

life group study guide



CORE VALUES: COMMUNITY

Core Values. Community. Feb. 26, 2012.

Bottom Line: We love people best by pointing them to Christ

Items needed: Bibles, pens, gift tags, index cards

Get Started:

Give each person in your group an index card.

Anyone hungry? I have a friend who eats the very same thing for lunch every single day – and loves it that way. Me? I like a little variety. But, there are certain things I come back to over and over again. Think about what you typically eat for lunch. Write down a menu for a typical-lunch-day for you. Do not write your name on the card. Hand all the cards in.

Read each of the cards' lunch menus and have your class try to guess who each menu belongs to

Q: How do you decide what to eat for lunch each day?

Q: Do you eat alone? With the same group of friends each day? Is it stressful or fun? *(Take a minute or two to hear some stories about lunch...it's always amazing to hear how very different a class full of people live throughout the week.)*

Jesus often used everyday activities as landing places for some of His most amazing miracles and teaching opportunities. One such opportunity took place at lunch time. Let's take a look...

Get the Scoop:

Read John 6:1-14.

Q: Why do you think these people were following Jesus?

Q: Why do you think Jesus asked Philip specifically for a solution to feeding the people? (Philip was from Bethsaida – a town about 9 miles away. If any of the disciples knew of a practical way to solve this problem, it makes sense that it would be Philip.)

Q: What do you think verse 6 means? (Jesus was driving home the point that what we see as limitation doesn't limit HIM in answering the problem. Philip saw this task as impossible – but Jesus already knew what He was going to do to meet the needs of the people.)

Q: How do you think Philip felt about this task/seeming impossibility of it?

Q: How many people were there that day? (common practice during Jesus' day was to record the number of men present. If there were 5000 men, there very well could have been that same number of women/children – or more! A safe estimate is around 15,000 people who had followed Jesus to a place where food was not available.)

Dig In:

Q: What kind of modern day difficulties can you think of that parallel this one?

Q: Have you ever been in a situation where what YOU had available to help didn't seem like much? Explain. (Give your students time to talk through this one. For example, my students have shared that they are concerned about sex-trafficking, but don't feel like their efforts will make a difference.)

Q: Have you ever felt like what you brought could help, but those around you didn't see the value?

Read John 6:9 again.

Q: What do you think the small boy was thinking?

Q: Can you imagine what it was like that day? Let's talk it through – read between the lines –

There were somewhere between 5000-15000 people gathered together – that's a bunch of people! A small boy is found who has brought his own lunch. Jesus takes the lunch and tells the disciples to begin seating the people. I love that the disciples obeyed – even though they didn't know what Jesus would do.

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Q: What did Jesus do next? (verse 11. Took the loaves and gave thanks!)

Q: What can we learn from that?

Q: How much did everyone get to eat that day? (vs. 12 – “when everyone had enough to eat...”) It was like Thanksgiving! They ate what they needed and there were leftovers!!!

Q: How much was leftover? Why do you think Jesus made enough for leftovers?

Q: What was the response of the people to this miracle?

Take It Home

There are a lot of lessons we can take from this account, but one important one is this: God can use whatever we are able to bring to Him.

Notice that not only did

1. He use the small amount the boy had, but
2. There were leftovers
3. People noticed Christ for Who He Is

God's Spirit may be directing you to bring something to Him to use. Maybe you're concerned it's not enough. Let me remind you that anything with Jesus is enough.

He can take your small gifts – even if you don't think they're enough – and add to them. The neighbor that seems lonely? You may think that leaving a note on her door or taking her cookies isn't much...but, if it's what God's asking of you right now, it is. What if your efforts to talk to him/her are enough to help her realize she has value? What if knowing that one person values her keeps her from taking her own life? You never know when the small thing God is asking of you is part of a HUGE plan to bring someone to Him.

Q: How have you felt God prompting you to give, share, obey lately?

Q: What's holding you back?

Q: How could what God's asking of you be a part of a bigger picture?

Q: What kind of “leftovers” could there be from your small part? (This could turn into a very cool, big discussion.)

Q: How could your action/gift point someone to Christ?

(If there are people in your class who do not know Christ personally, they may struggle with understanding the Spirit's prompting, encouraging, etc. Depending on your class, this may be a time to jump off the track of this lesson and talk about the power of the Spirit in directing one's life. Romans 8 and John 14:15-31 are filled with ways the Spirit works in the lives of believers. You may also need to talk about being aware enough to discern the Spirit's leading in situations where offering our little can point someone to Christ.)

Give each one of your students a gift tag. (You probably have some laying around from Christmas. If not, simply cut some squares or tag-shapes out of paper and have available.) Write what seemingly little thing you feel He is asking you to do on the gift tag. This small gift may be the beginning of a miracle – with leftovers – that points someone to Christ. Fold your gift tag and stick it in your pocket or purse. Keep it in your pocket (yes – transfer pockets when you change clothes) as a way to remind you to offer your gift when the opportunity arises. Call, text, inbox, or facebook me when you've offered your gift.

Bottom Line: The best way to love people is to point them to Christ.

Prayer time

Circle up and have students pray for the person to their right. Ask God to bless (person-to-the-right's-name) by making him/her aware of opportunities to offer what he/she has. Ask God to give him/her courage and wisdom in offering it – and the faith to trust God to do with it what He wills.