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**Adult  
Bible Study  
in  
Simplified  
English**

**Teaching  
Guide**



**Participating  
in God's Mission**

Margaret Gayle

# **ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH** **Teaching Guide**

## **Participating in God's Mission**

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# Introduction for Teachers

**T**he purpose of this teaching guide is to provide teachers with a plan for teaching a quality Bible lesson while helping participants improve their English language skills. Use of this material is suggested for International Sunday School classes or any Bible study group taught at a Basic English level.

The Teaching Guide begins with listings of the Lesson Focus, Focal/Background Text, and Memory Verse, all of which provide the premise for the lesson. This information is followed by a teaching plan under headings of Connect with Life, Guide the Study, and Encourage Application. At the end of each lesson, Supplemental Teaching Ideas are provided under those same headings. As the teacher, you may pick and choose from these helps to use along with the student's Study Guide to fit the lesson to your class members' abilities and needs.

The Bible text printed in the lesson material is from the NEW LIFE Version of the Bible (NLV), an inexpensive translation (not a paraphrase) which uses only an 850-word vocabulary. The NLV is available from Christian Literature International, P. O. Box 777, Canby, Oregon 97013; e-mail christian@canby.com; telephone (orders only) 1-800-324-9734.

The NLV Bible often uses simplified phrases to express terms generally familiar to anyone raised in a Christian environment. In the Teaching Guide, these terms will usually be expressed using the NLV terminology, followed by the more common term in parentheses; for example, "proud religious law-keeper (Pharisee)" or "early preacher (prophet)." The teacher has the option of using the NLV term for new Christians or beginning students, or the common term where it will be better understood and less cumbersome in teaching. Once a word or phrase has been introduced in the Word List or teaching procedures, however, the familiar expression may be used to help students add it to their vocabulary.

Prayer is sometimes specifically suggested in the teaching procedures. It should be an integral part of your lesson plan. Use your own judgment as to where it best fits into the teaching session.

The writers and editors wish you success and give you prayerful support in your teaching of this Adult Bible Study in Simplified English.

**Adult Bible Study in Simplified English is published by the Baptist General Convention of Texas and follows the same curriculum plan as the Bible Study for Texas materials, but has no Texas emphasis. Teachers may wish to purchase Bible Study for Texas lesson comments and teaching guides as additional resources. These may be ordered through your church or directly from the Sunday School/Discipleship Division, Baptist General Convention of Texas, 333 North Washington, Dallas, TX 75246-1798, e-mail baptistway@bgct.org; FAX 214-828-5187; or toll-free telephone 1-800-355-5285.**

## About the writer

*Margaret Gayle served with her husband, Jim, as a missionary in Vietnam and Indonesia for more than 24 years. She taught ESL at University of North Texas in Denton and at Tarrant County College for eight years. Margaret is a native Texan and lives in Plano. She and her husband have three adult sons and ten grandchildren. They are members of First Chinese Baptist Church of Dallas. They presently work through the church with international students at UTD & SMU.*

# Suggestions for Teaching

## General Suggestions for Teaching Simplified English Audiences

1. Provide language edition Bibles so students can read the focal passage in their native languages.
2. Beginning students may require three sessions to complete one lesson.
3. Review the Word List before beginning the study. Provide Study Guide pages for class to keep vocabulary studies in their notebooks.
4. Prepare 9-12 core sentences which tell the most important part of the Bible focal text. Illustrate each sentence with stick figures and symbols in *picture sequence* form (see details below).
5. Prepare lesson outlines or written materials before class—make your own cling sheets by cutting apart white plastic garbage bags and writing on them with markers. The plastic bags will cling to the wall.

## Bible Comments/Focal Text

1. Help students hear English and practice their pronunciation by modeling phrases and sentence. Allow the entire class to repeat. Be consistent with stress and intonation. Speak naturally.
2. Allow individual students to read a sentence or paragraph at a time. For further practice, ask students to tell sections from Bible comments in their own words.
3. When time allows, pairs may read the lesson again to each other.
4. Class may close books and listen as a native speaker reads the section again.
5. Discuss lesson using “Things to Think About.”

## Memory Verse

1. Challenge class members to say the Memory Verse several times each day.
2. Provide blank paper for students to write Memory Verses.
3. Write phrases or individual words on separate pieces of paper. Give to students to place in order.
4. Write entire verse on board. Read in unison. Erase key words a few at a time. Recite until entire verse is erased and class can repeat by memory.
5. Make a symbol for each word or phrase of the verse.

6. Use the symbols as a reminder for saying the verse.

## Picture Sequencing (Lipson Method)

This method is especially suited for teaching beginners. It consists of a series of pictures with accompanying sentences that tell a story. It may be used solely for oral production (using pictures alone) or for integrated skills (engaging students in reading and writing the story).

You may use real pictures, videotape, pictures that are professionally drawn, or stick figures

Other benefits include the following:

1. Relaxed, low-anxiety atmosphere as students focus on the pictures and create their own sentences to tell the story
  - Focus on fluency, not just accuracy
  - Focus on a message or task rather than form or grammar
  - Minimal error-correction as students tell the story
2. Pictures (even stick figures) convey meaning in every language.
3. The same set of pictures can be used with more than one level of students by making the sentences easier or more difficult.
4. The use of pictures helps students learn the language in “chunks” rather than words in isolation.
5. The only item needed is a piece of chalk—or a marker, if using a cling sheet or overhead transparency.

## Preparation

1. Put a story into sentences that are suitable for the level of your students. Try to tell the story with a maximum of ten sentences. For low beginners, choose the simplest and fewest words possible. Keep sentences in their most basic form, so students can combine sentences later.
2. Draw simple pictures or stick figures to illustrate key points in the story. These serve as prompts for the telling of the story. Other drawing tips:
  - An “x” in a small square beside a picture enables you to cue for a negative as you tell the story.
  - Direct quotations may be indicated with a cartoon-type bubble.

# Suggestions for Teaching

## Procedure

1. Introduce the story by following your prepared script of sentences (for consistency) and pointing to the pictures as you speak. This will give students the main idea and help them think in chunks of language (as in real-life language use).
2. Introduce the new words as you again reference the pictures. Use props and/or dramatization as needed to establish understanding. Work on individual sounds and word stress as students repeat new words.
3. Lead students in repetition of the story, one sentence at a time, working on sentence stress and intonation.
4. Lead the class in one more repetition of the story (going straight through and continuing to refer to the pictures throughout the story).
5. Ask the class to tell you the story as you cue the story sequence by pointing to the pictures. (You become “stage prompter” at this point.)
6. Then ask for a single volunteer to tell the story. (This may open the door for several more proficient students to use what they know.)
7. Divide the class into small groups of 3-5 students to give each person practice in telling the story. (Inevitably, the most eager student will go first, followed by another “semi”-eager student. By the time it is the least proficient student’s turn, he/she will have learned a lot by listening, will have observed a good model at least a couple of times, and will have bolstered courage for risk-taking.)
8. Follow with questions to review story (begin by naming the setting, the characters, etc.—easy questions).
9. Conclude with life application questions that require some thought and give students opportunity to express opinion, emotion, and their own ideas.

## Lesson Expansion

If the setting and circumstances permit, use these ideas:

- Sequencing pictures (a set for each pair of students) while listening to you or to a taped voice tell the story
- Picture sequencing without hearing the story told
- Matching pictures and sentences
- Scrambled sentences to arrange in order (writing numbers or letters in front of sentences to show sequence; cutting up sentences and moving around to position correct order)

- Strip story (cutting up sentences, issuing one strip per student, asking students to arrange themselves in order, having them retell the story by contributing the portion on their paper strip)
- Cloze (supplying a written copy with every n<sup>th</sup> word blank; students work in pairs to fill in the missing words)
- Dictation (teacher or student telling the story while students write what they hear)
- Provide a copy of the sentences for each student. Ask that they read the story to a partner.
- Ask students to write the story in their own words.

## Bible passage as content for reading

### Procedure

1. Tell the parable or story using pictures. Use animation and simple sentences.
2. Ask questions about the main idea of the story.
3. Read story aloud while students follow along and underline unknown words. Go over the meaning of these words with the whole class.
4. Intermediate or advanced students: Have students read silently a second time to look for answers to two or three questions about details that you have written on the board. Ask students to discuss their answers with a partner. Then go over answers with the whole class.
5. Beginning or low-intermediate students: Read story again and ask students to repeat it with you line by line.
6. Invite the class to read the story with you in unison.
7. Ask pairs to read the story to each other.
8. Ask for volunteers to tell the story in their own words.
9. Make drawings large enough for the back row to see.
10. Select a list of new words in the story—unfamiliar words that the students would not likely be able to figure out from context (generally 8-10 new words per lesson).
11. List the new words in categories: verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs. When listing verbs, you may write both simple present and past tense forms (e.g., eat/ate, walk/walked). Basic beginners would do well to tell the story in present tense, but high beginners could work in present tense, then retell the story in past tense.

# Suggestions for Teaching

## Checklist for Successful Classrooms

### *Right Kind of Input*

1. New language in every lesson
2. Input that is slightly above the students' current level of proficiency
3. Content relevant to the students' real-life needs and interests
4. Language learned in meaningful chunks, not words in isolation
5. Comprehensibility achieved by use of the following:
  - Realia or authentic materials
  - Simplified language (rephrasing, repeating, clear enunciation)
  - Demonstration and multiple examples rather than explanation
  - Lots of gestures and nonverbal language

### *Low Anxiety Environment*

Students should not be afraid to make mistakes or take risks in language learning. The following factors contribute to a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere and build a sense of community:

- Personally greeting and bidding farewell to students
- Sincere and frequent affirmation
- Minimal error correction from the teacher
- Frequent reference to the culture(s) of the students
- Smiles and laughter that are commonplace
- Connecting with students through eye contact and positioning yourself on students' eye level
- Calling students by name

### *Checklist for Real-Life Interaction*

1. Pace activities with a balance of noisy/quiet and still/active
2. Attention to different learning styles (visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic)
3. Variety in grouping (predominately pairs and small groups of three or five; using whole class in initial presentation and again for feedback and wrap-up at the end)
4. A focus on a task or message rather than form (grammar)
5. Provision for all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing)
6. Avoidance of questions for which answers are known
7. Use of information gap activity in which partners

- have different pieces of information and must ask each other questions in order to fill in their gaps of understanding
8. Other useful activities: surveys, interviews, role-play, problem-solving, and interactive games
  9. Review previous material.

Some suggestions based on material developed for the EFL Training Manual—Beyond our Borders.

## Online Resources and Study Helps

- **EasyEnglish** is a form of simple English developed by Wycliffe Associates (UK). Their website: ([www.easyenglish.info](http://www.easyenglish.info)) contains Bible commentaries, Bible translations, Bible studies, and other materials written in simple English. They are free for you to download and use.
- Use the following free helps: Additional adult Bible study comments by Dr. Jim Denison, “Teaching Plans,” and “Teaching Resource Items” available for each lesson online at [www.baptistwaypress.org](http://www.baptistwaypress.org). Additional teaching help is provided in the internet edition of the Baptist Standard [www.baptiststandard.com](http://www.baptiststandard.com)

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 1: God's Mission Begins

### Lesson Focus

God's mission begins from the foundation that God's rule is unlimited.

### Focal Text

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 46:5-9; Acts 17:24-31

### Memory Verse

“The God Who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth. He does not live in buildings made by hands. No one needs to care for Him as if He needed anything. He is the One who gives life and breath and everything to everyone.” (Acts 17:24-25)

### Prior Preparation

- Connect with Life #1: On a poster, attach pictures or illustrations of the universe, our solar system, Earth, and other cosmic bodies. See illustration on the next page, or search for your own online. NASA makes illustrations or photos available in the public domain (free). Or have a selection of books from the library on display with pages open to particular photos and illustrations.
- Connect with Life #3: Make a small bookmark for each student which summarizes the central truths from Lessons 1-4. Use the sample on the next page or make your own.
- Supplemental Connect with Life: Attach cut-out pictures of various objects (houses, cars, boats, clothes, cell phones, etc.) to a marker board in the classroom.

### Connect with Life

- At the front of the classroom, display the poster showing the universe. After making a few comments identifying the planets or anomalies shown, ask these questions:
  - Who created this universe?*
  - Who has authority to rule the universe? Why?*
- Introduce the quarter's topic, Participating in God's Mission, with these comments: *In creating the world, God had a mission.* (Refer the class to the Word List in

the Study Guide for a clear definition of *mission*.) *The Bible is the story of God's mission—what He is doing in our world. The Bible texts for this study will help us understand what God's mission is, its importance, and how we can participate in it. We will be challenged to greater action in God's mission.*

- Explain that the first four-week study presents basic truths about God's mission. Give each member one of the bookmarks and read aloud each truth.

### Guide the Study

- Invite class members to read aloud Genesis 1:1. Point out that to understand God's mission, we must understand who God is.

Ask: *According to this verse, who is God?* Then ask: *If God is creator, all else is \_\_\_\_\_?* (creation)

Discuss the significance this has for our daily lives. (Possible topics: We are God's beloved creation, cherished and of great worth. We are not the creators of our own lives, but are stewards or caretakers of the time He has given us on earth. He has power and authority in this world, and we are to voluntarily submit ourselves to His loving protection, guidance, and direction.)

- Invite members to share times/situations in their lives when they have grasped God's greatness. (Possibilities: At the birth of a child, seeing the power of nature, observing the world's beauty, marveling at scientific discovery, etc.)

- State that even as great as God is, people everywhere still tend to worship the creation rather than the Creator. Read Isaiah 46:5-7, then discuss these questions:

*How would you answer the question God asks in verse 5?*

*Describe the obvious limitations of handmade gods.* (powerless, immobile, dependent, silent)

*Besides the fact that many people in our world do not yet know the Creator God, why do people want/need a handmade god?* (Handmade gods are tangible; the owner of the god is the one with power—to shape, carry, place it wherever desired.)

- Invite members to scan Isaiah 46:8-9 to find what God says to people who worship false gods. Discuss these

questions:

*How would the command to “remember” help us when we are tempted to offer our devotion and service to other objects or people rather than to God?*

*When hard times come, are we more tempted to remember God's greatness and His work in our lives in the past or do we forget His faithfulness and promises? How can we resist spiritual forgetfulness regarding God's goodness?* (daily Bible study, prayer, and Christian fellowship)

Remind the class that no matter how distant God may seem when we are going through trials, He is never distant. Remembering His nearness and greatness will help us move through trials with confidence.

8. State that idolatry continued in the New Testament era. Paul confronted it in the city of Athens. Enlist someone to read Acts 17:24-29 aloud.

*Ask: In contrast to idols, what qualities of God are mentioned in these verses?*

Invite another person to read Acts 17:30-31 aloud.

*Ask: What does God desire of all people?* (to repent and recognize that He is the Creator and judge of everything)

## Encourage Application

9. Ask the class to consider the culture in which they live.

*Ask: What idols are prevalent in your culture?* (The U.S. culture would include materialism, sports, pleasure, power, sex, etc. Be sensitive to any non-Christian class member who may come from a culture where statues or figurines are kept as objects of worship. Use this study to build bridges of understanding about the greatness of the Living God.)

10. Invite the class to reflect on areas of their life in which they do not give God exclusive worship. Close with a prayer of commitment to let God reign in every area of our life.

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

• Attach cut-out pictures of various objects (houses, cars, boats, clothes, cell phones, etc.) to a marker board.

*Ask: How much honor and care do you give to these objects that surround your daily life? At what point could one of these objects become an idol in your life?*

• State that today's lesson is the first in a four-week study of God's mission in the world and our role in it. Today's

lesson begins with the biblical truth that as creator of the world, God has unlimited dominion over it. As such, the response of people everywhere should be to worship Him alone.

## Encourage Application

• Lead the class to assess their time management and budget to make sure God is over all. Close with a prayer that members would allow God full dominion over their lives.

• As time permits, review the Memory Verse, new words and definitions, and Things to Think About as found in the Study Guide.

*Connect with Life #3*

## Important Truths about God's Mission

1: God created the world and has dominion over all things.

2: God's mission to the world is motivated by love.

3: God's method in showing His love is to call and create a people to bear His message of love to others.

4: God's mission is universal. He wants all people to know Him.

*Connect with Life #1, sample diagram*

Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Planets2008.jpg





# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 2: God's Reason for the Mission

### Lesson Focus

God's love is the motivation for reaching out to the world.

### Focal Text

Deuteronomy 7:7-8; Psalm 136:1-11, 23-26;  
Jonah 3:10 to 4:3, 9-11; John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8

### Memory Verse

"God showed His love to us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

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### Prior Preparation

- Connect with Life #1: Become familiar with the information on page 9 about R.C. Buckner, the man who started Buckner Children's Home. Summarize it and/or find additional details at [www.buckner.org](http://www.buckner.org) about current Buckner ministries.
- Guide the Study #6: Ask someone to dramatize the story of Jonah, contrasting Jonah's love for self and his own people with God's love for all people—even the most wicked.
- Supplemental Encourage Application: Go to this site: [library.timelesstruths.org/music/The\\_Love\\_of\\_God/](http://library.timelesstruths.org/music/The_Love_of_God/) and look at the words to this song. Make a copy of the first stanza, refrain, and third stanza for each person.

### Connect with Life

1. Open by presenting the information you gathered about the work of Dr. Buckner. Lead the class to see that he was motivated to love others as Jesus loved people.
2. Point out that today's study covers five different passages, all of which tell us that God's love is what motivates Him to care for the world. Suggest that as each passage is read, members look for answers to these two important questions:
  - What does the passage say about God?*
  - What does the passage say about us?*
 Write these questions on the marker board so they

can be referred to visually during the lesson. If a marker board is not available, make a poster.

### Guide the Study

3. Invite members to quote from memory or read aloud John 3:16.

Make these comments: *This verse is the most famous verse in the Bible, and its context is a conversation Jesus had with Nicodemus—a ruler of the Jews. Nicodemus was shocked to hear Jesus say that salvation comes through a new birth—not from being a Jew. Jesus explained that salvation flows from the love of God for the world. Nicodemus, like other Jews, had missed the fact that God's love is for the whole world.*

Lead class to respond to the questions on the board.

4. Create two choral groups to read Psalm 136, with one group reading the first part of each verse, and the other reading the refrain, "For His loving-kindness lasts forever."

Lead the group to create an outline of God's loving acts recorded in these verses.

Verses 1-9: He is a great God Who created the world.

Verses 10-11: He delivered the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage.

Verses 23-26: He remembered, rescued, and provided for His people.

Remind the class that God's loving-kindness lasts forever and extends to us today. His love is not just warm feelings toward us, but is love that is demonstrated by His actions toward all people.

Lead class to respond to the questions on the board.

5. Ask if anyone has ever heard the rhyme, "How odd of God...to choose the Jews." Explain that this is not meant as a negative statement toward Jews in particular, but rather a general statement that it is odd (from a human perspective) that God would choose *any* one people group through which to carry out His mission. But since we cannot understand all of God's ways, we are left with the tasks of observing how God has worked throughout history, particularly Jewish history, and determining how we can get "on board" with His mission to make His love known to every person on earth in our day.

Read aloud Deuteronomy 7:7-8 while the class listens

for key words that tell why God chose the Jews. (First, God loved them, and second, He was keeping His promise He made to their forefathers—Abraham and his descendants).

Stress this point: *God didn't choose them for their strength or numbers; He had a broader purpose. He wanted them to share His love with all people. Sadly, their special place in God's plan became a source of pride for them.*

Lead class to respond to the questions on the board.

6. Transition the class to the story of Jonah, mentioning that he was an Old Testament minor prophet, that the story shows the missionary heart of God toward all people, and how Jonah almost missed it.

Introduce the dramatic story-teller and let him/her present the story of Jonah.

Thank the storyteller, and then read Jonah 3:10 to 4:3 aloud while members prepare to answer the two main questions.

Ask: *Do we, as did Jonah, sometimes prefer justice and judgment for people rather than God's love, grace, and loving-kindness?* Receive responses.

7. State that the following passage from the New Testament shows that even after Christ came, some people still needed to be reminded that Christ gave His life for all people.

Draw attention to the words *demonstrate* and *transform* in the Word List in the Study Guide. Read Romans 5:6-8.

Ask: *How did Christ demonstrate His love for us? (He willingly died for us while we were still sinners.)*

Emphasize that Christ does not wait for sin to be removed from the sinner's life. His love is based on the person, not on the potential of a person.

Ask: *How does Christ's love transform us? (Before Christ, we were weak and sinners. After Christ, we are loved, forgiven, saved.)*

Lead class to respond to the questions on the board.

## Encourage Application

8. Divide the class into groups of two or three people and give each group an assignment sheet. Ask each group to write down answers to this question: *If we love as God loves, how would we demonstrate that love?* Allow two or three minutes for each group to report.

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

- Ask: *Have you ever been shown love when you think*

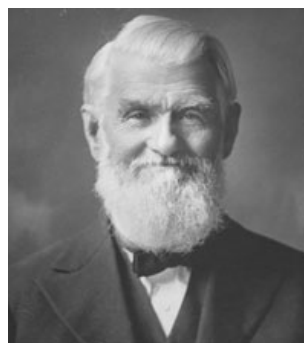
*you didn't deserve it? How did it make you feel? How did it make you feel about the person?*

Say: *In today's lesson we will study how God's love is the motivation for His reaching out to our world. In both the Old and New Testament, His love is clearly seen. Christ showed His love to us by giving His life for us—even while we were undeserving. This love is offered today to all people, even those who reject His love.*

## Encourage Application

- Give each person a copy of the first stanza from the song *The Love of God*. Read aloud together. Ask class to consider how our lesson encourages us to be on mission for God. Suggest that the class think of specific actions to take to share God's love with others. Close in prayer that our love would be the same as Jesus' love—a love that is demonstrated to all people.

### Connect with Life #1



R. C. Buckner didn't come to Texas with plans to start an orphans' home. He and his family rode the 900 miles from Kansas for health reasons. But the Baptist preacher did God's work wherever he landed.

He settled in Paris, Texas, in 1859, when the state was still recovering from the Mexican War, and settlers

were fighting off Native Americans, not to mention disease and drought. And the Civil War was getting ready to break out. There were a lot of needs. One of the biggest needs was for an orphans' home.

Buckner organized a deacons' convention in 1877 to discuss the creation of an orphanage. Buckner initiated his first fund raising campaign, dropping a dollar in his hat and passing it among those gathered under a large oak tree. He raised \$27, which provided the initial funds for the opening of the Buckner Orphans' Home, now called Buckner Children's Home in Dallas.

After that, Buckner used his favor with people and his mastery of words to rally people together to fund other Baptist orphanages, as well as hospitals, schools and support for the elderly. It was a new movement of service.

Before Buckner, there weren't any organized Baptist benevolences in Texas. He was ahead of his time. He worked towards healing between the races, founding the first high school in North Texas for blacks. He also broke ground for women, who had nowhere to study theology before he submitted a proposal to establish a women's training school.

—from [www.buckner.org](http://www.buckner.org)

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 3: God's Choice for the Mission

### Lesson Focus

God chose to work through one man and one people to bring the fullness of God's blessing to all people through Jesus.

### Focal Text

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:1-6; Luke 1:46-55

### Memory Verse

"My spirit is happy in God, the One Who saves from the punishment of sin." (Luke 1:47)

### Prior Preparation

- Connect with Life #1: Invite two guest speakers—one who has been involved in overseas missions and another faithful layperson in your church—to give short testimonies about their service in God's mission. As an alternate plan, prior to class, suggest that the guests share the benefits and sacrifices they experienced in following the Lord.

- Supplemental Encourage Application activity: Duplicate and cut apart the cards shown on page 11.

### Connect with Life

1. Start class by introducing the two guest speakers and allowing them to share their brief testimonies.

After they conclude, ask the class to identify what was different and what was the same in the two testimonies. (It should be evident that God called both, one to go to a foreign country and the other to work at home, but both were on God's mission.)

2. Point out that from the beginning God had a plan to make His love known to the world. Explain that today's lesson outlines God's unfolding plan through Abraham, the nation of Israel, and Jesus. As God's people, we too are chosen to be part of that plan.

### Guide the Study

3. Direct the class to read about Abraham's call in Genesis 12:1-3. Explain that the storyline in the rest of

Scripture begins with the call of Abram (later called Abraham). Refer members to the Study Guide section entitled, "Abraham: The Model of God's Mission," for a quick review of God's purpose in calling Abraham.

Guide discussion with these questions:

*Why is Abraham a good model for answering God's call? (He obeyed.)*

*What was required of Abraham to answer God's call? (a willingness to move to a different country, to leave his family, to begin a journey without knowing the destination)*

*What was promised Abraham? (He would be a great nation, have a great name, receive good from God.)*

*For what purpose did God call Abraham? (to bless all the families of the earth)*

Emphasize that Abraham obeyed and lived a life of service to God's purposes.

*Ask: In what ways do you think Abraham benefited from being part of God's mission? In what ways was his life difficult? (Receive responses.)*

4. State that, after Abraham, God's mission moved forward to the nation of Israel. Invite someone to read Exodus 19:1-6 aloud while the class listens for the terms of agreement between God and Israel.

*Ask: What was Israel's part? (to obey)*

*What was God's part? (to make them a nation of priests, a holy nation)*

5. Emphasize that Israel was God's chosen nation, not because they were better or more numerous than others. The blessing of being chosen was not given to them only to enjoy. They were given a task, a responsibility. Israel was chosen to bear God's love to all people. They were chosen to carry God's mission to the world.

6. State that Jesus' life and mission fulfills and continues the promise to Abraham. Direct members' attention to Mary's song, called the Magnificat (pronounced mag-NIF-eh-CAHT), in Luke 1:46-55. Explain that when Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, Elizabeth's unborn son (John the Baptist) leaped in her womb at the presence of Mary. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth burst forth with praise. Mary responded in praise with the Magnificat.

7. Read Mary's song aloud, then ask: *According to*

Mary's strong words, how would God's plan disrupt the lives of many? How would God's plan bless the lives of many?

8. Draw attention to the last phrase in 1:55 that connects God's work in Christ with Abraham and the role of the nation of Israel. State that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. Christ's mission was the greatest and blessed us the most. He became sin for us so that we might enjoy the blessings of God.

### Encourage Application

9. Write the following statement on the marker board, *Being called by God is not the ticket to an easy or successful life.*

Ask: *After studying this lesson, what else would you like to add to this statement?* Receive responses. Be sure to include the idea that though following God requires sacrifice, we experience joy and peace because we have a mission greater than ourselves.

10. Under two headings on the marker board, labeled "Benefits" and "Sacrifices," lead the class to list benefits that come from being involved in God's mission and sacrifices that are required.

### Supplemental Teaching Ideas

#### Connect with Life

- Invite members to share times when they have been chosen for a special role or honor.

Ask: *What responsibilities went with being chosen? What benefits were gained from carrying out the responsibilities?*

State these points:

—*In today's lesson, we see the plan God had from the beginning to spread His message of love to all peoples of the earth.*

—*God chose a plan that would depend on us! He chose to spread His story from one life to the next.*

—*God first chose Abraham, then the nation of Israel, and finally Jesus to make His love known.*

—*Today's lesson shows how we too are part of that plan.*

### Encourage Application

- Display this statement: *God did not choose Abraham because God loved him more than anyone else. God chose Abraham because God loves everyone else, too.*


Suggest that members substitute their name in place of Abraham.

Close with a prayer of commitment to be on God's mission so that our lives intersect the lives of others this

week.

Review the Memory Verse, new words, and discuss the questions in "Things to Think About."

*Supplemental Encourage Application activity: Duplicate this half-page on cardstock, cut apart the wallet-sized cards, and have class members write their names in the blank spaces.*




God chose

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to be part  
of His mission  
because He loves

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and He loves every other  
person in this world, too!




God chose

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to be part  
of His mission  
because He loves

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and He loves every other  
person in this world, too!




God chose

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# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 4: God's Mission Includes All People

### Lesson Focus

God's mission extends to all people.

### Focal Text

Genesis 12:1-3; Isaiah 49:5-6; Luke 2:25-32; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:12-13

### Memory Verse

"There is no difference between the Jews and the people who are not Jews. They are all the same to the Lord. And He is Lord over all of them. He gives of His greatness to all who call on Him for help. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved from the punishment of sin." (Romans 10:12-13)

### Prior Preparation

- Connect with Life #1: Research the population demographics of your area (go to [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org) and type in your town/state or go directly to your town's website). Write your findings on a flipchart, poster, or marker board. Identify the predominant religion of each ethnic group. As an alternate plan, ask the class to name the various ethnic groups who live in your area.
- Connect with Life #2: Prepare a poster which lists the five Scripture passages for this lesson (see poster sample on next page) with the names Abraham, Servant, Simeon, Jesus, and Paul beside the appropriate Scripture.
- Guide the Study #3: Make copies of the five Scripture passages for each class member. (See the Study Guide, Lesson 4, for the text to copy from.) Bring red ink pens for everyone.
- Supplemental Connect with Life: Look in magazines or on the Internet to find pictures of various ethnic peoples and put them together on a poster to create a collage of faces from around the world.

### Connect with Life

1. Present your findings on demographic data for your area. Then ask: *How often do we think that God's*

*mission is just for us and not for them?*

2. State that today's lesson reminds us how God's mission reaches to all people. Display the poster featuring the Scripture passages with the names. State that each Scripture shows God's concern for all people.

### Guide the Study

3. Distribute the Scripture copies and red ink pens. Ask for volunteers to read each passage aloud or plan to read them yourself. Before starting, explain that as each passage is read aloud, the class is to underline the words which express God's mission is to all people.

After the readings, discuss each passage using these questions:

#### Genesis passage:

- Who is included in "all the families of the earth"?
- Who might this include in our community?
- How is our church participating in God's mission? to the world? to our community?

#### Isaiah passage:

- Explain that the setting for this passage was during the time Israel was in Babylonian exile. Remind the class that Lesson 1 covered the same Isaiah passage and described the people's temptation to forget God and join in the practice of idolatry. The people longed to return to their homeland and the city of Jerusalem.
- What does God want of the people beyond just returning to their homeland? (to be a light to the nations, so men over all the earth can be saved)

#### Luke passage:

- How would you describe Simeon?
- How did Simeon's expectation of a Savior change after he met Jesus? (He may have expected the Messiah to free the people from Roman rule, but the Holy Spirit revealed that Jesus had come to save all men from the punishment of their sins.)
- What part did the Holy Spirit have in this change?

#### Acts passage:

- Invite the class to read Acts 1:6 to find the question the disciples asked Jesus and His response. Then discuss:
- What role in His mission did Jesus give to the disciples? (To tell the world about God's love and the

forgiveness He offers through believing in Jesus)  
*—In what ways does following Jesus' command require that we cross cultural barriers?*

*—What role does the Holy Spirit have in our witness to others?*

### **Romans passage:**

*—How does the way of salvation through faith differ from the way of salvation of the Jews? (For the Jews, salvation came through being a Jew (right parentage), keeping the law, and circumcision. Through faith, salvation comes “if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead” (Romans 10:9).*

*—What is the main task for the body of Christ around the world?*

## **Encourage Application**

4. Say: *In light of the fact that God wants all people everywhere to know Him, let us evaluate our actions and attitudes toward others around us.* Suggest that members think about people they know who are from a foreign country, people whom the government may regard as illegal, people who have different lifestyles than our own. Close with a prayer asking God to help us discover ways to bless others through our lives, as Abraham did.

## **Supplemental Teaching Ideas**

### **Connect with Life**

- Display the collage of faces around the world. Lead the group in singing the children's song, *“Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world.”*

- State that today's lesson shows us how our stance toward all who are unbelievers should be one of showing love and sharing the truth of the gospel. God clearly wants all people to know Him, and we as His people have the privilege of joining Him in His mission.

### **Encourage Application**

- Invite the class to think about and discuss this statement: *We as believers have more in common with the Indonesian tribes who have chosen to follow Jesus than we do with our unbelieving neighbors.*

- Consider this class activity: If you live near a university, check to see if there is an International Christian Fellowship that meets regularly on campus. If so, attend one of their meetings to experience the thrill of

the bond of love between various ethnic groups.

- Close with a prayer of gratitude that God cares for all people and we have a part in telling others of His love and salvation.

- Lead the class to review the Study Guide material, Things to Think About, the Memory Verse, and new words and definitions.

*Connect with Life #2: Poster Sample*

### **Lesson 4: God's Mission Includes All People**

Abraham	Genesis 12:1-3
Servant	Isaiah 49:5-6
Simeon	Luke 2:25-32
Jesus	Acts 1:8
Paul	Romans 10:12-13

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 5: God's Mission: Redeem All People

### Lesson Focus

God's mission is to provide a way for all people to live fully in right relationship to Him.

### Focal Text

Exodus 5:22 to 6:8; 15:1-2, 13; Isaiah 55:6-7;  
Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 9:11-14

### Memory Verse

"We have been bought by His (Jesus') blood and made free. Our sins are forgiven through Him." (Colossians 1:13-14)

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### Prior Preparation

- Connect with Life #2: Bring a well-worn but good pair of men's shoes. Decide if you need to enlist someone before class to read aloud the Lesson 5 introduction about the missionary who redeemed his shoes, or if one of the students will be comfortable being called on to read with no prior warning.
- Guide the Study #4: Print several extra copies of the instructions for each group, cut apart, and have ready to distribute to the groups at the appropriate time.
- Encourage Application #6: Print copies of the song Israel sang to the Lord (Exodus 15:1-2; see sample on next page). Attach to strips of construction paper. Give one of these as a book marker to each member.
- Supplemental Encourage Application: Consider sharing a testimony from your own life about how God's mission of redemption has social and physical implications.

### Connect with Life

1. Call attention to the new unit title, "What God's Mission is About." Explain that the three lessons in this unit will show that God's mission in Christ is about more than just getting us saved and into heaven. God is concerned about us spiritually and physically. In Christ we are redeemed from bondage to sin and we are

provided fullness of life. What we have in Christ, we are called to pass on to others.

2. Show the pair of men's shoes to the class. Call on your previously enlisted person (or ask for a volunteer) to read aloud the Lesson 5 introduction about the missionary who redeemed his shoes.

Ask: *Why did the missionary redeem the shoes?* (They belonged to him. They had value to him.)

3. Relate the story to today's lesson, "God's Mission to Redeem All People." Explain that through creation and love, all people belong to God. But because of rebellion and disobedience, people go away from God. In order to get us back in right relationship with Him, God redeemed us (bought us back) through the death of Jesus on the cross. Jesus' death was our redemption.

### Guide the Study

4. Divide the class into four groups. Distribute the group assignments now. Ask each group to read their assigned Scripture passage, study the questions, and after an allotted time, report back to the entire class. After each report is given, invite further discussion.

#### Group 1: God's Mission to Redeem Israel

- (1) Read Exodus 5:22 to 6:8; 15:1-2, 13.
- (2) How had God shown Himself to the Israelites in the past?
- (3) How does God want the Israelites to know Him? What does this verse mean to you?
- (4) List the things God redeemed Israel from.
- (5) What part did the Israelites have in being set free from slavery?

#### Group 2: God Mission to Redeem Israel

- (1) Read Isaiah 55:6-7.
- (2) Do we value the Lord's presence as a foundation for life in the same way the prophet did?
- (3) How does our answer speak of our understanding and involvement in God's mission?

**Group 3: Jesus, God's Redeemer for All People**

- (1) Read Colossians 1:13-14.
- (2) What is the great need of all people?
- (3) What has God done for us in Christ?

**Group 4: Jesus Takes Away the Old Way of Worship**

- (1) Read Hebrews 9:11-14.
- (2) Compare the redemptive work of Christ with the sacrificial system in Old Testament days.
- (3) What does Christ's redeeming work set us free to do?

**Encourage Application**

5. Call the class to a moment of reflection. Point out that each of us at times may need to be redeemed from a particular circumstance in life. We may live under oppression, like the Hebrew slaves did under the cruel rule of Pharaoh. Or we may feel like we are wandering in a wilderness, as the Hebrews did for 40 years after their lack of faith and trust in God. (If appropriate, mention such things as sickness, family problems, uncertain financial future.)

Emphasize that God, the all-powerful Creator of all, is also our Lord Who yearns to redeem us from our bondage to sin. Every person who has lived, is living, or will ever live has a need for this redemption from sin. God's purpose in redemption is to bring His people back to Him. Once we are freed from our bondage to sin, we are able to share in His mission to tell His love to those who are still separated from God by their sin.

6. Distribute the bookmarks featuring Exodus 15:1-2. Say: *After God redeemed Israel from bondage and Pharaoh's army, Moses and the Israelites could not help but sing!*

Lead the class in reading the words of the song aloud together.

**Supplemental Teaching Ideas****Connect with Life**

- Print the word *Redemption* on the marker board. Call attention to the title of today's lesson, "God's Mission to Redeem All People." Ask members to suggest words or phrases that mean the same or describe *redemption*. List them on the board.

- Point out that in line with Unit 2's title, "What God's

Mission is About," our lesson today shows us that God's mission is about redemption, both spiritually and physically. God in Christ not only died for our sins, but He wants us to live fully in right relationship with Him.

**Encourage Application**

- Review today's Memory Verse in the Study Guide (Colossians 1:13-14). Discuss how Jesus' blood redeems us from spiritual death.

- Lead the class to consider how God's mission of redemption has social and physical implications as well. Ask for volunteers to share ways God has redeemed them from bondage in these areas of their life. If you choose to, share a testimony from your own life.

*Encourage Application #6: Make a bookmark for your class members by making copies of these verses and attaching each strip to colorful construction paper.*

**Exodus 15:1-2**

Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying,

"I will sing to the Lord,  
for He is praised  
for His greatness.

He has thrown the horse  
and horseman into the sea.

The Lord is my strength  
and song.

He is the One Who saves me.

He is my God  
and I will praise Him.

He is my father's God  
and I will honor Him.

You have led  
with loving-kindness  
the people You have made  
free. You have led them  
in Your strength  
to Your holy place.



# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 6: God's Mission: Restore and Do Things Right

### Lesson Focus

God's mission is to bring restoration and justice to people who are needy and oppressed.

### Focal Text

Deuteronomy 15:1-11; Jeremiah 7:1-7; Micah 6:8; Luke 4:16-21; James 1:27; 2:14-16

### Memory Verse

"Religion that is pure and good before God the Father is to help children who have no parents and to care for women whose husbands have died who have troubles. Pure religion is also to keep yourself clean from the sinful things of the world." (James 1:27)

### Prior Preparation

• Prepare a bumper-sticker-style sign that says, "We're living it up with our children's inheritance." Use the example on the next page or create your own.

### Connect with Life

1. Display the bumper-sticker-style sign. Ask if anyone has seen such a sign and what they think about it. Ask: *While there's a good amount of humor in a sign like this, it represents a lifestyle that looks out only for self. How does a self-serving lifestyle keep us from being part of God's mission?*

2. State that the Scriptures in today's study confront us concerning our response to the needy and oppressed in our communities. We will see what the Bible says we should do when we learn about human needs.

### Guide the Study

3. Invite the class to read Deuteronomy 15:1-11 silently while they look for instructions God gave the Israelites. Ask members to name the instructions. Jot them on a marker board.

Ask: *How is God's blessing linked to Israel's generosity to the poor? How is the right heart attitude toward the poor linked to God's blessing?*

4. State that the prophet Jeremiah dealt with Israel's wrong actions and wrong attitude. The people thought that maintaining religious rituals made them right with God. Read Jeremiah 7:1-7 aloud while members listen for the "ifs" and "thens" in this passage.

Invite someone to state in his/her own words God's message through Jeremiah. Emphasize that God demands right actions, not just words.

5. Read Micah 6:8 aloud together. Point out that God is as concerned about justice today as He was in Micah's day.

Ask: *What are the three things we are told to do in this verse?* Brainstorm with the class a practical action that relates to each of the commands which would demonstrate obedience to God. Emphasize that God wants us to do more than go to church and practice religious rituals. He wants us to be partners with Him in showing justice to all people.

6. Point out that the New Testament continues the emphasis on God's concern for people. Invite the class to read Luke 4:16-21.

Ask: *According to the book of Isaiah, to whom did God's concern for justice reach?* (the poor, the sad, the captive, the blind, the oppressed.)

Lead the class to recall actions of Jesus that fulfilled God's mission to bring justice to the needy and oppressed. (Possible responses: Feeding the 5,000, raising the widow's son, healing the blind man, forgiving the woman caught in adultery, healing the man with a demon, forgiving sin of people like Zaccheus and Mary Magdalene)

7. Direct attention to the book of James by stating that it tells us what true religion is. Read James 1:27 aloud.

Ask: *What does true religion require?* (a response to the needs of others)

Invite someone to read James 2:14-16. Discuss the meaning of *faith*.

Ask: *How does James take the meaning of faith as merely trust or conviction to a deeper level? How would you define the faith James talks about?* (faith that acts, faith that is evident)

Emphasize that James is not saying we win God's favor by doing good deeds. James views faith as worthless if someone does not respond to the physical needs of others.

## Encourage Application

8. Write this statement on the marker board: *To be wealthy means that others are poor.*

Invite discussion as to how this might or might not be true. Ask: *Why do we feel uncomfortable when we consider it?*

9. Review the Memory Verse from the Study Guide. Ask: *What would be required of our church to practice true religion as described in this verse?*

Lead the class to commit to *be* Christ to some needy person during the coming week. Close in a prayer for God's guidance.

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

• Draw attention to this question, written on the marker board: *Is wealth in our world in the hands of a limited few?* Discuss, then invite members to ask themselves: *Am I among the few?* Follow by reading these "Do you know?" facts to the group.

- More than a billion people live on less than \$1 per day.
- More than 800 million people struggle with hunger.
- More than 2.2 million people die each year from diseases caused by lack of clean water and unsanitary conditions.

Invite members to suggest possible causes for the imbalance of wealth in our world. Write them on the marker board beside the question above. (Possible causes are greed, exploitation, arrogance, lack of education, natural resources/disasters, etc.)

State that we are called by God to look at our world and consider our contribution to the imbalance of wealth as well as what we can do to bring about a more just world for all people. The Scriptures in today's study confront us with our response to the needy and oppressed.

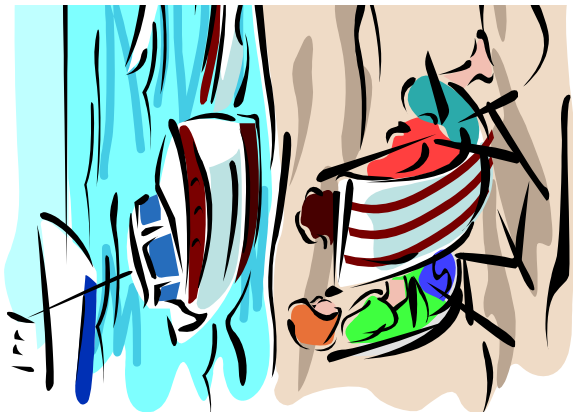
## Encourage Application

• Discuss question #1 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide: *Why does God want us to help the poor and needy?*

Then lead the class to consider: *Who are the poor in our community?* Suggest that members pray for eyes to see the needy and hearts of love and care so we might join God in His mission of making all things right in our world. Close with a prayer of commitment to be people of service to others, not self-serving.

*Connect with Life #1: Use this as an example of the bumper-sticker-style sign called for in the guidelines.*

We're living it up  
with our  
children's inheritance!



# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 7: God's Mission: Clearly Seen in Jesus

### Lesson Focus

God's mission of redemption and reconciliation, restoration, and justice are clearly seen in Jesus.

### Focal Text

Matthew 11:2-6; 23:23-24; John 1:10-14;  
Romans 3:21-26; Philippians 2:9-11

### Memory Verse

"Christ became human flesh and lived among us. We saw His shining-greatness. This greatness is given only to a much-loved Son from His Father. He was full of loving-favor and truth." (John 1:14)

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### Prior Preparation

- Connect with Life #1: Prepare and display pictures of several individuals who are known for having concern for the oppressed. (Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, and Mother Teresa are good examples and are shown on next page.) As an alternate plan, write the names of individuals on the marker board.

- Guide the Study #6: Provide paper and pens for everyone.

- Supplemental Connect with Life: Bring an illustration of Jesus, perhaps from children's Sunday school literature, to display in your classroom.

### Connect with Life

1. Display the pictures of the people who are known for their compassion. Call the name of each person and ask: *What was the mission of this individual?* Discuss, and then ask: *In what ways did their actions match their mission?* Suggest that they all acted courageously to provide justice and mercy for the oppressed.

2. Say: *Today Jesus will be our example. He showed what God's mission is through everything He did for people during His earthly ministry.* Invite members to recall ways in which Jesus ministered to both the spiritual and physical needs of people.

### Guide the Study

3. Begin today's study in Matthew 11:2-6 by stating that John the Baptist asked a very important question of Jesus—*Are You the One who was to come...?* Write the question on the marker board.

Comment that this is the question all people must ponder. Jesus' answer to John, and to us, is to not only hear His words but also observe His actions. Those of us who are not ashamed to embrace Jesus as Lord are also called to embrace God's mission, a mission of concern for the poor and oppressed, which is clearly seen in Jesus' life and works.

4. Invite someone to read aloud Matthew 11:2-6. Discuss: *How might prison have brought out doubt in John?*

Ask: *What evidence did Jesus tell those sent by John to report?* Point out that John, who was familiar with the Old Testament characteristics of the Messiah as One who would uphold justice and righteousness, would be reassured by Jesus' reply to his question. Jesus' actions were proof of His true identity.

5. Instruct the class to read Matthew 23:23-24 silently and prepare to contrast the actions of the religious leaders with Jesus' acts of mercy and restoration.

After discussion, ask: *Beyond failing to serve the needs of others, what were the religious leaders guilty of?* (hypocrisy—pretending to be something they were not) Point out that religious rituals are not wrong, but they cannot serve as substitutes for treating people fairly and with pity.

6. State that our next Scriptures show God's mission includes much more than helping the poor and oppressed. God's mission is to provide a way for all people to be redeemed from our sinful condition and to know Him personally.

Divide the class into two groups with one group assigned to examine John 1:10-14 and the other Romans 3:21-26. Instruct the groups to read their Scripture and identify "dark" aspects of Jesus' ministry and "bright" aspects of Jesus ministry. Distribute paper and pens so members may summarize their findings. After a time, call for reports from both groups.

7. Emphasize that all human efforts to be right with God will always fall short of the goal. But God has provided a way for us to be made right—through Jesus Who became a man and lived among us. The salvation He provides is through the cross of the Lord Jesus—and this salvation is ours for free, when we put our trust in Jesus. Stress that through the cross of Jesus, not only are we forgiven of our sins, but we are also liberated from every manner of bondage. In Christ alone we can have hope and release.

8. State that the Scriptures we have just examined tell what Jesus did in fulfilling God's mission, and our final Scripture, Philippians 2:9-11, tells us how we are to respond. Lead the members to read the passage aloud together. Ask: *What is a proper response to Jesus? What does calling Jesus "Lord" mean?* Response responses.

## Encourage Application

9. Lead the class to reflect on this thought: *If I call Jesus "Lord," what would I need to do to be more a part of God's mission to bring redemption and justice to our world?* Suggest that anyone who has not yet trusted Jesus as Savior reflect on this: *What do I need to do to make Jesus Lord and follow Him?* Close in prayer that we would all find our place in God's mission to the world.

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

• Display the illustration of Jesus. Invite the class to think about the image they have of Jesus. Ask: *Has your picture of Jesus changed from the time you were a child to the present?* Receive responses.

Comment that even if we had an actual, physical picture of Jesus, that would not tell the full story of Him. Jesus, as God, did come in bodily form, but a full picture of Jesus must include who He was and what He did. Refer the class to the Memory Verse in the Study Guide and read it together. State that the Scripture passages we will study today show that when Jesus lived among us, He was concerned about people, both their spiritual condition and their physical needs.

## Encourage Application

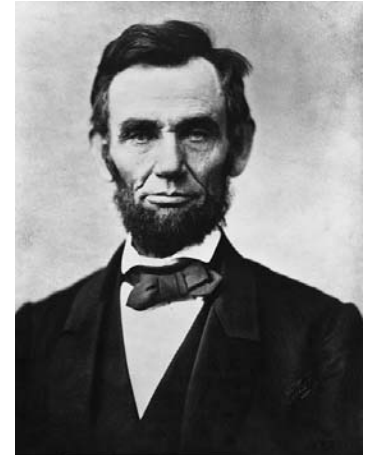
• Suggest that, during the following week, members return again to the Scriptures in today's study and ask themselves: *Which of the activities in Jesus' ministry are not in mine?*

• Review, as needed, the Word List in the Study Guide. Close with a prayer that as we look at Jesus' mission, we will discover our own place in God's mission.

*Connect with Life #1: Photos of people who showed compassion toward those who were oppressed.*

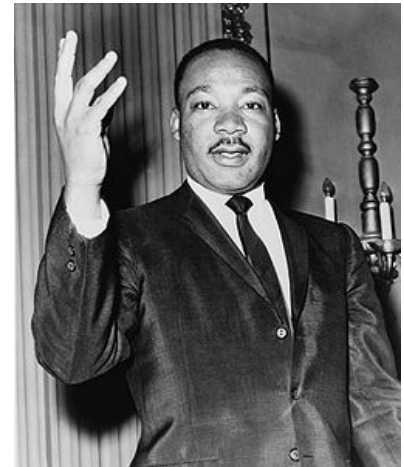
## Abraham Lincoln

Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs Division under the digital ID cph.3a53289



## Martin Luther King

Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs Division under the digital ID cph.3c26559



## Mother Teresa

photo: Wikimedia-Commons User Túrelío, Creative Commons BY-SA 2.0-de

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 8: Experience God's Good News

### Lesson Focus

Participating in God's mission grows naturally and directly out of a genuine experience of God's Good News.

### Focal Text

Luke 19:1-10; Acts 9:1-0, 19b-22; 16:13-15, 25-34

### Memory Verse

"The Son of Man came to look for and to save from the punishment of sin those who are lost." (Luke 19:10)

### Prior Preparation

• Prepare a handout of discussion questions which includes the questions for all four Scripture passages. Suggestion: Make an extra copy of this lesson's teaching plan, cut out the four boxes featuring questions, tape/ glue all four to blank page, and make copies.

### Connect with Life

1. As members arrive, ask them to write their names on the marker board. Begin the class by explaining that each member of the class has significance and is unique—no two people are alike. Everyone has a different life experience, personality, and giftedness. Call the name of each member and ask class to express one or more unique characteristics of that person.

2. State that in the six-lesson unit we are beginning today, we will discover how each of our lives has significance in the plan of God. Our experience, personality, and giftedness make us special, and God has a purpose for our life. He wants us to be part of His plan to tell the Good News so that all may know Him.

### Guide the Study

3. Explain that our study today presents several individuals who experienced God's Good News and how their lives became significant in God's mission. Before reading the first Scripture passage, distribute the Scripture handout.

Call on someone to read aloud the questions pertaining to the first passage. Advise the class to listen for the answers as a member reads aloud the Scripture passage. Call on persons or ask for volunteers to respond to the questions.

#### Luke 19:1-10 • Zaccheus

1. How is Zaccheus depicted?
2. What is his predicament?
3. How does Jesus' reaction to Zaccheus contrast with the crowd's reaction to Jesus?
4. With whom does Zaccheus need reconciliation?
5. In what way does Zaccheus' genuine experience of God's Good News change his life?

4. Announce that the next Bible passage tells the story of Paul's conversion. Before reading the passage, present this background information:

*The early church grew, but always under the atmosphere of threat. Saul put a human face on the persecution. He was present at the stoning of Stephen and then began a program of persecution designed to destroy the church. He believed he was defending Jewish beliefs against heretical ideas and individuals.*

5. Follow the same procedure with the Acts 9:1-9, 19b-22 passage. Have the class read the discussion questions on the handout before reading the Scripture. Then read the Bible passage and discuss the questions.

#### Acts 9:1-9, 19b-22 • Paul

1. What does encountering the risen Lord through a bright light and an unseen voice affect Paul? How does it affect his companions?
2. Who does Paul learn he is actually working against?
3. What evidence is there that Paul knew he was encountering the divine presence of God?
4. After the encounter, what indicates that Paul had a new direction for his life?

6. Follow the same procedure with the Acts 16:13-15 passage.

### Acts 16:13-15 • Lydia

1. Why would the river be a good place for people to gather for prayer?
2. What description does the writer of Luke give of Lydia?
3. How does Lydia respond to what Paul tells her about Jesus?
4. How does she show that her life is changed?

7. Follow the same procedure with the Acts 16:25-34 passage.

### Acts 16:25-34 • The Philippian jailer

1. How is Paul and Silas' worship through praying and singing—even in prison—a witness to others there?
2. What further convinces the jailer that he is encountering God in prison that night?
3. What evidence is there that the jailer's life is changed?

8. Point out that the four individuals studied today had distinct conversion experiences. When they learned the Good News of God in the Lord Jesus, they responded differently, but they all responded by sharing the Good News with others.

Write the names *Zaccheus, Paul, Lydia, and the Philippian jailer* on the marker board. Ask the class to name one action each individual took, using their unique gifts and abilities, to participate in God's mission. Jot responses on the board.

### Encourage Application

9. Point out that the church at Philippi grew because of the influence of Lydia and the jailer among their family and friends. Most people that we are likely to influence to believe in Jesus are within the network of relationships we have with our family and friends. Encourage the class to consider opportunities they have to share Christ in natural and appropriate ways in their circle of relationships. Close with prayer that as recipients of God's Good News in Christ we would participate fully in God's mission to the world.

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

- Using the list of class members' names from the marker board, write beside each person's name the job he/she does. (Example: school teacher, accountant, grocery clerk, etc.) Suggest that members imagine that they are going on a mission trip to a distant country. (Add interest by allowing the class to choose the country.) Suggest that they think of a specific task they could do, using the gifts they have, to achieve the overall mission goal. Allow time for sharing.

- Introduce the new unit, "Participating in God's Mission" by pointing out that as believers in Jesus Christ, we are participants in God's mission. The six lessons in this unit will challenge us to see the opportunities we have as unique individuals to use our specific skills to participate with God in His mission.

### Encourage Application

- Refer the class to #3 and #4 under Things to Think About in the Study Guide. Discuss question 3, then suggest that #4 be changed to read, "With whom could you or should you share your experience of believing in Jesus?" Point out that a natural way to share Christ is to tell what your life was like before you trusted Jesus and how your life has changed since you trusted Jesus. Lead the class in prayer for themselves and for those in their circle of influence who may ask "What must I do to be saved?"

- Review the Memory Verse from the Study Guide, and, as needed, the vocabulary words in the Word List.

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 9: Live in Faithfulness to God

### Lesson Focus

Participating in God's mission means living transformed lives with right attitudes and actions.

### Focal Text

Romans 12

### Memory Verse

"Christian brothers, I ask you from my heart to give your bodies to God because of His loving-kindness to us. Let your bodies be a living and holy gift given to God. He is pleased with this kind of gift. This is the true worship that you should give Him." (Romans 12:1)

### Prior Preparation

- Guide the Study #3: You will invite members to share their testimonies about those who have experienced a change of mind that resulted in a change of action. Be prepared to share from your personal experiences or to tell about someone you know who has experienced this change.

- Supplemental Encourage Application: Bring blank note cards for all class members.

### Connect with Life

1. Remind the class that this quarter's series of lessons is about God's mission—what He is doing in our world and how we can participate in it. Each lesson encourages us to participate fully in God's mission. Today's lesson presents descriptions of attitudes and actions we must maintain in order to participate fully in God's mission.

2. Draw two columns on the marker board. Label one *Accepted Behaviors of the World* and the other *Christian Attitudes and Actions*.

Lead the class to brainstorm and list attitudes and actions under each heading. Examine the lists to find similarities and differences in the attitudes and actions. Point out that Christian attitudes and actions are often opposite to what seems like common sense and what Jesus taught.

*Say: Paul, in our Scripture lesson today, gives us a picture of what Christian attitudes and actions look like.*

### Guide the Study

3. Lead the class to examine Romans 12:1-2 to find what worshipping the right way involves. (giving our entire self in service to the Lord)

*Ask: What must we do for God to give us a new mind? How is having a change of mind a necessary prerequisite to changing our actions?*

Call for testimonies from members who have experienced a change of mind that resulted in a change of action. Share your own experience or tell of someone else you know.

4. Comment that changed attitudes and actions don't happen in isolation. We need each other if we are to be the people God wants us to be. Paul says the Christian community is like a body with various members. We all have gifts and should use them to build up the larger body. Read aloud Romans 12:3.

*Ask: How does Paul encourage Christians to show humility?* Read Romans 12:4-8 aloud, stopping after each verse that mentions a gift and list the gift on the marker board. (If members have other Bible translations, accept their wording also.)

5. Point out that this list of gifts differs slightly from other lists in the New Testament. Invite members to suggest other gifts to add to the list.

*Ask: What are the gifts God has given you and how are you using them to bless others?* Allow a moment for reflection and for volunteers to share. Then invite members to point out unique gifts they see in other members of the class and tell how these gifts bless the entire group.

6. State that in the remaining verses in Romans 12:9-21, Paul describes the nature of love and how it should be demonstrated within a Christian community. Read the verses. Discuss using these questions:

--Which instructions of Paul deal with our attitudes toward others?

--Which deal with the way we act toward people?

--What principle should govern the way we respond to people who mistreat us?

--What difference would it make in our world if Christians were truly characterized by love?  
--(For personal reflection) How well is my life characterized by this kind of love?

## Encourage Application

7. Instruct the class to review the Romans passage silently. Then call for reflection, using these questions:

--Which instructions are the most difficult for me to follow?

--How much are my attitudes and actions influenced by the world?

--What steps do I need to take to have the mind of Christ?

8. Close in prayer, asking God to help us live the right way.

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

- Ask the class to imagine that they are people from another planet, and they know nothing about what Christians are like. You are a newspaper reporter asking questions of these “foreigners” on the street. Ask this question, *When you hear of a loving community, what do you think would be a characteristic of the people in the group?* Move around the class, asking each member for a response.

State that today's lesson gives a clear description of characteristics of a Christian community that is governed by love. The characteristics involve both right attitudes and right actions. The lesson calls us to evaluate our life by these values and to take action to change in response to them.

### Encourage Application

- Refer to Things to Think About in the Study Guide and ask the question of the group, “What do people see when they look at the way you live day after day?” Pass out note cards and suggest members write down one or more attitudes and/or actions they need to change in order to become more loving. After a time, close in prayer, asking for the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit.

- Lead the class to read the Memory Verse from the Study Guide together. Suggest that they ponder ways they might give their bodies as living and holy gifts to God during the coming week.



# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 10: Working Together in God's Mission

### Lesson Focus

God's people are to use their diverse gifts in engaging in God's mission together.

### Focal Text

Acts 4:32-35; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9;  
1 Corinthians 12:4-13; 1 Peter 2:6-10

### Memory Verse

"But you are a chosen group of people. You are the King's religious leaders. You are a holy nation. You belong to God. He has done this for you so you can tell others how God has called you out of darkness into His great light." (1 Peter 2:9)

### Prior Preparation

- Guide the Study #3: Think about a testimony you can share when God met one of your needs, even a small one, through the generosity of someone else.
- Guide the Study #5: Photocopy the "List of Spiritual Gifts" handout for every class member. Make sure everyone will have access to either 1 Corinthians 12:4-13 or Romans 12:6-8 which present the spiritual gifts. The 1 Corinthians passage is in the Study Guide. The Romans 12 passage is on the next page of this teaching plan and may be photocopied and distributed as needed.

### Connect with Life

1. Before class, write the following statement on the marker board, and call members' attention to it as they arrive: *Christianity is a group enterprise.* Engage the group in a discussion of what is needed for success in a group enterprise.

*Ask: What happens when someone in the group doesn't share in the planning, participate in the work, or contribute financially to the project?*

2. State that God has called all kinds of people to share in His mission. As people of God, we are called to share willingly. We are to use the gifts He has given us to witness to the world of God's love. Today's lesson focuses on the model of early Christians—how they

lived, worked, and worshiped together, using the gifts God gave them. We can learn through their example how we, too, can participate in God's mission by using our diverse spiritual gifts together.

### Guide the Study

3. Before reading Acts 4:32-35, point out that these verses give a picture of how the very first believers lived together. Then ask the class to listen as the verses are read and consider whether the first believers' pattern should be followed today. Receive responses.

*Ask: What positive attitudes and actions did the early believers demonstrate that we should follow today?*

Emphasize that sacrificial giving, sharing with others in need, is a Christian principle characteristic of true believers. Perhaps your group may have people who have been recipients of love gifts from others who saw their need and gave willingly to meet that need. First, share a testimony of your own, telling how God met a need, perhaps a small one, through someone else's generosity. Then call for testimonies from the group.

4. State that giving is always emphasized as part of Christian living. Paul the missionary served many churches, and he taught them to give, to participate in God's mission.

Invite a member to read aloud 2 Corinthians 8:1-9.

Lead a discussion with these questions:

- Why do you think giving is a part of Christian living?*
- Why should the poor be a special focus of our giving?*
- Is money our only treasure to give, or should we also give our time and talents in God's mission?*
- (For personal reflection) How much of my giving is "sacrificial"?*

5. Comment that we may be rich or poor, but God has uniquely gifted each of us with a spiritual gift to use for His purposes. We should help each other discover our unique gifts and then use them to serve the larger purpose of God.

Distribute the "List of Spiritual Gifts" handout, making sure everyone can read one of these two Scripture passages: 1 Corinthians 12:4-13 and Romans 12:6-8. Instruct half the group to read the Corinthians passage and the other half to read the Romans passage and to note the description of the various gifts.

Ask the class to think of an opportunity to participate in God's mission (for example, going with Buckner International to Mexico to distribute shoes to orphans) and tell which spiritual gifts might be helpful in accomplishing that mission.

6. Remind the class that though some people reject, disobey, and stumble over God's gift of Jesus, many others of us find Him precious, like a stone of great worth. Invite someone to read 1 Peter 2:6-10 aloud. Call attention to verse 9.

Ask: *How are believers as a group described in this verse?* (chosen, the King's religious leaders [priests], a holy nation, belonging to God)

*How would remembering who we are make a difference in how we participate in God's mission in the world?*

## Encourage Application

7. Suggest that the class consider an opportunity to use their spiritual gifts to serve God together. Receive suggestions for a project or event, and follow up with future planning. Close in a prayer of gratitude for the opportunity to serve with God in His mission.

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

• Present this case study: *Bill Tinsley served as executive director for Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention and tells the story of working with the Hmong Baptists. The Hmong people, native to Laos, came to the United States as refugees after the Vietnam War. In their homeland, they had suffered persecution, but in the US, many of them turned from animism and embraced Jesus as Lord. When the Red River flooded Grand Forks, South Dakota, the Hmong were among the first to respond for disaster relief. They did what they could, cooking food for the evacuees and contributing money for relief supplies. Out of a background of affliction, the Hmong led the way in giving.*

State that in today's lesson we will see that Christ has joined us together into a new kind of people, living in a new kind of fellowship, using our diverse gifts to engage in God's mission together. We can learn from the early Christians who provide a good model for us to follow.

### Encourage Application

• As a class, brainstorm ways to use our spiritual gifts more effectively. Decide on an activity or outreach to be on mission for God which would use the resources or gifts of the entire class. Schedule a time for future

planning. Close with a prayer of commitment to use our unique gifts for His purposes.

*Guide the Study #5: Photocopy for half the class.*

## Romans 12:6-8

**6** We all have different gifts that God has given to us by His loving-favor. We are to use them. If someone has the gift of preaching the Good News, he should preach. He should use the faith God has given him.

**7** If someone has the gift of helping others, then he should help. If someone has the gift of teaching, he should teach.

**8** If someone has the gift of speaking words of comfort and help, he should speak. If someone has the gift of sharing what he has, he should give from a willing heart. If someone has the gift of leading other people, he should lead them. If someone has the gift of showing kindness to others, he should be happy as he does it.

*Guide the Study #5: Photocopy for each class member.*

## List of Spiritual Gifts

- Teaching words of wisdom
- Teaching words of knowledge
- Faith
- Healing
- Doing powerful works (miracles)
- Speaking God's words (preaching)
- Service
- Teaching
- Mercy (showing kindness)
- Exhortation (speaking words of help)
- Generosity
- Leadership
- Telling the difference between the Holy Spirit and false spirits
- Speaking in special sounds
- Telling what the special words mean

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 11: Tell the Good News of How God Redeems and Restores

### Lesson Focus

Participating in God's mission means telling the Good News of redemption and restoration through Christ.

### Focal Text

2 Corinthians 5:11-21; Colossians 1:24-29

### Memory Verse

"We are Christ's missionaries. God is speaking to you through us. We are speaking for Christ and we ask you from our hearts to turn from your sins and come to God." (2 Corinthians 5:20)

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### Prior Preparation

• Guide the Study #4: Makes copies of the handout from this page. All three group assignments are on one handout, and students can write on the back.

### Connect with Life

1. Write the words *awe* and *love* on the marker board. Ask the class to recall a time when these words could describe a relationship they had with another person or a relationship someone they know had with another person. Receive responses.

Ask: *Does awe always come before love? What does a person have to do to be "awed" and "loved"?*

2. State that in our study today, Paul explains his motivation for sharing the Good News of Christ with all people. He reminds us that when we experience all that Christ has done for us—being redeemed from sin and restored to an ongoing relationship with God, we will respond with awe and love and will be sharers of the Good News, too.

### Guide the Study

3. Ask the class to listen as a member reads aloud 2 Corinthians 5:11-15. Ask that they note the verses that show Paul's motivation for sharing the Good News of Christ with others. (verse 1, fear of God [awe] and verse 14, love of Christ)

Discuss the verses with these questions:

--What verses show the passion Paul had for telling others?

--What in your experience with Christ fills you with passion to tell others?

--What "good news" is found in these verses that you could share with an unbelieving friend?

--According to Paul, what is the responsibility of every Christian?

4. Divide the members into groups of two or three people. Read verses 16-21 aloud. Give each group a handout with a written assignment. Suggest that each group should review the verses and do the assignment. Allow time for group work, then hear reports and discuss.

## Group Assignments

### Group 1

Describe the changes that take place when a person becomes a follower of Christ.

### Group 2

Describe how Christ redeems from sin and what that means to you personally.

### Group 3

Describe what it means to be Christ's missionaries.

5. Explain that the word *missionary* is translated *ambassador* in other translations of the Bible. The word *agent* has a similar meaning. Whether a missionary, ambassador, or agent—all speak not for themselves but for the person(s) they represent. As Christ's ambassadors we speak for Christ and make the appeal to others to come to Christ.

Ask: *If you are an ambassador for Christ, what things would you tell about Him?* (how God sent Jesus, how He died for our sins, and how He rose from the dead)

*What things would you tell about yourself—the difference Christ has made in your life?*

Emphasize that every believer has a unique and personal story to tell that others cannot argue against.

6. Enlist someone to read Colossians 1:24-29 while the class listens for what Paul's experience as ambassador for Christ was like. (He suffered.)

Point out that Paul's suffering was because he was participating in God's mission to tell the Good News of redemption and restoration to others. When we work as ambassadors for God to the world, we may face suffering, too. Invite discussion of the various types of suffering Christians may undergo when they tell others about Jesus. (persecution, social ostracism, ridicule, family rejection, etc.)

Ask: *What was Paul's attitude toward his suffering?* (joy)

7. Invite the class to review the verses again to note what Paul says about the "secret" or (in some translations) "mystery." Responses should include some of the following:

--The secret is made known to people who belong to Christ. (verse 26)

--The secret is that redemption and restoration is for all people regardless of race—to Jews and non-Jews. Christ wants the people who belong to Him to make this known. (verse 27)

--The secret is that in and through Christ we have hope of great things to come. (We are redeemed and restored.) (verse 27)

## Encourage Application

8. Ask: *What do you consider "good news" in the Christian message?* Receive responses. Make these comments as needed:

*—God acted decisively and finally through Jesus Christ to create a situation where sinful people could be redeemed.*

*—Through acceptance of Jesus as Lord, we are no*

*longer enslaved to sin and death, but receive the gift of salvation.*

*—Furthermore, we are restored to an eternal relationship with God.*

9. Call the class to a moment of reflection: *As a redeemed person, do I feel an imperative to be an agent of redemption to tell the Good News to others, even in the face of suffering?*

Close with a prayer of commitment to faithfully share God's message of redemption and restoration to people around us and around the world.

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

- Write the word *AGENT* on the marker board. Invite the class to respond with thoughts that come to their mind when they hear this word. (Possible responses: Athletes and movie star agents, travel agents, insurance agents, etc. Also, representative, go-between, spokesperson) State that today's lesson focuses on God's plan for redeeming and restoring all people to Himself and how we as redeemed people are to be agents for God, sharing this good news with others.

### Encourage Application

- Brainstorm some ways members might share their faith with people they know who have yet to hear the Good News of what God has done through Christ. List the ways on the marker board. Close in prayer that each person would seek opportunities to proclaim the gospel in a natural way.

- As time permits, review the new words, Memory Verse, and Things to Think About from the Study Guide.

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 12: Minister to People's Physical Needs

### Lesson Focus

Participating in God's mission means ministering to people's physical needs.

### Focal Text

Deuteronomy 10:14-19; Amos 5:21-24;  
Matthew 25:31-46

### Memory Verse

"Let what is fair roll down like waters. Let what is right and good flow forever like a river." (Amos 5:24)

### Prior Preparation

- Guide the Study #3: Bring pens and paper for all class members.
- Guide the Study #5: Prepare copies of Matthew 25:31-46 for a dramatic reading. Use the text as printed in the Study Guide and make enough copies for those who will read the parts aloud (narrator, the King, people on the right, people on the left). Mark the appropriate verses which are to be read by each character/group.

### Connect with Life

1. Before class, write this statement on the marker board:  
*Proclaim good news and offer good care.*

Invite the class to suggest what they think this statement has to do with today's lesson. Explain that throughout the biblical story, God calls His people to participate in His mission by ministering to people's physical needs.

2. State that our lesson today gives a powerful call to recognize that true worship includes a compassion for the poor and a seeking for justice.

### Guide the Study

3. Begin the study by asking members to read Deuteronomy 10:14-19 silently. Then pass out pen and paper and ask that they jot down the status and characteristics of God found in these verses. Compare

the lists compiled by members. Expand on discussion with these questions:

—*Why would a chosen people, like the Israelites, need to be reminded not to be "strong-willed"?* (As a proud people, they were not living up to the mission God had for them—to show God's love by caring for the needy.)

—*What had the Israelites forgotten about their own history?* (They had been strangers in Egypt.)

—*What assurance of God's care do we gain from these verses? for ourselves? for widows, orphans, and strangers?*

4. Point out that the Scripture passage from Amos presents the sad picture of a "strong-willed" people. The Israelites had failed to care for the needy within their nation while asserting that they were God's special and blessed nation. Invite the class to turn to Amos 5:21-24 to find what God had to say about them. Enlist a member to read the verses aloud.

Ask: *Why did God despise the people's worship? What did He require instead?*

Call for a moment of reflection:

—*How much do I work for justice and righteousness on behalf of the poor in my community?*

—*Have I ever felt worship exempted me from showing compassion and working for justice for the oppressed?*

Encourage the class to follow the admonition in these verses to let fairness, righteousness, and goodness flow like a river from our lives.

5. Enlist volunteers for the dramatic reading of the story of the sheep and the goats from Matthew 25:31-46. Allow a minute or two for the readers to read through it once or twice to become familiar with it.

Present the dramatic reading.

After the reading is finished, discuss the story with these questions:

—*How do you feel about the division of people being based on demonstrated service to others?*

—*Why do you think the people on the right did not realize they had served the King? (Point out that Christians do not earn their way into God's favor. Our good deeds are motivated by a response to God's call to participate in His mission.)*

—*Why did the people on the left not realize they had served the King?*

—*What sober truth do we get from this story? (To ignore the needs of the poor and the oppressed is to refuse Jesus. We do this at our own peril; refer to verse 41 and 46).*

## Encourage Application

6. Lead the class to brainstorm some things we can do to become more sensitive and tender hearted to the most vulnerable people in society. As a starter, plan an out-of-class activity and invite someone involved in a social service agency to talk to the group. Follow up by selecting a class activity of outreach to a needy family or a community project to help the underprivileged.

7. Close in prayer, seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance to effectively participate in God's mission to the poor and oppressed.

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

- Today's Bible study stresses the interrelationship between faith and work.

Ask: *What widows, orphans, and/or strangers do you know to whom you could show God's love in a tangible manner? Point out that God calls His people to participate in His mission by ministering to people's physical needs.*

Invite the class to name people in need in our world. List them on the marker board. (Immigrants [legal and illegal], the poor, the neglected in nursing homes, international students in a strange land, the hopeless)

Suggest that our lesson today will challenge us to find effective ways to minister to people in need.

## Encourage Application

- Discuss the Things to Think About in the Study Guide.

- Close in prayer that the Spirit of God would prompt members to care for the needy out of sincere compassion and concern for justice.

# Teaching Guide

## Lesson 13: Participate in God's Mission to Everyone

### Lesson Focus

God calls us to participate in His mission to everyone.

### Focal Text

Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 11:19-26; Revelation 5:1-10

### Memory Verse

“Your blood has bought men for God from every family and from every language and from every kind of people and from every nation. You have made them to be a holy nation of religious leaders to work for our God. They will be the leaders in the earth.” (Revelation 5:9b-10)

### Prior Preparation

- Encourage Application #7: Bring small note cards and pens for the class members to use as a commitment card.

- Supplemental Connect with Life: Gather pictures of individuals from various places in the world who are followers of Christ. If needed, ask someone in your church who works in ethnic ministries to provide you with pictures. Introduce the people in the pictures by telling their name (if known), country of origin, and that they are followers of Christ. Another option would be to read short written testimonies of several people from different countries.

### Connect with Life

1. On the marker board, write:

*What a small world we live in!*

Ask members to tell circumstances when they have said this or when they have heard someone else make this statement. Discuss advances which have made the world of 21<sup>st</sup> century smaller than the world of 1<sup>st</sup> century.

2. State that Jesus commanded all believers to go into all the world and “make disciples.” The 21<sup>st</sup> century affords unique opportunities to accomplish God’s purpose so that every family, language, people, and nation can worship Him.

Today’s lesson helps us see opportunities to participate in God’s mission to all people and we will be encouraged to do so.

### Guide the Study

3. Introduce “The Great Commission” as one of the best-known Scripture passages, and enlist a member to read aloud Matthew 28:16-20.

Discuss the concept that “Disciples make disciples.”  
Say: *If we respond to God’s call to make disciples, we are participating in God’s mission to all people.*

Discuss what “making disciples” involves. Point out that making disciples is more than teaching Bible studies. It also includes living in close contact with others so that they can see the difference Christ makes in our lives.

Lead the class to discuss ways we can “go” without being a “professional missionary.” Include these ideas:  
Going about our daily lives at work, school,  
or among our neighbors  
Going on mission trips  
Going on a work visa to another country

Consider barriers that may keep us from reaching out and sharing our faith with others. Then talk about ways these barriers can be overcome. Remind the group that the success of God’s mission depends not on our abilities or training but on God’s power to draw people to Himself.

4. Comment that the Jews who fled Jerusalem because of persecution carried the Good News with them. They launched a missionary movement in the Mediterranean world.

Ask the class to suggest happenings in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world that have caused people groups to be dispersed. (Natural disasters, wars, famines, global economy, and prosperity that allows freedom of movement)

Discuss the circumstances that have brought other cultures, languages, and races of people into your

community. Ask: *Do you see this as part of God's purpose?*

5. State that the Acts 11:19-26 passage tells about people carrying out God's call to go and make disciples of all nations—not just to the Jews. Read the passage aloud.

Invite the members to respond to the following questions:

—*From this passage, what encourages you to answer God's call to participate in His mission to all people?*

—*What "comfort zone" do you need to step out of in order to build bridges of friendship and share your faith with someone from another background?*

6. Remind the class that from the beginning to the end, the Bible story tells of God's activity in redeeming people of all cultural and ethnic groups. In Revelation 5, we find a description of the throne room of heaven at which there is a gathering of people offering praise to God as Creator and Redeemer.

Invite someone to read aloud Revelation 5:1-10. Discuss the passage using these questions:

—*Who does the Lamb represent?*

—*Who was bought (ransomed) by the blood of the sacrificial Lamb?*

—*What does this passage imply about our responsibility to share the Good News with all nations?*

## Encourage Application

7. In conclusion of this lesson and the series of lessons on "Participating in God's Mission," encourage the class to consider how they will more intentionally participate in God's mission. Pass out a commitment card and ask that they pray and determine one specific change to make so that "as they go" they will share God's love with others. Close in a prayer of gratitude for God's mission to redeem and restore all people.

## Supplemental Teaching Ideas

### Connect with Life

- Display the pictures of individuals from various places in the world who are followers of Christ. Tell the person's name, country of origin, and that they are followers of Christ.

Point out that people from all nations are included in God's purposes, and He has commissioned us to "go and tell."

(Or let the short testimonies be read at this time, instead of presenting the pictures.)

State that today we will study Christ's commission to His followers, how some followers carried the Gospel to others nations, and how God's mission culminates with people from all nations praising God as Creator and Redeemer.

## Encourage Application

- Guide the class to think about the community where they live: Are there groups of ethnic people in the community? Are there physical and spiritual needs your class could meet? Brainstorm ways to learn more about the groups, and commit to following through with a specific action as individuals or as a class.

- Close in prayer that all would be faithful to share the Good News (Gospel) right where they live.

- Review the Memory Verse and new words on the Word List in the Study Guide.