

Small Group Guide: Connect the Unconnected

Opening Question:

What does it mean to you to be "connected" in a church community?

Key Takeaways:

1. Being connected goes beyond just attending church; it involves being part of a spiritual family.
2. Discipleship happens best in the context of relationships, not just through information transfer.
3. Connection is both a means to maturity and a way to live out maturity in Christ.
4. Jesus' model of discipleship involved both teaching and living life alongside His disciples.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does our church currently approach connecting new believers? What could be improved?
2. Jim Putman talks about the importance of spiritual parents. Who has been a spiritual parent in your life, and how did they impact your growth?
3. The sermon mentions that "most Christian homes don't actually disciple their kids." Do you agree or disagree? How can we better equip parents to disciple their children?
4. How does being in a small group or life group contribute to your spiritual growth in ways that simply attending a church service cannot?
5. What are some practical ways we can create a culture of intentional discipleship in our small group?

Practical Applications:

1. This week, identify one person in your life who may be "unconnected" in their faith journey. Pray for an opportunity to invite them into deeper community.
2. Reflect on your own discipleship journey. Write down the names of 2-3 people who have significantly impacted your spiritual growth. Consider reaching out to thank them.
3. As a group, brainstorm ways you can foster deeper connections beyond your weekly meeting time. Choose one idea to implement in the next month.
4. Evaluate your own level of vulnerability in the group. Challenge yourself to share something you're struggling with at the next meeting, allowing others to support and encourage you.

5. Pick a spiritual discipline (prayer, Bible study, service, etc.) and pair up with another group member to practice it together and hold each other accountable for the next month.

Closing Prayer:

Lord, thank you for the gift of community and connection. Help us to be intentional about growing deeper in our relationships with You and with each other. Give us the courage to be vulnerable, the wisdom to disciple others, and the love to create a welcoming environment for those who are unconnected. In Jesus' name, Amen.

5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide to go with this lesson:

Day 1: Connected in Christ's Love

Reading: John 15:1-17

Devotional: Jesus calls us to abide in Him, just as branches are connected to a vine. This intimate connection with Christ is the foundation of our spiritual life. Reflect on how you're currently "abiding" in Christ. Are you regularly spending time in prayer, studying His Word, and seeking His presence? Consider how you can deepen this connection today. Remember, it's through this abiding relationship that we bear fruit and experience the fullness of God's love.

Day 2: Sharing the Good News

Reading: Matthew 28:16-20

Devotional: The Great Commission calls us to share our faith and make disciples. This isn't just a task for pastors or church leaders – it's a calling for every believer. Think about your own journey of faith. Who shared Christ with you? How has that impacted your life? Now consider your sphere of influence. Who in your life needs to hear about Jesus? Pray for opportunities to share your faith, and for the courage to seize those moments when they arise.

Day 3: The Body of Christ

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Devotional: We are called to be connected not just to Christ, but to one another as members of His body. This passage reminds us that every believer has a vital role to play in the church. Reflect on your own gifts and how you're using them to serve others. Are you actively participating in a small group or ministry? If not, what steps can you take to get more connected? Remember, true spiritual growth happens in the context of community.

Day 4: Growing in Maturity

Reading: Ephesians 4:11-16

Devotional: God's desire is for us to grow into spiritual maturity, becoming more like Christ. This growth doesn't happen in isolation – it requires both personal devotion and the support of other believers. Consider areas in your life where you need to grow. Is it patience, forgiveness, or perhaps dealing with conflict in a godly way? Identify one specific area and commit to

working on it this week. Seek out a mature believer who can offer guidance and accountability in this journey.

Day 5: Living as Disciples

Reading: Luke 9:23-26

Devotional: Jesus calls us to a life of discipleship, which involves daily surrender and following Him. This isn't always easy – it often means putting aside our own desires and comfort for the sake of Christ and others. Reflect on what it means to "take up your cross daily" in your current life situation. Are there areas where you're holding back from full commitment to Christ? Ask God for the strength to fully surrender these areas to Him. Remember, true discipleship is not just about what we know, but how we live out our faith in everyday life.