



"Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch."

Luke 10:4

Mission

One Church, Encountering Jesus,
Equipping Disciples, and Living Mercy

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Objectives

1. Awaken the desire to participate in the Mission of Jesus

The theme for each week centers around Jesus' Mission to seek and save the lost and his invitation for his disciples to join him.

2. Facilitate an encounter with God through Scripture.

This series does not primarily provide an *education* in faith, but *life transformation* through an encounter with the living God.

3. Engage hearts through an experience of beauty.

The Psalm and painting for each week help engage the emotions and arouse the imagination as aids to prayer.

4. Form authentic friendships.

Make time for casual conversation and the sharing of life together outside of the weekly meetings.

5. Send out witnesses to share the Good News.

As Pope Francis said in *The Joy of the Gospel*, "anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love." We expect that many who complete the series as a participant will go on to lead their own group with encouragement and minimal coaching.

Who do I invite?

Those most likely to benefit from the *Mission* Bible study are those who:

- Already have a personal relationship with Jesus
- Desire to follow Jesus more faithfully
- Are becoming aware of their call to share Jesus with others

Note: These characteristics refer to internal dispositions and attitudes that are best discovered through personal conversations where individuals feel heard and respected.

Disclaimers

1. *This is not group counseling.* If someone is experiencing strong emotion (particularly if it is a negative emotion), some in the group may be tempted to step in to comfort in a way that could be distracting for the rest of the group. Do your best to redirect the conversation and allow Jesus to finish what he has started in their heart.
2. *This is more that intellectual discussion.* We are not primarily seeking intellectual understanding, but prayer – a heart to heart conversation with God. As such, historical background, language, and other intellectual insights are best left to another time.

Suggested Meeting Outline

20 Minutes	Casual Conversation	Provide your group members an opportunity to build relationships – it will allow them to be more honest in later group discussions.
10 Minutes	Psalm & Conversation Starters	Read the Psalm aloud and check in on last week's group action.
45 Minutes	WRAP with the Gospel	Ask for a volunteer to read the Gospel passage aloud; then follow the process for WRAP as outlined in the guide.
10 Minutes	Going Deeper	Read the Scripture verses and ask the "going deeper questions" to guide your group's discussion.
5 Minutes	Group Action & Psalm	Introduce the group action and encourage your group to take the challenge. Then read the Psalm aloud as a closing prayer.
Total Time: 90 Minutes	End on Time	Everyone is free to leave at this point, but the leader should be prepared to stick around for anyone would like to continue the discussion.

1. Pray to the Holy Spirit for open hearts and the gift of prayer. Draw your group members' attention to any particular graces they are seeking in this time.
2. **WRITE**
 - a. **Read the Passage Aloud.** It is best to have a consistent reader, as some people get distracted as reading styles change.
 - b. Guide your group members to notice where the Lord draws their attention and **write** it down. This could be a word, phrase, or image. Give them permission to re-read the passage silently.
 - c. Invite anyone in your group who feels comfortable to share what the Lord is bringing to their attention. Acknowledge their contributions with a simple smile while encouraging silence rather than conversation at this point.
3. **REFLECT**
 - a. Read it aloud again
 - b. Invite your group members to deeper reflection on the scripture passage, saying something like, "Let the Lord draw your mind back to what initially grabbed your attention and use your imagination and intellect to **reflect** on what is going on in the passage."
 - c. Allow your group members time to write, then invite them to share as they feel comfortable.
4. **APPLY**
 - a. Read the passage aloud a final time.
 - b. Invite your group members to see the personal application of the Gospel passage, saying something like, "This time make it personal as you **apply** the passage to yourself. Where are you in the story?"
 - c. Allow time for writing, then invite people to share.
5. **PRAY**
 - a. Allow time for each member of your group to write a personal **prayer** in response to God.
 - b. Close with an Our Father.

The WRAP Method

*WRAP is an acronym and method for Lectio Divina from the book WRAP Yourself In Scripture © by Karen & Lawrence Dwyer published by The Institute for Priestly Formation (2011, 2018). The WRAP Method involves four steps: Write, Reflect, Apply, and Pray with Scripture.

Keys for Success

1. Complete the *Small Group Action Plan* (on the next pages).

The Bible Study Action Plan will guide you through all of the logistical considerations of beginning a Bible Study.

2. Pray for your group members daily.

God is the one who changes hearts. Ask him every day to supply the grace needed for deep and lasting conversion of hearts.

3. Read the participant guide ahead of time.

Pray through the Gospel passage for the upcoming week ahead of time, and think through how you might answer the discussion questions.

4. Meet Weekly.

We recommend your group meet weekly through the initial study for consistency and maximum impact. However, if your group continues to meet, you might consider adjusting your meeting frequency to bi-weekly.

5. Meet Seasonally.

Some seasons of life are busier than others. It is a good idea to take periodic breaks, asking for commitments of around 5-8 weeks at a time.

6. Facilitate discussion instead of teaching.

Setting yourself up as the "teacher" can discourage participation from group members who are unsure of what they believe or who already feel like they don't belong. Trust that Jesus is revealing himself to them through their prayer with the scriptures, in just the way they need.

7. Build relationships with your group members.

Disciples are made in the context of authentic friendships. So, your effectiveness as a group leader and disciple-maker requires that you maximize the amount of time you spend together with your group outside the formal group time.

8. Cast vision for multiplying groups.

As you near the end of the series, begin encouraging your group members to look beyond your group to other people in their lives who might be ready to hear the Good News of Jesus. It is important to avoid an insular mentality – sharing the love of Jesus should be a natural overflow of our own encounter.



Small Group Action Plan

Questions for Reflection

Stepping Out in Faith

“Jesus said to them, ‘How many loaves do you have?’” What “loaves” do you have that the Lord can bless and multiply? (e.g., hospitality, listening ears, gift of gab, etc.).

List any fears about leading a small group that might be holding you back (e.g., lack of knowledge, fear of making invitations, disqualifying past, etc).

Help from the Lord

Who might help you co-lead as your “wingman” if you asked them?

Who will you ask to keep you accountable to this Action Plan, through both encouragement and practical coaching?

Logistics

Choose Day of the Week:

- Sun
- Mon
- Tues
- Wed
- Thurs
- Fri
- Sat

Choose Location:

- My home
- Conference room at work
- Someone else’s home
- Zoom
- Coffee shop
- Park
- Other location: _____

Choose Time:

- Before work
- Over lunch
- After weekend Mass
- In the evening
- After parish/school event
- Other time

Target Start Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Make Invitations By: ____ / ____ / ____

Childcare Options:

- No childcare
- Grandparents
- Split cost of a sitter
- Other: _____

Possible Roles to Delegate to Other Members of the Group:

- Provide drinks
- Icebreaker
- Provide snacks
- Opening prayer
- Other: _____

Set Time:

Start: ____:____ am/pm
End: ____:____ am/pm

Identifying your Mission Field

List the different affinity groups in which you consider yourself an “insider” (e.g., school parents, soccer moms, co-workers, neighborhood friends, etc). Consider others who belong to these groups as potential small group participants.

Use the table on the next page to plan your invitations:

1. Begin listing the names of people you could invite to your small group (6-10 attendees is ideal)
2. Ask the Lord why he wants that person to come, and write that down (use this reason when you make your invitation)
3. Think about when you will see the person and have an opportunity for a face-to-face conversation (if at all possible) – when and how will you strike up a conversation?
4. Pray for these people by name, both now and throughout your small groups



Mission Study



Week One: The Light Shines in the Darkness

Psalm 34:2-8

I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall be always in my mouth.
My soul will glory in the LORD;
let the poor hear and be glad.
Magnify the LORD with me;
and let us exalt his name together.
I sought the LORD, and he answered me,

delivered me from all my fears.

Look to him and be radiant,
and your faces may not blush for shame.

This poor one cried out and the LORD heard,
and from all his distress he saved him.

The angel of the LORD encamps
around those who fear him, and he saves them.

Conversation Starter

1. When was a time that you had good news to share? What were you feeling at the time? How did other people respond?
2. Why do you think the Gospels describe Jesus as "light shining in the darkness?"



Cestello Annunciation, c. 1445-1510 (Sandro Botticelli)

Week One:
The Light Shines in the Darkness

WRAP with the Gospel - John 1:1-5, 9-14, 16-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it... The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man’s decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth... From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father’s side, has revealed him.

Write

Reflect

Apply

Pray

Week One:
The Light Shines in the Darkness

Going Deeper Questions

1. Jesus prays to the Father about his disciples, "As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world" (Jn. 17:18) How do the disciples of Jesus participate in his mission?
2. Why is it important that God became human and lived among us? What does that tell us about his missionary heart?

Group Action

This week, spend 10 minutes in prayer each day thanking Jesus for the gift of his salvation.

Psalm 34:2-8

I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall be always in my mouth.
My soul will glory in the LORD;
let the poor hear and be glad.
Magnify the LORD with me;
and let us exalt his name together.
I sought the LORD, and he answered me.

delivered me from all my fears.
Look to him and be radiant,
and your faces may not blush for shame.
This poor one cried out and the LORD heard,
and from all his distress he saved him.
The angel of the LORD encamps
around those who fear him, and he saves them.

Week Two: Put Out into Deep Water

Psalm 66:2-7ab, 16

Shout joyfully to God, all the earth;
sing of his glorious name;
give him glorious praise.

Say to God: "How awesome your deeds!
Before your great strength your enemies cringe.

All the earth falls in worship before you;
they sing of you, sing of your name!

Come and see the works of God,

awesome in deeds before the children of Adam.

He changed the sea to dry land;
through the river they passed on foot.

There we rejoiced in him,
who rules by his might forever,

His eyes are fixed upon the nations.

Come and hear, all you who fear God,

while I recount what has been done for me.

Conversation Starter

1. When was a time you took a step of faith? What were you feeling at the time? What happened as a result?
2. Describe a person you know who is full of faith in the Lord.



The Miraculous Draught of Fishes, c. 1515 (Raphael)

Week Two:
Put Out into Deep Water

WRAP with the Gospel - Luke 5:1-11

While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. He saw two boats there alongside the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, he asked him to put out a short distance from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. After he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” Simon said in reply, “Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets.” When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come to help them. They came and filled both boats so that they were in danger of sinking. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at the knees of Jesus and said, “Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.” For astonishment at the catch of fish they had made seized him and all those with him, and likewise James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners of Simon. Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” When they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him.

Write

Reflect

Apply

Pray

Week Two:
Put Out into Deep Water

Going Deeper Questions

1. Do you believe God wants to astonish you with his goodness? Where in your life do you most desire to be astonished by God?
2. What do you think it would mean for you to become a "fisher of men?"

Group Action

Think about one person in your life you desire to be astonished by the goodness of God. Take turns in your group praying for the people who come to mind.

Psalm 66:2-7ab, 16

Shout joyfully to God, all the earth;
sing of his glorious name;
give him glorious praise.

Say to God: “How awesome your deeds!
Before your great strength your enemies cringe.
All the earth falls in worship before you;
they sing of you, sing of your name!
Come and see the works of God,

awesome in deeds before the children of Adam.
He changed the sea to dry land;
through the river they passed on foot.
There we rejoiced in him,
who rules by his might forever,
His eyes are fixed upon the nations.
Come and hear, all you who fear God,
while I recount what has been done for me.

Week Three: The Laborers are Few

Psalm 96:1-68

Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
Sing to the LORD, bless his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.
Tell his glory among the nations;
among all peoples, his marvelous deeds.

For great is the LORD and highly to be praised,
to be feared above all gods.
For the gods of the nations are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.
Splendor and power go before him;
power and grandeur are in his holy place.

Conversation Starter

1. When was the last time you had a conversation with someone about Jesus? How did that conversation come about and how did it go?
2. Why is there a need for more missionary disciples to spread the Kingdom of God?



The Angelus, c. 1857-1859 (Jean Francois Millet)

Week Three:
The Laborers are Few

WRAP with the Gospel – Luke 10:1-12

After this the Lord appointed seventy[-two] others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, “The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way. Into whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this household.’ If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God is at hand for you.’ Whatever town you enter and they do not receive you, go out into the streets and say, ‘The dust of your town that clings to our feet, even that we shake off against you.’ Yet know this: the kingdom of God is at hand. I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom on that day than for that town.

Write

Reflect

Apply

Pray

Week Three: **The Laborers are Few**

Going Deeper Questions

1. What do you think it means concretely for *you* to labor for the harvest of the Lord?
2. Why do you think prayer is so necessary for the work of evangelization?

Group Action

Pray together for other individuals in your parish that the Lord may be calling to labor for this harvest. Identify opportunities to share with them your convictions and desires about the need for more laborers in spreading the Gospel message.

Psalm 96:1-68

Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
Sing to the LORD, bless his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.
Tell his glory among the nations;
among all peoples, his marvelous deeds.

For great is the LORD and highly to be praised,
to be feared above all gods.
For the gods of the nations are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.
Splendor and power go before him;
power and grandeur are in his holy place.

Week Four: The Cost of Discipleship

Psalm 22:28-32

All the ends of the earth
will remember and turn to the LORD;
All the families of nations
will bow low before him.
For kingship belongs to the LORD,
the ruler over the nations.
All who sleep in the earth
will bow low before God;

All who have gone down into the dust
will kneel in homage.
And I will live for the LORD;
my descendants will serve you.
The generation to come will be told of the Lord,
that they may proclaim to a people yet unborn
the deliverance you have brought.

Conversation Starter

1. Name one fear you have about being a missionary disciple of Jesus.
2. What would it take for you to be fully invested in the mission of Jesus?



The Taking of Christ into Custody (Pavel Popov)

Week Four:
The Cost of Discipleship

WRAP with the Gospel – Matthew 10:32-42

Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father. “Do not think that I have come to bring peace upon the earth. I have come to bring not peace but the sword. For I have come to set a man ‘against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one’s enemies will be those of his household. “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. “Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever receives a righteous man because he is righteous will receive a righteous man’s reward. And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because he is a disciple—amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward.”

Write

Reflect

Apply

Pray

Week Four: **The Cost of Discipleship**

Going Deeper Questions

1. In your experience, what makes evangelization easy, joyful, and peaceful?
2. What makes it difficult, painful, or frustrating?

Group Action

As a group, take turns naming aloud your fears about sharing your faith as a missionary disciple. Then surrender those fears to the Lord in prayer, asking him to encourage you and give you peace.

Psalm 22:28-32

All the ends of the earth
will remember and turn to the LORD;
All the families of nations
will bow low before him.
For kingship belongs to the LORD,
the ruler over the nations.
All who sleep in the earth
will bow low before God:

All who have gone down into the dust
will kneel in homage.
And I will live for the LORD;
my descendants will serve you.
The generation to come will be told of the Lord,
that they may proclaim to a people yet unborn
the deliverance you have brought.

Week Five: Go and Make Disciples

Psalm 130:5-8

I wait for the LORD,
my soul waits
and I hope for his word.
My soul looks for the Lord
more than sentinels for daybreak.

More than sentinels for daybreak,
let Israel hope in the LORD,
For with the LORD is mercy,
with him is plenteous redemption,
And he will redeem Israel from all its sins.

Conversation Starter

1. When did you feel the love and closeness of the Lord most acutely in your life?
2. Have you ever told another person (outside the faith) about this experience? What might happen if you told others about this experience more frequently?



Mary Magdalene Announces the Resurrection to the Apostles, c. 1890 (Vasiliy Polenov)

Week Five:
Go and Make Disciples

WRAP with the Gospel – Matthew 28:1-8, 16-20

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, approached, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing was white as snow. The guards were shaken with fear of him and became like dead men. Then the angel said to the women in reply, “Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ Behold, I have told you.” Then they went away quickly from the tomb, fearful yet overjoyed, and ran to announce this to his disciples.

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Write

Reflect

Apply

Pray

1. Why do you think Jesus appeared directly to Mary Magdalene and commissioned her to announce his resurrection to the other disciples?
2. The Lord has commissioned every baptized person to be a messenger of the good news. How does this affect your understanding of God's purpose for your life?

Write down a list of the people in your life (e.g. family, friends, co-workers, etc.) that you can begin praying for by name. Begin to daily ask the Lord:

How are you asking me to be a messenger of your love, peace, joy, and/or truth to this person?

I wait for the LORD,
 my soul waits
 and I hope for his word.
 My soul looks for the Lord
 more than sentinels for daybreak.

More than sentinels for daybreak,
 let Israel hope in the LORD,
 For with the LORD is mercy,
 with him is plenteous redemption,
 And he will redeem Israel from all its sins.

Week Six: The Gift of the Spirit

Psalm 67:2-8

May God be gracious to us and bless us;
 may his face shine upon us.
 So shall your way be known upon the earth,
 your victory among all the nations.
 May the peoples praise you, God;
 may all the peoples praise you!
 May the nations be glad and rejoice;
 for you judge the peoples with fairness,

you guide the nations upon the earth.

May the peoples praise you, God;
 may all the peoples praise you!

The earth has yielded its harvest;
 God, our God, blesses us.

May God bless us still;
 that the ends of the earth may revere him.

Conversation Starter

1. How would you summarize your conversations about missionary discipleship up to this point in the Mission study?
2. What questions do you still have that you want to bring to the Lord and this group?



Peter Preaching at the Entrance to the Catacombs, c. 1901 (Jan Styka)

Week Six:
The Gift of the Spirit

WRAP with the Gospel – Acts 2:1-11

*When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, “Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his own native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God.”

Write

Reflect

Apply

Pray

Week Six:
The Gift of the Spirit

Going Deeper Questions

1. How can you invite the Holy Spirit more explicitly to direct your life?
2. How is the Lord making you aware of your weakness, poverty, and limitations when it comes to Evangelization? How can you more freely surrender to his strength and grace?

Group Action

Pray about one or two people with whom you plan to speak about Jesus in the coming week. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you peace and the right words at the right time.

Psalm 67:2-8

May God be gracious to us and bless us;
may his face shine upon us.
So shall your way be known upon the earth,
your victory among all the nations.
May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you!
May the nations be glad and rejoice;
for you judge the peoples with fairness,

you guide the nations upon the earth.
May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you!
The earth has yielded its harvest;
God, our God, blesses us.
May God bless us still;
that the ends of the earth may revere him.



Archdiocese *of* Omaha