

SERMON SERIES: Invest & Invite
SCRIPTURE: Acts 8:26-40
SPEAKER: Rick Richardson, Guest Preacher
DATE: June 3-4, 2017

Small Group Discussion Guide

for leaders (see below for participants' guide)

Gathering Time

- Make sure newcomers are welcomed and engaged in conversation
- Offer a snack and drink if the setting is right (i.e. a home)
- Arrange seating so everyone in the group can see each other

Getting Acquainted

- **What is one takeaway from your last small group meeting? How are you doing putting it into practice in your life?**
 - As routine opener to group meetings, this question encourages individuals to apply your discussions in their lives. It also brings continuity & intentionality from meeting to meeting.
- **Today we're talking about evangelism—telling others the “good news” that they can discover life with God by following Jesus. What is your reaction to the idea that followers of Jesus are called to evangelize? Positive? Negative? Explain.**
 - This question sets the stage for the Bible Exploration and helps people get to know one another on a personal level.

Bible Exploration

- **Read Acts 8:26-40 as a group and reflect on Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian man. What elements stand out and why? Discuss.**
- **In his sermon, Rick Richardson pointed out that it is often our weaknesses that help us relate to people and allow us an opportunity to share our faith. For example, Philip may have felt like a 2nd class leader in the early church since he was a Gentile among mostly Jews. Interestingly, God used him to reach a man who, as a eunuch, may have felt like a 2nd class male. What opportunities might you have to relate to someone else's sense of weakness or inadequacy?**
- **Rick shared that 4 out of 5 unchurched people are open to talking about faith, and only 1.5% of unchurched people give their friends a hard time about their faith. How do these statistics affect your outlook about sharing your faith?**
- **Rick shared another study showing that blessing others is more effective than trying to convert them. Why do you think that is?**

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- **What do you think about the idea that evangelism is spelled B.L.E.S.S.? How does this model affect your outlook on evangelism?**
 - **B**egin with Prayer
 - **L**isten with Care
 - **E**at Together
 - **S**erve Others
 - **S**hare your Story
- **Who is God calling you to bless? What steps can you take to bless them?**
- **What is one takeaway from this week's discussion you can begin applying to your life this week? Be specific, and be prepared to share next time how it went.**

Prayer

- Invite the group to participate in a time of "conversational" prayer. Each person may pray as often as he or she wants, but only 1-2 short sentences on one topic at a time. This lowers the barrier of participation for people unaccustomed to praying with others.

Wrap-Up

- Be sure to end the formal conversation on time.
- Thank newcomers for joining you, and invite everyone to the next meeting.
- Encourage people to linger for a few minutes, and do your best to have a personal interaction with each individual before he or she leaves.

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