stories?
 - c. What do we learn about the whole event surrounding Stephen in Acts 6:13?
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. Was there ever a time in your life when you stuck to your belief and it cost you something?
 - b. Was the principle worth the sacrifice?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. Notice how Stephen knew God's actions in history.
 - b. Notice how Stephen knew God's actions in the Church.
 - c. Notice how Stephen knew God's plan for the future.
 - d. What happened next?
 - e. Was anything left out?
6. As discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - b. How is God's Son involved?
 - c. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
 - d. What did we learn about the role of Deacons in the Church from this account?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. How did Stephen's life match his message?
 - b. What do you need to change so that your life will match the message of God's Love in your life?
 - c. Are you more concerned about winning an argument or winning people to Jesus?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts Eight (8)

The Biblical record: The Responsibility to Witness – Acts 8:26-40

Sermon: **The Gift or The Giver** Acts 8:9-25

Memory Verses: Acts 8:12

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. Did you have an occasion this week when your principles were challenged and you stood firm? What was the cost?
 - b. How has God strengthen you this week to “stand firm?”
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. The shift from Stephen to Philip another deacon.
 - b. God is directing Philip's life. How does God direct your life?
 - c. Did you find yourself in a place you had not planned because God is directing your life? What happened?
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. What is the relationship between God's Part and Your Part in doing evangelism?
 - b. How was Philip prepared for this opportunity to share and baptize this man?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What caused Philip to connect with The Ethiopian?
 - b. What happened next?
 - c. Was anything left out?
6. As discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - b. How is God's Son involved?
 - c. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
 - d. What do we learn about evangelism from this account?
 - e. What do we learn about baptism from this account?
 - f. What do we learn about the “good confession” from this account?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. When was the last time you baptized someone? Tell us about the experience.
 - b. If a “Philip” were to answer your toughest questions about Jesus what would your question be? 1) Who was Jesus, 2) Why do people suffer? 3) How can I find my role and purpose in life? 4) What is the after life like? 5) How can I forgive someone who has hurt me? 6) How can I open my self up to The Holy Spirit? 7) Other?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format Acts Nine (9)

The Biblical record: An example of Obedience Acts 9:1-19

Sermon: **How was Paul Saved?** Acts 9:1-19

Memory Verses: Acts 9:22

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. When Stephen was stoned (Acts 8:1) Saul (Paul) gave permission for the event.
 - b. Were you privileged to baptize anyone this week? Tell us about it?
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. When we last head of Saul (Paul) he is giving permission to stone Stephen. Acts 8:1) now we find him on the way to Damascus to imprison more Christians.
 - b. Saul was clearly a man of focused energy. How does God use our focus for His Church?
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. Share a time when you had to talk with someone who intimidated you or you were afraid of?
 - b. How often does "fear" stop Kingdom progress? What gave Ananias strength to do this task?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What stopped Saul in his tracks? Who was it that stopped him?
 - b. What did Ananias learn from his vision?
 - c. What happened next?
 - d. Was anything left out?
6. As discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. How long did Saul pray before he was baptized?
 - b. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - c. How is God's Son involved?
 - d. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
 - e. How did his baptism effect him?
 - f. How does obedience give us strength to follow God?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. In what areas of your life have you seen the most change since your conversion?
 - b. What changes is calling you to make at this time?
 - c. Are ready to share the good news with a "Saul" who comes into your life? What do you need to be ready? How can we help you?
 - d. Have you followed Saul and Jesus in being baptized?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts Ten (10)

The Biblical record: Acts 10:1-23 Overcoming Bias and Prejudice

Sermon: God is at work in all peoples! Acts 10:1-48

Memory Verses: Acts 10:47-48

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. What happened to Saul/Paul following his baptism? Who helped him to be accepted in Jerusalem?
 - b. Who were able to help move forward in their Christian walk this week? How did the opportunity get “set up?”
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. Peter continues to be a leader in the Jerusalem congregation.
 - b. However it takes a special “vision” from God to get him to go to Caesarea to baptize Cornelius?
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. What vision did Cornelius have?
 - b. What vision did Peter have? How are they different? How are they the same?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. How does God still use “visions” to help people to come to Jesus?
 - b. What happened next?
 - c. Was anything left out?
6. As discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - b. How is God's Son involved?
 - c. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
 - d. This is the second “Holy Spirit falling.” Why is this needed a second time?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. Do you believe people can be saved with out hearing the Gospel? If yes why then did God send Peter to preach? Notice Acts 11:14 in the matter.
 - b. What does God have to do in your life to help you overcome prejudice or cultural bias?
 - c. Have you to overcome prejudices you may have been taught?
 - d. What is the power of the Gospel to change any person from any background?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format Acts Eleven (11)

The Biblical record: Acts 11:1-18 Peter learns more about Jesus

Sermon: **Hard Lessons** Acts 11:1-18

Memory Verses: Acts 11:21

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. Did you experience any prejudice this week? How did you react?
 - b. Were able to share Jesus with anyone this week?
 - c. How is God leading you to new levels of service?
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. Peter had a vision and participated in the baptisms but still hard to learn more.
 - b. In this report we learn more about God's will for all peoples of the world.
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. Peter is now the center of prejudicial activities.
 - b. Why did Luke take the time and space to repeat this account already reported in Acts 10:9-46?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. Did you learn anything new from this report?
 - b. What happened next?
 - c. Was anything left out?
6. As discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - b. How is God's Son involved?
 - c. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
 - d. Why did Peter receive such criticism?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. How can the principle of God bestowing His Spirit on the non-Jews affect the way you treat unacceptable people you meet?
 - b. How have you been criticized for breaking religious traditions?
 - c. What might have happened if the early Church ignored the lessons of 10:34-35 and 11:18?
 - d. How has this study helped you in your walk with Jesus?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts Twelve (12)

The Biblical record: Please Open The Door Acts 12:1-19

Sermon: **God is Still in Charge** Acts 12:1-19

Memory Verses: Acts 12:5

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. How was God getting your attention this week?
 - b. What was the focus of His call on your life?
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. Peter continues to get into problems with the “authorities” because of his teaching?
 - b. The importance of Prayer is the focus of the account.
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. If one of our group members was killed and another put in prison how would that impact our group?
 - b. Do we believe in prayer or are we like Rhoda and we just believe God has answered our prayers?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What happened next?
 - b. Was anything left out?
6. As discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - b. How is God's Son involved?
 - c. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
 - d. What do we need to change our prayer times as a result of this passage?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. How can this group help you?
 - b. What is the most difficult prayer need in your life?
 - c. How can you see God at work in this situation?
 - d. How do you organize your prayers? How long have you used this pattern?
 - e. What is the most helpful thing you have learned about prayer?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts Thirteen (13)

The Biblical record: The Joy of the Lord Acts 13:42-52

Sermon: **The Call to Service** Acts 13:1-5

Memory Verses: Acts 13:44-45

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. Once Peter reports to the Church they are encouraged and *"The Word of God continued to increase and spread."*
 - b. Did you have any specific prayers answered this week? How is working for you?
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. Prayers that God answers are for the mission God has given His Church.
 - b. Now the Church in Antioch responds by "setting apart" people for mission service.
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. What does God do when He calls someone to mission serve?
 - b. What is the difference between God's call for mission service in Acts 13:1 and His call on your life in Acts 12:25?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What happened next?
 - b. Was anything left out?
6. Ask discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - b. How is God's Son involved?
 - c. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
 - d. What are the steps in God setting people apart for mission service?
 - e. What is God's part in this? What is Our part?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. What is God calling you to do in His Kingdom?
 - b. Have you been set apart for this service?
 - c. Where did Barnabas and Paul get the money for this trip?
 - d. What are the implications for this congregation?
 - e. How does your financial giving represent God's Call in your life?
 - f. What is the role of The Word of God in the calling to service?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts Fourteen (14)

The Biblical record: Misunderstanding the Messenger Acts 14:8-20

Sermon: **God At Work – You Are Not Him!** Acts 14:1-7

Memory Verses: Acts 14:27-28

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. What did God call you to do this week that you did?
 - b. Was there anything you did not do that God clearly called you to do? Why or why not.
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. Once the team is involved in the First Missionary Journey they teach, preach, disciple and baptize lots of followers.
 - b. Now they revisited the congregations they established to encourage and strengthen them.
 - c. The persecution continues.
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. The healing of this man reminds us of Peter's healing a lame man in Acts 3. What is different in this account?
 - b. Why did they "stone" Paul?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What happened next?
 - b. Was anything left out?
6. Ask discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What can we learn about "missionary strategy" from this account?
 - b. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - c. How is God's Son involved?
 - d. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. Seeing how Barnabas and Paul were encouraged in this account, how does that impact you?
 - b. What encourages you?
 - c. Will you speak so clearly that someone may "stone" you? Why or why not?
 - d. How do you separate the message of Jesus from you as the messenger?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts 15 Gospel Freedom

The Biblical record: 15:1-33

Sermon: **Another Church Meeting?**

Memory Verses: Acts 15:36

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. Review how you have been encouraged in your Christian walk this week.
 - b. Who was it that helped you? How did they help you?
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. Has anyone every attempted to add extra rules to your Christian walk?
 - b. How did you respond? How did you evaluate these suggestions?
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. What were some of the expected, extra Biblical rules you were supposed to follow in the congregation where you grew up?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What happened next?
 - b. Was anything left out?
6. Ask discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. How important is the church in this discussion and decision?
 - b. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - c. How is God's Son involved?
 - d. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
 - e. Do you believe we treat the church at the same level we see in this report?
 - f. How was the church people involved in these decisions? Why is this important?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. How can your congregation follow the example reported in Acts 15?
 - b. What decision do you need regarding your walk with Jesus to make your walk stronger?
 - c. Are there any additions to Christian Faith might a new believer encounter in your congregation?
 - d. How can you help people live their day to day walk with Jesus? Will you do that this week?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts 16 Relationships ARE IT

The Biblical record: Acts 15:36-16:5

Sermon: **Dealing With Differences**

Memory Verses: Acts 16:4-5

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. How did you review your “faith commitments” in light of The Jerusalem Conference?
 - b. Did you learning anything this week about communication with in the congregation this week?
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. These two powerful leaders Paul and Barnabas could not agree on how to move forward. The issue focused on John Mark.
 - b. Why is it so hard when Christian leaders disagree?
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. What “breakup” was the hardest for you? Why was that so?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What happened next?
 - b. Was anything left out?
 - c. What was the outcome of this decision to separate?
6. Ask discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What do we learn about dealing with differences from this account?
 - b. How are these principles related to your Christian Walk?
 - c. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - d. How is God's Son involved?
 - e. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. When have you “given up your rights” in order to better represent Christ to others?
 - b. Have you ever lost a friendship because of a religious dispute?
 - c. Would you do anything differently now than what you did then?
 - d. How does The Purpose of the church connect to these issues? Why?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts 17 THE Truth

The Biblical record: Acts 17:16-34

Sermon: **Make Me A Berean**

Memory Verses: Acts 17:10-12

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. How were you able to deal with differences more effectively this week?
 - b. Did Paul and Barnabas's pattern help you?
 - c. Have you shared these principles with others?
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. As the second mission journey moves forward Paul is waiting in Athens for his traveling companions.
 - b. As he walks through the city his spirit is "distressed" and so he preaches to Jews and God fearing Greeks. This produces an invitation to the public place of discussion and debate.
 - c. Paul engages the people and tells them about Jesus.
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. If someone made a statue of you, what pose would be most appropriate? What would the inscription say?
 - b. What distresses you spiritually about the area in which you live?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What happened next?
 - b. Was anything left out?
6. Ask discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - b. How is God's Son involved?
 - c. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
 - d. How did Paul's sermon connect to the people? How did he do that?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. Whom do you know that has very little or no background in the Gospel? Can you share the Gospel with them without using the Bible?
 - b. What do you use a points of connect with people today in your efforts to related them to the Gospel?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts 18 We Are All Learning

The Biblical record: 18:24-28

Sermon: **The Way**

Memory Verses: Acts 18:28

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. What happened why you shared the Gospel this week with out using The Bible?
 - b. Did you find it harder or easier to share the Gospel in this way? Explain.
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. It is possible to be sincere and to be wrong. Apollos was doing a good work but did not understand baptism.
 - b. Why is it that baptism is often a matter of conflict in making a faith commitment?
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. Who is the mentor in this account?
 - b. Who had been the mentor to them?
 - c. How are Paul and Apollos related?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What is the importance of this husband and wife team serving together?
 - b. What happened next?
 - c. Was anything left out?
6. Ask discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - b. How is God's Son involved?
 - c. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
 - d. What do we learn about married couples serving together from this account?
 - e. How did Priscilla and Aquila help Apollos change his theology without causing a break in their relationship?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. What is the principle behind Priscilla and Aquila's discussion with Apollos?
 - b. How can you use this principle?
 - c. Who will you talk with this week using this principle to help them draw closer to Christ?
 - d. How will you approach the subject? How will you close the discussion?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts 19 That Was Evangelism

The Biblical record: Acts 19: 8-20

Sermon: **First Sunday of Advent – Being Baptized**

Memory Verses: Acts 19: 8-10

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. How were you able to help someone in their Christian walk this week?
 - b. Did the plan used by Priscilla and Aquila help you? How?
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. Luke tells us that “everyone who lived in the province of Asia heard the Word of The Lord.” This incredible spread of the Good News did not happen without some push back.
 - b. What experiences have you had with religious counterfeits? Did any of these really scare you?
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. What was the “signal” Paul used to stop teaching in the synagogue's and move out into other venues? See Acts 5:42 and Acts 20:20 to learn how they reached every person in just 24 months (Acts 19:10).
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What happened next?
 - b. Was anything left out?
6. Ask discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - b. How is God's Son involved?
 - c. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. How do people try to use Jesus for their own purposes today? How to you respond to these situations?
 - b. How do you experience the difference between these folks and real faith in Christ?
 - c. What do you need to “burn” in order to live for God? What will it cost you?
 - d. Will you do that this week?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts 20 Final Words to The Faithful

The Biblical record: Acts 20:25-38

Sermon: **The Lord's Day**

Memory Verses: Acts 20: 36-38

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. Were you able to “burn” anything this week?
 - b. What was the impact on your Christian walk?
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. Paul is making his way to Jerusalem and so his final times with his Christian brothers and sisters across the Roman Empire.
 - b. He continues to preach, teach, and encourage the Disciples.
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. How do you say goodbye to people you love?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What happened next?
 - b. Was anything left out?
6. Ask discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - b. How is God's Son involved?
 - c. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
 - d. How are relationships used in doing Christian work?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. Suddenly we experience Paul as a loving friends rather than a hard driving missionary. Has your preoccupation with the tasks of ministry every caused you to miss our on loving people?
 - b. Who makes up the “flock” for you are responsible? In what ways will you shepherd them this week?
 - c. What will be the greatest need you need to meet?
 - d. How would you complete the sentence, *The one thing I must accomplish at any cost is _____?*

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts 21 Extreme Conflict

The Biblical record: Acts 21:27-36

Sermon: **A Great Gathering**

Memory Verses: Acts 21:17-19

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. What impact did the report of Paul's farewell to Ephesians Elders have on you this week? Good? Bad? Helpful?
 - b. Have you deepened a relationship with a believer or non-believer this week? What happened?
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. When Paul arrives in Jerusalem the followers of Jesus are very glad to see him. However those who feel Paul has betrayed them are more intent than every to kill Paul.
 - b. They bring some very strange and false accusations against him so they can justify killing him.
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. What is the strangest thing you have every seen don in the name of religion?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What happened next?
 - b. Was anything left out?
6. Ask discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - b. How is God's Son involved?
 - c. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
 - d. How did Paul use his background to help deal with those who were against him? Why did he do that?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. What group is critical of the church today? How might the church provoke this group?
 - b. What can we do to lessen this animosity?
 - c. What will you do this week in this regard?
 - d. What do you need to help you accomplish this goal? How can we help?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts 22 Using Your Citizenship

The Biblical record: Acts 22:22-30

Sermon: **Review of Your Journey**

Memory Verses: Acts 22: 14-16

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. How were you able to deal with “extreme conflicts” this week?
 - b. How was Christ honored by your actions?
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. As the Roman soldiers rescued Paul from the crowd Paul ask for permission to speak. He address the audience and give a review of his journey with Jesus.
 - b. When Paul told them that the Gentiles were to receive God's Grace they became enraged and would have killed him right there – however Paul did something unexpected and was delivered.
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. Paul used his “birthright” as a Roman citizen to obtain his release from the crowd.
 - b. How does using logic and truth empower the presentation of the Gospel?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What happened next?
 - b. Was anything left out?
6. Ask discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - b. How is God's Son involved?
 - c. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. Have you every been enraged with what someone said in a speech? How did you react?
 - b. What credentials do you have that might be of help with you are falsely accused?
 - c. How does your story with Jesus provided a platform to tell others about Jesus?
 - d. What is the most dramatic part of your journey? How do you tell people about that?

Prayer Requests

Bible Story Telling Format

Acts 23 Keeping Courage

The Biblical record: Acts 23:1-11

Sermon: **The Story Continues**

Memory Verses: Acts 23: 11

Pray

1. Briefly review last week's story – catch up with group.
 - a. Did you have to appeal to your citizenship this week in order to share the Gospel?
 - b. How did you use Paul's experience to help you in your Christian walk this week?
2. Transition to this week's story.
 - a. Following the rescue of Paul from the crowd Paul was brought to the Sanhedrin to hear and face the charges against him
 - b. Paul is confrontive, combative, and uses his knowledge about the Sadducees not believing in resurrection in an attempt to get a hearing and do what The Lord wanted him to do.
3. Ask pre-story question.
 - a. What was the most frightening thing that happened to you this week?
4. Tell the story.
5. Ask questions to rebuild the story.
 - a. What happened next?
 - b. Was anything left out?
6. Ask discussion (Thumbprint) questions.
 - a. What do we learn about God from this account?
 - b. How is God's Son involved?
 - c. Is God's Spirit active in this report?
7. Application Questions.
 - a. When facing death, what duty do you want to have fulfilled before God?
 - b. How can you pursue that course this week?
 - c. How has The Lord encouraged you in hard times?
 - d. What could be your "Rome" – the next crucial step in your spiritual journey?

Prayer Requests

GROUND RULES

The following are a few ground rules to help us in our small group discussions:

Transparency: It's difficult to love someone as God called us to do without really knowing them in a deep and meaningful way. We're going to encourage you to share from your heart – to let down your walls, so that others can really know you. This isn't just struggles and fears, but also the positives – dreams, hopes, answered prayers, etc. We understand that's easier for some and we'll respect your boundaries.

No Convincing: Share your opinions – a difference in opinion is welcome. However, please don't try to convince others to your way of thinking.

Listen: Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Hear what's being said – don't be thinking about what you're going to say next or how you're going to respond – really listen.

Pause: After someone shares, give a pause to allow the group to feel the weight of what was just shared and to fully consider it before the next person shares. This also provides the person sharing with the opportunity to continue with their thought without feeling rushed.

Don't Fix: Let's try to hear what people are sharing without trying to fix them. If they want your advice, they'll ask for it.

Don't rescue: When someone is sharing something deeply personal and/or painful, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation. Often this will cause people to stop sharing and results in their not going as deep as they might have gone. Resist the temptation to rescue people.

No Cross-talk: Be considerate of others as they are sharing - don't be having side conversations.

Use "I" Statements: It's easy to talk about the issues of the church or other people on your team, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use "I" statements rather than "them", "the church", "us", "we", etc.

Personal Application: It's important that we all use this time to consider where we're at on any given subject or issue and what God would have us do. How am I walking this out in my personal life? How does this affect my ability to lead others? What is my part of the issue and/or solution? What changes does God want me to make?
