KINGDOM OF GOD

TEACHER GUIDE

Truth Centered Transformation is a ministry of Reconciled World learn more at tctprogram.org
Acknowledgements

The ideas in this training are not my own. As always, I am building on the shoulders of those who have gone before me. In this case the materials have been inspired by the work of Disciple Nations Alliance (disciplenations.org). The many churches that have studied have helped refine the lessons through their feedback or all out confusion. My gratitude goes to them and their endless patience with me while I learned to communicate truth in ways that are easily applied.

Much of the content of this training has drawn from ideas in Bob Moffitt’s Book “If Jesus was Mayor.” The ideas and illustrations for lessons 2, 5 and 6 were drawn directly from this book. Lesson 3, Kingdom Values, was inspired by the Bible study guide “God’s Unshakable Kingdom” (Kingdom Lifestyle Bible Studies) by Darrow Miller, Bob Moffitt and Scott Allen.

While the inspiration comes from others, the errors are my own. Please let me know if there are any suggestions on how we can continue to refine these materials.
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Before You Get Started

Preparing for Teaching a Lesson

1. Read through the Teacher’s Guide carefully, several times if possible. Highlight or make notes in the margin to remind yourself of important points.
2. Look at the objectives for each lesson so you know what students should learn through the lesson.
3. Read all Scripture passages ahead.
4. Check to see what materials are needed in each lesson and make sure you make copies of Student Guides (handouts) and create the visual aids that are used in the lesson.
5. Make sure you are familiar with each activity in the lesson (role plays, games, visual aids). You can practice it with your family or friends.
6. Take time to pray for God to prepare the students, for the students to hear what God wants them to hear and for Him to help you teach the materials. Remember that it is only through God’s strength that we will see people changed.

Helpful Hints for Effective Teaching

1. Arrive early and set up your materials and the area you will be using.
2. Don’t rush through the material. Plan enough time for discussion, activities and breaks. The goal is for people to have time to understand and be involved in the learning process. Move at a pace from topic to topic that makes sure everyone understands. Some modules may take an extra ½ or whole day.
3. Review often. At the beginning of each session have the class review all they have learned so far in the training module. Repetition helps people to remember what was learned.
4. Follow the Teacher’s Guide and your preparation notes.
5. Make sure to include all four parts of each lesson.
   a. Introduce the topic – activities will connect the topic to their previous experiences.
   b. Give new information – there are many ways to share new information.
   c. Give students something with what they have learned – activities allow them to better understand the information by working with others, creating something or using the new information in some way.
   d. Connect the information to their life – this is the application step that helps the student decide specific ways they will apply new information they have learned in their lives. Learning without application doesn’t produce change and isn’t very useful.
6. Review your adult learning principles and other skills taught in the Facilitator Development training.
   a. Give clear directions
   b. Ask lots of open ended questions
   c. Thank people for their participation
   d. Don’t tell people what they can learn better by discovery
3. **Managing Timeframes and Flow:** Time frames are not included for each lesson.
   a. Take as much time as is needed to help people learn the ideas in the lesson. It is more valuable to be concerned about what people are learning than with completing the lesson in a set timeframe.
   b. Remember to leave time for facilitators to start off with devotions, share testimonies, discuss any problems they are having, and pray together.
Lesson 1: The Kingdom of God

Key Objective

1. Understand the Kingdom of God is present when we fully obey God’s commands
2. Understand the Kingdom grows when more people come to obey God and when we obey Him more completely

Materials

1. None

What is the Kingdom of God

When Jesus walked on earth He shared His plan. This plan is mentioned 98 times in the New Testament. Jesus says it is the entire reason He was sent, and He sends His disciples to teach about it as well. Paul talked about it and we are even encouraged to pray for it.

• Do you know what it is?

IN SMALL GROUPS DISCUSS

Read the following verses and answer the questions:

• Matthew 10:5-8 — What did Jesus send the disciples to teach about?
• Luke 4:43 — Why was Jesus sent?
• Acts 1:3 — What did Jesus teach about during His last forty days on earth?
• Acts 28:30-31 — What did Paul teach about?

God’s plan is the building of the Kingdom of God. As we can see in these verses, this is a key idea both Jesus and Paul taught. It should be important to us as well. However, many of us don’t understand the phrase “the Kingdom of God.”

• Turn to someone and think about how you would describe the Kingdom of God to a new Christian.

Share the answers with the whole group.
Lesson 1: The Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God is not actually hard to explain. The Kingdom of God is wherever Jesus is King and His laws are followed. So wherever we see people walking in obedience to God and following His desires, there is a little piece of the Kingdom of God. Obviously the Kingdom of God will not come in its completeness until Jesus comes again and everything is made new and without sin.

To help us understand let’s think about Thailand. Thailand is a kingdom: they have a king and when the king speaks, the people of Thailand listen. He said he likes the color yellow, so now people all wear yellow shirts on Mondays. He said his wife likes purple, so now many people wear purple shirts on Fridays. He is so loved and admired that just by saying he likes a color, he affects how people dress.

A few years ago, the military took over the government in Thailand. There was fighting on the streets. The supporters of the government fought the supporters of the army. Everyone was concerned it would become very serious. And then the king spoke. He told everyone to stop fighting and to prepare to have elections. The fighting stopped immediately. Nobody questioned the king; they just did what he said. Even if they still felt angry, it didn’t matter. The king had spoken and pleasing the king was more important than their feelings.

We also have a King—Jesus is our King. Shouldn’t we seek to please Him and to do whatever He says in the same way that the people of Thailand try to please their king? If the people of Thailand love their king so much that even by saying he likes a color he can impact the way people dress, shouldn’t our lives be even more impacted by our love for our King Jesus?

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Do we seek to please our King in all we do? Why or why not?
- What are some areas in our lives in which we could learn to obey God better?

Obeying in ALL Things

God wants us to please and honor Him at all times. Read Colossians 3:17 and 1 Corinthians 10:31. In these verses it tells us that whatever we do, we should do to bring glory to God. In both verses it repeats the idea of everything we do: in Colossians, “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” In Corinthians, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” If something is repeated in the Bible, it usually indicates the idea is important. Paul wants us to understand that in EVERYTHING we should bring glory to God.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some things we do in a typical day? (Write a list on the board.)
- How can we bring glory to God as we do each of these things? (go through the list one by one.)
We should be serious about obeying our King Jesus and pleasing Him. God has done so much for us, sending His son to die for us. When we consider His great gift we should desire to obey His commands.

Build God’s Kingdom

Read Matthew 6:9-10

- What does Jesus ask us to pray for?
- How do we see His kingdom come?

God wants to build His Kingdom here on earth. (Your Kingdom come.) His Kingdom is built on earth by people doing His will. (Your will be done.)

There are two main ways we can build God’s Kingdom. The first is by increasing the number of people in God’s Kingdom by seeing people saved. The second is by seeing God’s will done more and more by people. As we learnt, Jesus came to reconcile all things (Col 1:18-20).

If we want to see God’s will being done more, we need to see more people saved and obeying God, and we need to see more people living as God intended in ALL areas of their lives.
Lesson 2: Kingdom Communities

Key Objectives

1. Understand if we are truly living obediently, we should see our whole community becoming more like the Kingdom of God.

Materials

1. Handout 2.1 Community Stories
2. Large sheets of paper
3. Crayons or markers

The Kingdom on Earth

Can you imagine what it would look like to have the Kingdom of God on earth? In the New Testament we see many examples of how the early Christians came together to form the Kingdom of God.

Read Acts 2:42-47

- What did the new believers do?
- Are these spiritual or physical things? (Both)
- What was the result?
  - No one was in need, other people looked on them favorably, and more people became believers.
- What results should we see in our communities when we have fellowship like the early believers did?

God as the Ruler of our Communities

God wants to see our communities increasingly living as He intended. He does not just want His will done in our lives individually, but in our communities as well.
IN SMALL GROUPS

Instructions: Read the following stories and answer the questions. (HANDOUT 2.1)

A man in India went to visit a village where he had been working. He asked the village women what their community would look like if Jesus were the leader of the village. Umrai, one of the more outspoken women, described a village where there was unity and solidarity. She knew Jesus was not honored by how her village was divided. Each family lived only for itself. Because of her reply, the group of village women formed a health committee and a self-help group. The fourteen women in the self-help group began to meet regularly and with great enthusiasm. Group members collected small amounts of individual savings into a group account and they began to solve community problems together. Umrai became the president of the committee and used her leadership gifts to plan and to mobilize the village to do the kinds of things Jesus would do if He were the leader.

Ladies from a Bible study in Uganda decided to serve their village as Jesus would serve. They carefully planned their first project: cleaning garbage from around a local bar. Two of the women courageously entered the bar. (Usually, the only women who go into a bar are the prostitutes.) They asked permission to clean up the garbage. The surprised owners laughed, but agreed. The women mobilized the community, with many people volunteering. The group dug two pits: one for biodegradable garbage and the other for non-biodegradable materials. When bar patrons saw others cleaning up their trash, they helped. To the delight of the community, the bar owners continued to keep the area clean.

Encouraged, the woman decided to build nine fuel-efficient stoves for local families and to provide water storage pots for needy people. Next, the Bible study group undertook a larger project: a community market. The village women typically walk many hours, carrying their vegetables and goods to far away markets. A nearby market would allow them to generate income while keeping them close to their families, community, and gardens. Land was donated, but it was too steep to begin to build the market. The women from the Bible study prayed and the highway workers who were repairing a road nearby willingly came and bulldozed the market property level at no cost. With God’s help the small group of rural Christian women discovered and collect resources, saved money, solved dilemmas, and built a community market. Their spiritual lives grew as they served others on behalf of Jesus.

Discuss:

• What happened in each of the stories?
• Because of the people in the stories, did the communities move closer to how it would be if everyone lived as Jesus intended? Why?
• What were some of the activities the groups in the stories did?
• How could you do the same in your community?
Jesus as a Community Leader

LARGE GROUP

Imagine that Jesus was the leader of your community. What do you think are some of the first things He would change?

Instructions: If the group only focuses on changing political leaders, remind them that while on earth Jesus didn’t change the political leaders. The disciples all expected Him to overthrow the political structure; however, He didn’t. He worked with individuals to bring change person by person. In this program our focus is on living as God intended and helping others to do the same.

If the group is struggling to think of ideas then you can use some of these questions to prompt discussion:

- What would Jesus do about widows and orphans?
- How would He strengthen families?
- How would He promote safe drinking water, adequate housing and food, health services, garbage and sewer systems, and decent roads?
- What would be done about education of children and adults?
- What would He do about alcoholism, drug abuse, gambling and other addictions?
- What would He do about spousal and child abuse?
- How would He improve relationships between people?

Community Change in All Four Areas

- Do you remember the four ways that we should grow like Jesus did? (Luke 2:52)
  o Wisdom, Physical, Social and Spiritual

The Kingdom of God brings change in all four areas. If we want to see our communities become more like the Kingdom of God, then we need to imagine all four areas changed in our community.

IN SMALL GROUPS

Instructions: Divide the class into groups and ask them to take time to discuss what the ideal community would be like. Specifically ask them to think about the spiritual, physical, social and mental areas. Ask them to draw a picture of how they imagine God would desire their community to be.
Lesson 2: Kingdom Communities

Explain:

God also longs to see our communities transformed to become more like His kingdom. He encouraged us to pray that His Kingdom would come on earth like it is in heaven and told us to seek first His Kingdom.

Can you imagine what it would be like to live in a community where everyone lived in complete obedience to God? There would be happy families, friendly neighbors, helping one another and living in harmony; there would be no arguing or fighting or dishonesty. Would you like to live in a community like that?

God’s method for bringing His kingdom is through us. We will learn more about this in Lesson 4, but for now let us think about: (go through each of these slowly giving people time to think about the answer.)

• What would happen if tomorrow morning, starting at 6 a.m., everyone in the church started to act as God intends?
• What would happen to us, personally, if we fully obeyed God’s intentions for our relationships, for the care of our bodies, and for our walk with God?
• What would happen in our families if all members fully obeyed God’s intentions for their relationships with one another?
• What would happen in our church and in the other churches in our community if all the leaders and members truly loved each other, served each other, cared for the powerless and poor, and lived in unity?

God has given us an exciting vision: the vision of His Kingdom coming to earth. He wants us to be part of building His Kingdom on earth. Imagine what the world would be like if everyone obeyed God. It would be like heaven! Although we know this will not be complete until Jesus comes again, we can still start to work on this God-given vision.

Every day we should wake up and think to ourselves, how can I build God’s kingdom today? What can I do to increase God’s Kingdom? How can I live so I live according to God’s rules? How can I help my family to do the same?
Lesson 3: Kingdom Values

Key Objectives

1. Understand that the problems in our communities can only be solved through complete obedience to God
2. See that the Kingdom of God comes as we apply the Bible to every area of our lives
3. See that the principles in the Bible are different from the values in our communities
4. Understand that we can find Bible principles when we read the Bible

Materials

1. Handout 3.1 Kingdom Values worksheet
2. Foundational Principles Posters

Foundational Principles

Let's start by looking at three basic principles.

The world is seriously broken. Human wisdom and material resources cannot heal it.

- What are some examples of the effects of sin in the world?
  Possible answers
  - Alcohol abuse/gambling/prostitution
  - Broken families
  - Fighting between people

Read the following story:

The nation of Haiti is an example of brokenness that has not been fixed by human wisdom and material resources. Haiti is the poorest country in South and Central America. It has a population of eight million people. Since 1980, thousands of international, governmental and non-governmental programs have been carried out. Billions of dollars have been spent trying to improve the economic, social and spiritual problems of Haiti. However nothing improved. In 2004 international organizations and governments gave another one billion dollars to try to fix Haiti.

Despite all this money Haiti has not changed at all. The people are still suffering; they have no hope. 80% of people live in total poverty. There are no factories or businesses in the country; they have all closed down. Unemployment is at least 70%. Over 10% of children do not live past the age of four. Slums are overpopulated, people do not have stable houses, and the streets are filled with litter. Crime is out of control. The roads are in terrible condition and there is not enough water to drink. The rural areas are no better. After years of cutting down the forests and soil erosion, the villages have nothing to defend them against tropical storms and no fertile land to plant.
Even with all the money spent and all the experts’ ideas, there has been no improvement. Economic resources have not healed the land nor have the ideas of all the top experts in the world.

- What is the situation in Haiti?
- How much money was spent in Haiti?
- What was the impact?
- Why do you think that is?

The world is broken and all our good ideas are not enough to fix it. In Haiti, even with billions of dollars and thousands of experts, the situation has not improved. This is true throughout the world, not just in Haiti. After spending fifty billion dollars in Africa and sending thousands of experts the continent is now poorer than it was twenty years ago. Human wisdom and resources are not enough to heal our world. We need something more.

Healing for a nation happens through people as they respond to God and live as He instructs.

Read 2 Chronicles 7:14

- What does the Bible say we need to do?
- Who needs to do it—Christians or non-Christians?
- What will happen if we do these things?
- Do you believe this verse is correct?
- What should we do if we want to see our community healed?

God does want to see our societies healed. Jesus came to reconcile all things. However, He still works through us. Without us praying, fasting and walking in obedience to God there will be no healing! God’s healing for our communities comes when we do these things. Do you want healing for your community? Are you willing to do these things?

The Bible tells us how we should live to heal our nations and build the Kingdom of God.

Sometimes when we buy something valuable we get a manual which tells us how to use it. The manual is written by the company who designed and built the product. They know how to use it so it will run the best and last the longest. If we want the best results from our new product it is best to read the manual.

God is the same. He designed the world and made it. He designed us and made us. He knows how to make the world and our lives the best possible and He has written an instruction manual. It is called The Bible. In it He tells us how to live in every area of our lives. The Bible has all the instructions and wisdom we need to heal our broken world and communities. We need to read, understand and apply what is written there to every area of our lives if we want the best possible life and if we want to see our communities changed.
**Instructions:** Review these three ideas again using the cards. Make sure the class understands each of the cards.

- What have we learnt about how to heal our world?
- How can we walk in obedience to God?
- We need to read the Bible and apply it to every area of our lives.
- What has God promised will happen if we are obedient?

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**Applying the Bible to Every Part of Our Lives**

If you read the stories of when Jesus lived on Earth you will see the disciples had very different ideas about how Jesus should rule than Jesus did.

Read Mark 10:35-37,41-45

- What were James and John discussing?
- What did Jesus say about how leaders should act?

James and John were thinking like their culture. They wanted to rule over others and were imagining the day when they would be great leaders. But Jesus corrected them and told them what a great leader is really like: a great leader is a servant.

- What do you think the life of a servant was like at that time?
- How do you think the disciples felt when they heard this?

So often this is the case. The way of the world or tradition is not the way of God. We need to know God’s ways if we are going to build God’s kingdom here on Earth. God has given us the Bible, which tells us how we should live in a way that pleases God.
### IN SMALL GROUPS

Fill in the following table (Handout 3.1). For each item think about what your culture would usually say. Then look at the verses and see what the Bible says we should do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Scripture</th>
<th>Our Culture/Tradition</th>
<th>God’s Kingdom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How we should act as a husband</td>
<td>Colossians 3:17</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Peter 3:7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ephesians 5:25, 28, 33</td>
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<tr>
<td>How we should act as a wife</td>
<td>Genesis 2:18</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ephesians 5:22-24, 33</td>
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<tr>
<td>How we should treat children</td>
<td>Psalm 127:3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ephesians 6:4</td>
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<tr>
<td>How to treat people</td>
<td>Matthew 22:36-40</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Luke 10:25-37</td>
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<tr>
<td>How to treat enemies</td>
<td>Luke 6:27-31</td>
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<td>Our attitude toward work</td>
<td>Colossians 3:22-4:1</td>
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<td>Ephesians 6:7-8</td>
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<td>Our attitude toward the environment</td>
<td>Psalm 24:1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Genesis 1:28-30</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Genesis 2:15</td>
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<tr>
<td>The most important thing</td>
<td>Matthew 6:25-34</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Matthew 22:36-40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our attitude toward death and dying</td>
<td>John 11:25-26</td>
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<td>Hebrews 2:14-15</td>
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<td>Revelation 1:17-18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our attitude toward suffering</td>
<td>Luke 6:22-23</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2 Corinthians 1:8-11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Finding God’s Principles

This week as you read the Bible you need to start to look for God’s principles you can apply to your lives. As you read a chapter or a passage ask yourself these four questions:

- What does this passage teach me about God?
- What does this passage teach me about how I should live?
- What does this passage teach me about how I should treat others?
- What does this passage teach me about how I should treat the environment or how I should work or use money etc?
Lesson 4: Kingdom Values and Work

Key Objectives

1. Work is an important area in our lives where we can bring glory to God. The Bible shows us how to be obedient in our work and how to work in a way that glorifies God.

Materials

1. Handout 4.1 Small Group Discussion Guide
2. John Wesley’s Guidelines for Work

Introduction

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Is work generally considered good or bad?
- What are some proverbs in your language about work?

Genesis 1:28

- What were God’s first instructions to Adam?
- Was this before or after Adam sinned by eating the fruit?

Genesis 2:2

- What does God rest from?

Mark 6:1-3

- What was Jesus profession before He started teaching?

As we see in these verses God worked, and as we are made in the image of God we are made to work. Right from the beginning of time, before sin entered the world, man worked.

In the book of Ruth, we learn about Ruth. She is escaping from a famine with her mother-in-law and is very poor. They return to Moab because they have heard there is food there. Ruth finds work in the field of Boaz, who takes an interest in her and learns what she has done for her mother-in-law.

- What did Boaz do to help Ruth? (Ruth 2:15-16)
- Why do you think he didn’t just give her the wheat?
  - Because we have been designed to work, so because of this we find dignity in working rather than just being the recipient of charity. By doing this, Boaz gave Ruth her dignity.
A Biblical Perspective on Work

IN SMALL GROUPS

Using Handout 4.1 discuss. What are some reasons to work? Use the following verses and any ideas you have so far in this lesson.

- 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12
- 1 Timothy 5:8
- Ephesians 4:28
- 1 Corinthians 10:31

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Do you think God intends for us to work?
- What attitude do people typically have towards work?
- When God was planting a garden, or Jesus was a carpenter, what do you think His attitude was?
- How can we have an attitude more like God?
- How can we help others to have an attitude similar to God about their work?

INDIVIDUALLY

- What is your attitude towards your work?
- Do you need to change your attitude?

Pray that God will help you to see your work as He sees it and that He will give you an attitude that is more like His.

Types of Work

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Do you think that some types of work are more important than others? What makes them more important?
IN SMALL GROUPS

- What job did God give Adam?
- What job did God give Noah?
- What job did God give Joseph?
- What job did God give Daniel?
- What job did God give Gideon?
- What job did God give Moses?
- What job did God give David?
- Do you think God would have preferred if these people had led a church or preached sermons instead of doing the work He had given them to do?
- Do you think God considered these people lower or less important than the priests? For example was Moses’ work less important than Aaron’s work?

The idea that some jobs are higher and some are lower is not found in the Bible. This idea was part of Greek culture that became part of Christian thinking until the time of the Reformation. The Greeks believed spiritual things were higher and more honoring to God while other things were lower and were not important to God.

However this is not the story in the Bible. The Bible starts with God creating the universe and the Earth. In Genesis 2:8 we see God planting a garden. God, the God we worship and adore, planted a garden. As we work in the field, let us remember God was the first gardener. We are doing what God did so many years ago. Again and again God called people to serve Him in a variety of ways. While being a preacher or evangelist is an honorable job, so is gardening, being a carpenter, or being a teacher. We don’t only need people to teach us spiritually but also to grow food to eat, to build shelter to live in, and to teach our children. John Wesley, a very famous Christian who lived two hundred years ago, gave the following guidelines for work.

**John Wesley’s guidelines (Visual Aid 2)**

- Work should not harm your health
- Work should not harm your family
- Work should not be against our conscience
- Work should not hurt our neighbor or his ability to earn money
- Work should not hurt our neighbor’s body
- Work should not cause your neighbor to sin.

John Wesley said that within these guidelines we should use our talents to work as hard as possible. We should try to earn as much as we can so we are able to look after our family, save for the future, give to expand God’s work, and give to the poor. In that way we are honoring God by using the talents, strength and health He has given us.
**LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

Look at John Wesley’s guidelines

- What is an example of how each could be broken?
  - *Work should not harm your health* — working somewhere dangerous, work that is inappropriate to your abilities for example very physical labor for someone old.
  - *Work should not harm your family* — working such long hours that you neglect your family. Jobs that require you to be away from your family for the majority of the month rather than caring for them.
  - *Work should not be against our conscience* — robbing or taking advantage of someone.
  - *Work should not hurt our neighbor or his ability to earn money* — starting a business next to someone else but selling at a lower price so you get all their customers.
  - *Work should not hurt our neighbor’s body* — making alcohol or cigarettes.
  - *Work should not cause your neighbor to sin* — running a local beer bar.

- If we believe all work is honoring to God then how does that affect the way you see your work?
- Does this impact the way you do your work?

**God Cares About How We Do Our Work**

Often it has been said that Christian workers are the worst workers.

- Why do you think that would be true?
- Does it happen in your area?
- How do you think God feels about Christians having this reputation?

While the Bible never suggests some jobs are more important or less important, the Bible has a lot to say about how we should do our jobs. It is an important part of our days — we spend most of our waking time working, so we need to consider carefully how we do our work.

**IN SMALL GROUPS**

Look at the following verses. What do these verses teach us about work? In small groups summarize in one sentence.

- 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12
- Proverbs 10:4
- Proverbs 19:15
- Proverbs 21:25

What do you think these verses teach about how we should do work?

- 1 Corinthians 10:31 - Glorify God
- Colossians 3:23 - Work as if working for God
LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

For most of Jesus’ life He was a carpenter. Imagine if you could see Him as a carpenter.

- What do you think the quality of His work was like?
- Imagine you worked in a workshop with Him: what would it have been like to work in the same workshop as Jesus?
- How would He act during the day?
- How would He act when no one was looking?

During the Reformation, an incredible change happened in the way Christians did their work. For the first time people began to read the Bible to see how it applied to their everyday life. At that time, if a carpenter made a table, he would ensure that the bottom of the table was as beautiful as the top of it. He said that God could see the bottom of the table as easily as the top, and the carpenter was working to please God. The products made at that time were amongst some of the highest quality products ever made.

IN SMALL GROUPS

Role Plays

Choose a job and create two role plays: one showing a person doing the job in a way that brings glory to God, and one showing a person doing the job in a way that does not bring glory to God. Do your role plays for the whole group.

LARGE GROUP

After each role play discuss:

- What are some of the ways you saw the person bringing glory to God in his/her work?
- What are some of the ways you saw the person not bringing glory to God in his/her work?
- What are some more ideas we can add to each of these lists?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Think about your work. What are some of the ways you glorify God in your work? Ask God to show you some things you could do better to honor Him more.
Lesson 5: Building the Kingdom of God

Key Objectives

1. We must be obedient in our individual lives and family life in order to transform our community to be more like the Kingdom of God.

Materials

1. Handout 5.1 ‘One Christian Family Makes a Difference’ Story
2. Handout 5.2 How to be a Kingdom Builder
3. Poster – Individual to Family

It Starts With Us

In Lesson One we talked about how God has given us an incredible vision.

- What was the vision?
  - The Kingdom of God
- What can we do to start to achieve this vision?

A Community Transformed

Read the following story.

In one area, the Christians had for years been known for being extremely poor. Most families earned very little money. They were forced to plant fields that were a long distance from their homes, and they had to carry their harvest out on their backs because the road was not good enough to bring in a car. Most families had only enough rice from their harvest each year to last six months. The rest of the year they foraged in the woods to provide food for themselves. Because they didn’t understand how to budget their income, the families went into debt every year. There were no toilets in the community, and people were sick often. Their homes were very small and leaked often. The children in the community did not regularly attend school. The church as well was very small and poor and faced constant struggles because of persecution and internal division.

Development organizations were not allowed to work with these communities, and so there seemed to be very little hope for them to come out of poverty. But this changed when one couple came and started to train some church leaders from the community on how they should love their neighbor, and on what the Kingdom of God meant. The couple did not give the local churches any money, but only taught them about being obedient to God’s commands.
The churches responded to what they had learned by helping others in their community. They repaired and widened roads. They helped each other with harvesting. They built and repaired houses. They built toilets. They sent their kids to school. They treated their husbands and wives better.

Within five years, the community had changed completely! The community leaders came and told the couple that they were no longer poor. Their incomes had gone up. They were healthier. Their children were going to school. Moreover, the church had grown! Almost everyone in the community had become a Christian after seeing how the church was showing God’s love to the community. The church had good relationships with the local officials as well, and no longer suffered from persecution.

When a group of Christian development workers from another organization came to see what had happened in these communities, they did not believe at first that the community had truly been that poor just five years ago. When they finally realized how much the community had changed in such a short time, they were amazed! They started to ask every leader, “What did you do to bring this kind of change?”

Do you know what the leaders said? Every single one gave the same answer: “We were obedient to God.”

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

• What had changed in this community?
• Are these spiritual or physical things?
• When the development workers asked about what the community did to bring change, what answer do you think they expected?
• What answer did everyone tell them?
• What had the churches done in the community to show their obedience to God?

How Do We Transform Our Community?

If we want to see our communities changed we need to walk in obedience to God. The first step is to start by changing our own lives. We need to start to apply Kingdom values to everything we do.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

• What would our lives be like if we obeyed God’s will every moment of every day?
• Think of a few things you do in a normal day. If you were obeying God’s will every moment of the day would you do these things? Would you do them differently?
• How does God’s will affect the common things such as sleeping, eating, preparing meals, planting a field or collecting water? Does God care about the way we do these things?
• Read Matthew 6:25-33
  o What were the people worried about? Are these spiritual things or common things?
  o What was Jesus response?
  o What do you think Jesus meant? How can we seek the Kingdom of God in everything?
It can be confusing to think that when people came to Jesus to tell Him they were concerned about what to eat and drink, His response was, “seek first the Kingdom of God.” What does that mean? Does it mean we shouldn’t ever think about these things, but spend all our time doing spiritual things like praying? If we did would it be the perfect life?

Fortunately for us there was Someone who lived a perfect life and did God’s will at all times: Jesus (John 14:31). We can look at His life to see what it means to seek first the Kingdom of God. Look at these verses. What do they teach us about some of the things Jesus did?

- **Mark 6:3** – up to the age of thirty Jesus was a carpenter. In His community He was not seen as being a super spiritual leader, but an ordinary person. While Jesus was a carpenter He was still leading a perfect life. There was never a moment in Jesus’ life when He was outside of God’s will for His life. From the age of about ten to the age of thirty, God’s will for Jesus was that He followed His family trade and was a carpenter.
- **John 21:9-14** – Jesus cooked a meal for the disciples.
- **Mark 4:38** – When He was tired, Jesus rested.
- **John 2:1-2** – Jesus attend a wedding.
- **Were these ordinary things or spiritual things?**
  - They were ordinary things and yet they were things that Jesus spent His day doing. While He was seeking God’s Kingdom at every moment, He still spent His day doing many ordinary things. At those times He was not outside of God’s will, but was serving God completely.

Read **Mark 1:21-34**

- What are some of the activities that Jesus did on this day?

In these verses we see a Sabbath in the life of Jesus. He spent the morning in the Synagogue teaching. He then went back to Peter’s home, and after healing his mother, relaxed for the afternoon while Peter’s mother served them. In the evening He went out and spent time serving others by healing the sick.

- How does this compare with how we spend our Sunday? What is different, and what is similar?

As we can see, for the first years of His life Jesus was a carpenter. Even when He started teaching others, He still didn’t spend every hour praying and teaching. He ate with friends, He served His friends, He slept and relaxed. Everything He did was perfect and according to God’s will. Even when He did common things He was doing what God wanted Him to do.

**Brother Lawrence**

Around 1608 a man was born in France. He became a Christian at the age of eighteen, and in his twenties he decided that he wanted to commit his life to God more fully. He entered a monastery where he was given the name Brother Lawrence. He imagined that by living in a monastery he would spend all his time at the chapel praying and worshipping God. However, he found himself
assigned to the kitchen duties. For ten years he hated being in the kitchen while others were at the chapel. He resented being given such meaningless work.

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

- If you met Brother Lawrence during these ten years, what advice would you have given him?
- Do you think Brother Lawrence’s work in the kitchen was less important than the monks in the chapel?
- Read the following verses and think how they apply to this situation:
  - Matthew 25:40 (34-40)
  - 1 Corinthians 10:31
  - 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

After ten years Brother Lawrence realized he could serve and worship God no matter where he was. He remained in the kitchen, but now felt he was as much in God’s presence there as if he were worshipping in the chapel.

The Bible shows us that God is more concerned with how we do things than what it is we do, as long as what we are doing is not sinful. Anything we do can be used to bring glory to God.

**From Individuals to Families to Communities**

Transformation starts with individuals but expands to families, then on to communities and to the nation. This is a process. When individuals and families obey God, this impacts their communities. As communities start to live in obedience, this affects the communities around them, and so on to nations.
Lesson 5: Building the Kingdom of God

Families

Read the following verses:

- Deuteronomy 6:7
- Titus 2:3-4
- 1 Timothy 3:12
- Titus 1:6
- How are we supposed to influence our families?
  - We need to teach and set a good example for them.

Read Luke 2:52

- What lesson did we learn from this verse in the last training?
  - We need to grow in all four areas.

IN SMALL GROUPS

Come up with as many different ways to help your family grow in each of the four areas as you can. Have each person choose one thing that they will do under each category (social, spiritual, physical and mental) this week.

Communities

As families are transformed they have a desire to see their communities changed. Read this story of a man and his family who changed a community. (For literate classes give this as handout 5.1 and ask the students to read individually.)

This is a true story of a man who moved with his family to an area where there were no Christians to share Christ to the area. He wanted to see God’s Kingdom built and people’s lives restored in every area—spiritually, socially, mentally and physically.

One Christian Family Makes a Difference

Four years ago when the evangelist moved to this area the whole community was Hindu. The village was located in the Himalayas at 1,000 ft. above sea level. A few kilometers away from the village was a tea plantation. This provided the main work for the people in the village. However, the wages were so low that the people struggled to survive even with a job.

The village was made up of about twenty-five run-down, poorly-constructed wood homes with tin roofs. There were no latrines in the village. Because it was so high it was very cold; however, the children were barefoot and had swollen stomachs.
Each house was on a small plot of land. The cooking was done in a separate little smoke-filled cooking shack over an open fire, with the pot balanced on three stones. There were a few chickens running in and out of the houses and the compounds were dirty.

The nearest school was two kilometers away. It was too far for the children to walk daily and they had work to do around the home. Therefore, most of the children did not attend school. Many adults could not read or write, therefore they were always being taken advantage of by those in other villages who could.

There were very few gardens because the nearest water was a reservoir two kilometers away. It was hard enough to bring water for drinking and washing, let alone for watering gardens. There once was a pipeline from this reservoir, but it no longer worked and the people hadn’t done anything about getting it repaired.

Rain was sporadic except for the one growing season when there was normally enough rain to get their main crop of rice. There was not enough room or time to raise vegetables. If they were lucky they could harvest enough rice to get them through until the next harvest.

The people were Hindu, therefore they worshipped many different gods. There are over one million gods, which Hindus must appease and worship. The village had many little idols to the Hindu gods. Each time the villagers ate they would drop some food on the ground for the wandering spirits.

There was a sense of defeat and hopelessness. Their only hope was that maybe in the next life they would be reincarnated into a better situation. But there was also the chance that if they made the gods unhappy, they could be reincarnated as a rat or a dog. They felt trapped, with no way out and no way to better themselves.

Lepcha was an evangelist who moved to this area. He studied to learn the basics about helping others improve their health in a one-month course. Once he completed the course he moved with his family to the village so they could live there to help their neighbors by sharing what they had learned. They had a very clean compound with a cooking house that had a raised fireplace, making cooking easier and using less fire wood. They had a small coop to keep their chickens. They planted a small vegetable garden, which improved their children’s nutrition. They had an outside latrine and their children didn’t seem to have worms or diarrhea as often as other children in the village.

Lepcha made a rain collection jar which he put under the gutters they installed on their tin roof to collect water when the sporadic rains came. Others copied this idea, and now when it rains, they too have water.

They got the people in the community to work together to lay a pipeline from the reservoir to the village, and now the villagers have plenty of water, even enough to water their new vegetable gardens. Many of the people have copied the chicken houses and have built latrines that don’t smell or have flies.

When Lepcha’s family came they began to teach adults and children who wanted to learn how to read and write. They started by teaching children and teenagers how to read. Today, the village has its own school for children up through fourth grade.
Today there is a small church building because now twenty-three of the twenty-five families have a personal relationship with Christ. All of this is because this one family shared Christ with their words and their deeds.

The people have a sense of accomplishment, and they see that they can live healthy lives because one family cared enough to come and share their life with others.

This same story is being told time after time in villages in northern India and eastern Nepal. Today the same things are happening in 120 villages in the area. People’s lives are changed physically. But the villages are also being changed spiritually as 107 home fellowships have been started, with the largest twelve having 200 members.

The Indian pastors have now formed their own denomination called Agape Church, which the majority of these new churches will join. When one Christian family, like the Lepchas, has a vision to see their community changed, mighty things can happen for God if they are seeking God’s will and then are willing to act on the vision that God has given them. Some of the family models have changed to church-based models by training key people in the churches. It is our prayer that these will become community-based models in the future.

• What were some of the changes that Lepcha brought to the community? Look again at the story and make a list under the headings social, spiritual, mental and physical.
• How did he bring these changes? Who did he start with? His family
• How is the community different because of Lepcha?
• How can you be like Lepcha in your community?

Note: In Phase 4 we will also bring you a series of health teachings similar to those that Lepcha studied.

Other Examples of People Who Built God’s Kingdom

Read through the next few stories, discussing the questions after each story.

Reaching Out to Hospitals

A pastor in a closed country had been distributing tracts at mosques. The government wasn’t happy so they withdrew his official ministry status. His evangelism methods were not welcomed. One day he attended a training and learnt about demonstrating God’s love through Acts of Love. He thought of a new plan. He immediately took four volunteers, bought bread and asked the head of a local hospital for permission to visit patients, share bread, and pray for them. The team received permission, but was assigned to the most difficult wards: a closed unit for incurable schizophrenic patients. One patient was a man who had not spoken in many years. Instead of walking, he crawled. His face was swollen and disfigured. One of his ears was greatly enlarged. He had a terrible odor. He was filthy. The visitors laid hands on him to pray and did not want to touch anything else until they washed.

The next week, the pastor and volunteers returned. A tall, thin man behind the bars of the psychiatric ward met them. They asked him to take them to the main group of patients. The man
announced he was the man they had prayed for last week— their prayers had so changed him that he wanted them to pray again. However, the group did not recognize him, so they told him they did not have much time and asked him to take them to the other patients. He did and the staff in the ward confirmed this was indeed the grotesque man they had prayed for the previous week. The ministry team was amazed. The man had been healed. He walked and talked. He was even able to write. His diagnosis had to be changed from incurable to curable.

As time passed, the ministry team kept coming, bringing bread and clothing and praying for the patients. Other patients began to respond in the same way. Next, the team was invited to minister to all 800 patients and the hospital staff. God multiplied resources as others heard of their work. Within three years and with the blessing of local officials, an expanded team was ministering weekly to 2600 people in five hospitals, five orphanages, two prisons and a rehabilitation center for drug and alcohol abuse. They also began to minister to street children and the homeless.

- What happened in this story?
- What started it all?
- What did he do?
- What was the result?
- Is his community now more or less like God intends because of his actions?
- What can we learn from this story?

**From Persecuted to Leading**

There was a pastor in another closed country who was always being called into the police station. At least six times a year the police came to a training he was conducting and took him to the police station. One day he learnt about the idea of building the Kingdom of God and he started to teach his church these ideas. He encouraged his church and those he was responsible for to start serving their neighbors and looking for opportunities to make their community more as God intended it to be.

The churches carried out many projects: giving to the needy, building houses for widows, repairing roads, building latrines, etc. The church started to grow and the believers became more mature. Social evils such as drinking and gambling stopped in this community. Slowly government officials noticed the impact this pastor and the churches he was responsible for were having on the community. As a result they made the pastor the new government leader for the area. He started in his new role by teaching those under him health lessons so they were able to teach everyone in the community these lessons. Now the health of those living in the community is improving.

- What did this pastor do?
- In what ways is he building God’s Kingdom?
- What has been the result?
- What are some lessons from this story that we could apply to our own lives?
Children Attending School

In one area the number of children that attend school is very low. One man, realizing the importance of education, decided to try and do something about it. He talked to others in the church about the problem and gathered together a small team who were willing to work with him to solve this problem. They started to go house to house encouraging families to send their children to school. As a result all the children in his area stayed in school. Education officials in other areas noticed what was happening in his community and invited him to go to other areas to encourage parents to keep their children in school. Now, not only the children in his village but also in the surrounding villages are staying in school.

- In what way is this man building God’s Kingdom?
- How possible would it be to do something similar in our community?

We can all be someone who brings change to our communities. These people were not special or extra-blessed. They were ordinary people like you and me. Some had very little education but all were willing to do what they could to build the Kingdom of God in their community.

How to Be a Kingdom Builder

God can do anything He wants. He could build His kingdom without us. But that is not His plan; His plan is to use us in building His Kingdom. Building God’s Kingdom starts with us. Read through or give the students Handout 5.3. Ask them to prayerfully think about how they can respond.

Distribute Handout 5.2 – How to be a Kingdom

1. **Start with yourself**
   
   The first step in seeing God’s Kingdom built in your life, in your family, in your church, in your community, and in the world is to examine yourself. Are you willing to be used by God? Are you willing to be obedient to God in every area of your life? What are one or two things that you could work on improving this week?

Teach and encourage your family

As you start to apply God’s Kingdom to every part of your life you need to start to encourage your family to do the same. As we read, we should be teaching our families at all times (Deut. 6:7) no matter what we are doing. Look for ways to teach your family by what you do, through talking to them, and by looking for ways to help them to start serving others as well.

   Remember the things you committed to do in the lesson in each of the four areas to also help your family to grow.

Ask God to use you to impact others

Start praying and asking God to help you to impact others. Look for opportunities. As you see people in need, ask God to show you how you can help those people.
God is more than willing to help us to build His Kingdom. He will reveal to us at the right time, the right way to help.

Serve Others

Get involved in an Act of Love and find other ways to serve. Even if you feel like you are not able to do much, you should still use all the talents God has given you to serve. As you serve, you will start to grow and will find you are able to do more and more.
Lesson 6: The Church’s Role in Building the Kingdom of God

Key Objectives

1. Understand the church must be at the center of transforming the community to be more like the Kingdom of God
2. Understand every person in the church is important and all should be involved in building God’s Kingdom in some way

Materials

1. Parts of the Body cards

Introduction

In our previous lesson we looked at the transformation process—how it starts with you and moves to your family, community and the nation. However, there is another important part to this process: the church.

To achieve this great vision, God’s plan is that the church will have a vital role to play in the transformation process.

Read Ephesians 1:22-23

- What is the role of the church?
  - To fulfill the work of Jesus

Read Ephesians 3:10

- What is God using to make known His wisdom?
  - The church

These verses are not always easy to understand but they remind us God has given the church a special role in building His Kingdom. The church is Christ’s body. It is the church’s role to fulfill the work of Jesus, bringing reconciliation to ALL things.

- What would happen if your church had to close down? Would the non-Christians in your community complain? Why or why not?

The church should have such an impact on the community that the community members would be upset to see the church leave.
Let’s draw our diagram from our previous lesson another way. Let’s start with the individual, then the family, then the community, and then the nation. (Draw on the board.)

The role of the church is to help this process. (Draw in the church.) We are to equip individuals and to help them to impact their families, communities, etc. We are also to look for ways to help families and communities become all that God intends.

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**Equipping Individuals**

**Instructions:** Give various members of the class cards with pictures of various parts of the body (Visual Aid X).

- Which are useless, or do not have any purpose?
- Which are the smallest parts of the body?
- What would be the impact of getting rid of the smallest parts?
- If all the parts were separated would the body still function?
- Give some examples of how different parts of the body need other parts.
- How effective would the body be if some parts were missing?

Have various members put down their cards.

- Would the body be better now?
- What would be the effect of losing these parts?

Have the class choose the most important parts then lay down the rest of the cards.

- Would the body be able to function now? Why not, we do have the most important parts?
Lesson 6: The Church’s Role in Building the Kingdom of God

I Corinthians 12:12-20

• In the body every part is essential. The church is supposed to be like the body—every member of the church should be essential to building God’s Kingdom. There should be no useless members. Is every member of the body playing an essential role? Are there any people whom, if they stopped attending, it wouldn’t have any impact to the running of the church or the church’s ministries?
• What percentage of the church is actually participating? What percentage of the body is not actually participating or being used?
• Ask approximately that percentage of students to lay down their cards.
• If your own body only had that percentage working what would it be like? Is this also true of the church? Would the church be more effective if a greater percentage were effective?
• What can we do to start to address this problem?

Why Does Everyone Need to be Serving?

Read Ephesians 2:10

• What were we saved to do?
• Are all people that are saved to be doing good works or only some?
• Is everyone in your church doing good works?

Read the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)

• As you read this parable do you think that it indicates that there are any Christians that don’t need to be using their talents to build God’s Kingdom?
• Are all Christians in your church using their talents fully?
• How can we help more people to be using their talents fully to build God’s Kingdom?

To build God’s Kingdom we ALL need to work together. While one person can build a small piece of God’s Kingdom, as the whole church starts to live in accordance with God’s will in every area of their lives and helps others to do the same, we can build God’s Kingdom more effectively. Imagine if everyone in your church committed themselves to seeing God’s will being done in their own lives, in the church, and in the community. What impact would that have on the church and the community?

Ephesians 4:11-12

• What is the role of leaders (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers)?
• In many churches they say that 10% of the people do 90% of the work. How true is that? How can we change it?
• How can we be better at building up others so they are able to do works of service?

Often it is said that those who learn the most and grow the most are those who are serving others. In Indonesia there were some missionaries working with youth. Although they were teaching them weekly, they became frustrated by how weak the Christians were and how slowly they were growing. They decided the youth needed to start serving, so they instituted a new rule that only
those involved in some service role were allowed to attend the weekly training. Most of the youth got involved in various activities. They did everything from reaching out to a poor family in their community, to tutoring poor children, to helping in the children’s ministry. Within a few months the missionaries noticed the youth had really started to mature in their faith. Now they needed to read their Bibles and pray. They needed to trust God to help them to be able to really help others.

**LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

- What happened in this story?
- What were some of the ways the youth started to serve?
- Have you seen people mature as they have started to be more involved in serving through the church?
- Why do you think people mature as they start to serve?

**Transforming Families**

The church can play a role in helping families to live as God intends by teaching church members how to have strong marriages and how to parent well, and by giving families opportunities to worship and serve together. The church needs to look for opportunities to help individuals serve their families and help their families live as God intended.

**Transforming Communities**

As the church we can impact our community in many ways. Three important ways the community should be affected are:

1. **Increase the number of Christians**

   This is not always the same as our church getting bigger. (We can do that by sheep stealing.) Increasing the number of Christians means that more and more non-Christians come to know God and accept Christ as their Savior. Churches play an important role in helping people to understand the gospel and in nurturing new Christians.

2. **Teach the community to live in obedience to God**

   As we learnt, God made us and He knows what is best for us. He has revealed how we should live in the Bible. We can also teach others basic Bible principles. As a church you can start to look for opportunities to help people to live in obedience in every aspect of their lives.

   Even those who are not interested in Christianity may be interested in learning about health, how to have a strong marriage, or how to manage money wisely. These types of trainings both help people to improve their lives as they live according to biblical principles and help to build good relationships between non-Christians and the church.
3. Help their community live as God intends through service projects

IN SMALL GROUPS

Answer the following questions:

- Matthew 20:28 - Why did Jesus come?
- Phil 2:4-9 - How does Paul describe Jesus?
- Jesus came to serve. In fact, when the Bible says, “being in very nature God,” it can also read, “because He was God, He did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant.” Imagine, because He was God He made Himself nothing, taking on the nature of a servant. The nature of God is to serve. As the church is the body of Christ, the nature of the church should also be to serve.
- James 1:27 - What type of religion is pleasing to God?
- Mark 12:31 - What does God command us to do?

Our love for God and for our neighbor should cause us to serve. In the same way as Christ came to serve, the purpose of the church is to serve by helping people to know and grow in Christ and by demonstrating His love to others.

As we serve our communities we will see them transformed. Read the story below of a community that was transformed as the church served it.

The Community School

Kagishu, a shantytown slum with homes made from discarded sheet metal and broken wood, had a fifteen-member church. This church received an invitation to attend a wholistic ministry training conference and selected Meshack, a 21 year old member, to attend. Meshack returned with a new vision: “I learnt obeying Jesus is not optional!” So Meshack, Dismus (an elder), the pastor and his wife prayed, asking God for a project to demonstrate the love of God to their community. The answer came: begin a primary school for children in the church.

Immediately they began talking to church members who had children but could not afford the small fee for public school. Several agreed to send their children to this new “school.” With no training, Meshack, the pastor and the pastor’s wife began teaching thirteen children, ages six to twelve, in the one-room church with no desks, books or equipment. The village people did not want to associate with the school and came at night to steal the building materials. Meshacks’s first salary came during the seventh month — one US dollar paid by fees and offerings from children’s parents.

Meschack and Dismus invited neighborhood children and the school grew. Soon there were forty-five students of varying ages in one room. A second teacher volunteered by the sixth month and a third by the eighth month. With 100 students, the teachers stood back to back in the middle of the room, facing their classes. Soon the neighbors moved out. As they did the school gained more space. By the time the school was two years old it had two buildings, with more than ten rooms that could also be used for church on Sunday.
The next year the church bought a piece of land in nearby Kawangware, purchased a permanent building, and relocated. In its sixth year there were seventeen paid teachers, five non-teaching staff and 445 children.

This is only the beginning of the story for the community, the school and the church. As a direct result of this effort there is a new secondary school in a nearby village with ten staff and sixty students. Another church started a daycare for twenty children whose mothers must work. The original church fellowship grew into a congregation of sixty members and has planted another church of more than forty members. Each of these churches has produced two new churches in different areas.

Six years after the obedient sacrifice of a very small church and its members there is a large visible effect in the communities and churches in this area. In fact transformation in Kagishu was verified as community members suggested renaming the community from Kagishu (which means “the knife”) to Ruita (which means “removing something dangerous”).

**LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

- What happened in this story?
- How big was the church?
- What was the impact of their actions?

In one village it was the tradition when the crops were harvested that the community members would gather together to help in each other’s fields. However, the person whose field was being harvested had to provide a large meal and drinks for each of the days the community members were helping with the harvest. Unfortunately, the cost of the meal meant that often the land owner would make very little profit from their harvest.

The church decided as an Act of Love they would help some of the poorest families in the community to harvest their land without requiring anything in the way of payment. Instead they would bring their own food to eat at lunchtime. As other community members started to see the way the church was serving the poor, they decided they should also help one another without requiring a large meal and drinks.

Nowadays everyone helps each other to harvest their crops. No one has to provide any alcohol or food. The profit the farmers make from their land has increased significantly, and as a result, they now have enough to eat for the whole year.

- What did the church do to help in this community?
- What was the impact? What changes did it make to the whole community?

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

- What are some things our church could do to serve the community?
- How can our church help individuals to be able to live according to God’s intentions?
Lesson 7: The Truth Centered Transformation Program

Key Objectives

1. The Truth Centered Transformation Program is about equipping churches to transform their communities.

Materials

1. Project Vision
2. Church Transforms Community poster
3. Future Training Topics

Introduction

Have two volunteers stand at opposite ends of a table. Ask them to pull the table in opposite directions. After a minute or two, ask them to carry it in the same direction.

• Which was easier — going in the same direction or in opposite directions?

For the last few lessons we have talked about the Kingdom of God. Our desire as an organization is to help build God’s Kingdom here on earth. Our vision for the program is (hold up the poster or write on the board):

Equipping Churches to Transform Their Community

Our vision is what we want to see as a result of partnering with you. As you listen, think about whether this is something with which you also want to be involved. Remember the example of the table. When was it easier? When the people were going in the same direction. It is the same with partnering together. If we are trying to achieve different goals then we are going to get frustrated with each other. We would not be good partners. If we agree on the same goal of building God’s Kingdom then we are all pulling in the same direction. We would be good partners.

Project Vision

Equipping Churches to Transform Their Community
Lesson 7: The Truth Centered Transformation Program

Equipping Churches

As mentioned in our last lesson, the church plays a very important role in building God’s Kingdom. The church passes on the vision and teaches and supports the people who do the work. We desire to help churches to fulfill their role. We are not trying to take over from the church or to do their role. (Show Poster 5)

Equipping the church does not mean:

1. We have all the answers—each area and situation is unique. We will learn together how best to help your community.
2. You are lacking or don’t have the ability— we all have unique talents, skills and ability. Using all God has given you, you can transform your community. We will bring you ideas and skills that you may need.
3. We are in control of what happens— this is your church and your community. You know best what needs to be done. In the same way as we suggested Acts of Love, we will make suggestions. However, as with the Acts of Love, we will not tell you exactly what to do. You decide what projects would be best for your area.
4. (THIS MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE EVERYWHERE AND CAN BE SKIPPED) We are starting a denomination or want you to change denominations. The opposite is true. We believe that you should not change denominations or go against your leader. Look at the way that David acted towards Saul: David stayed and played the harp for Saul even when Saul was throwing spears at him. When he was in danger of losing his life, then he left, BY HIMSELF. He did not try and take Saul’s position or ask other people to also leave, even though God had promised him that he would be the future king. When he was given the opportunity, he did not kill Saul but let him live.

We encourage people to follow David’s example. Even if you think your leader is terrible you should continue to serve him and pray for him. If things become too terrible then you can leave, ALONE. Don’t take anyone except your wife and young children. Don’t try to attack your old leader. Like David, we should fear even speaking against a leader.

As leaders in this organization we are disappointed at the way some churches and leaders quickly change denominations. We don’t believe that it honors God. We definitely don’t want you to change denominations. Please try to be a David and stay faithful to your leaders even if it seems difficult. This honors God.

As an organization we do not favor any denomination or belong to any denomination. We work with many different denominations. The members of our leadership team belong to different denominations. We want to see all churches become all that God desires. We believe God can build His Kingdom through all sorts of denominations.

What it does mean:

1. We will train you to transform your community. We are not going to send our staff to your community to transform your community. We believe that the church is God’s instrument for bringing reconciliation so we want to help and support you as you follow His intentions in this way.
2. It is your vision and your plan. We will introduce many ideas, but it is up to you which ideas and plans you implement at your church. You are not forced to do any of them, although if you are serious about seeing God’s Kingdom built in your community, then we would encourage you to implement as many as possible. As we have visited churches in the program we have seen that the ones who applied as much as possible have seen dramatic changes in their community. The ones who did just a few things have only seen a few changes. It’s up to you what you desire. Seeing your community transform does take hard work.

Transforming the Community

The first part of our vision is to equip the church. The next section is what we are equipping the church to do: transform their communities.

Transform

- Why do you think that we use the word transform? What does the word transform mean?

When something transforms, it changes completely in a way so it cannot be changed back. For example, think about a caterpillar and butterfly. The caterpillar transforms into a butterfly. It cannot change back. It is a complete and irreversible change. We also want to see transformation in communities. We want to see communities that have completely changed to live as God intends and do not go back to how they were after a few years.
Lesson 7: The Truth Centered Transformation Program

Areas of Transformation

SMALL GROUPS

Ask each group to think of what changes they would like to see happen in their community under each of the headings—spiritual, social, mental and physical—as a result of this program. Remind the group that social is related to our relationships; for example, marriage, parenting, relationships between neighbours, unity, etc. Physical includes things like money, work, health, etc. They can also refer back to the ideas that they generated in Lesson 1.

When the groups have finished have each group present. Is there anything that every group wrote or most groups wrote? What?

Write the following chart on the board. Ask the group just to start by looking at the topics under the headings social, mental, physical and social. Go through each area discussing these two questions for each topic.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are the differences between the goals that you created and the goals that we mentioned?
- Are there any goals that we mentioned that surprise you or with which you disagree?

Once you have looked at each of the four areas discuss:

- As you look at the two lists of goals do you feel like there is enough similarity for us to be able to work together?
**Method**

This is a training program. We don’t give churches money to implement programs. As we will learn in the next training, much of the reason that we are poor is not because we lack resources. And the ways that we will get out of poverty will not be by receiving resources. If you look at the life of Jesus, He never had anything to give in terms of material possessions. As Peter said in Acts 3:6, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give to you.” In our case what we have to give is knowledge and ideas that we believe will help your community move closer to how God intended it to be. We believe that this training, your sacrifices and efforts, and God’s incredible multiplying power will bring change to our nation.

We offer training to anyone in the church to help you have the ideas and skills that you need to help to bring change to your communities.

**Future Training Topics**

Hold up the poster 7 outlining the next training topics. Explain these are topics we are planning to teach, although there may be changes.

- Module 3 – How Satan’s Lies Affect Us and How to Overcome Them
- Module 4 – Health
- Module 5 – Marriage and Family
- Module 6 – Money Management
- Module 7 – Salt and Light
- Module 8 – Agriculture
- Module 9 – Evangelism
- Module 10 - Living as God Intended

Some of the topics— for example, Health, Marriage and Family, Agriculture and Money Management— include small group training that can be done with the rest of the church and community. As you do each of the trainings, we will teach you how to apply these ideas to your church and community. We will give you various ideas for you to implement.
Lesson 8: Next Steps

Key Objectives

1. We need to make plans and to be intentional about our work.

Materials

1. Handout 8.1 Act of Love Planning Steps

Why Planning is Important

Mr Lim, a farmer, went out to prepare his piece of land for planting but while on his way, he remembered his wife had asked him to feed the chickens, so he went home, got the chicken food and went to feed the chickens. While he was feeding the chickens, he looked at the goat pen and noticed that it was broken. He felt worried that if it wasn’t repaired immediately then the goat may escape. He returned home to look for wire to fix the goat pen. As he didn’t have the right tools, he went to his neighbor’s, Mr. Son, and asked to borrow tools from him. Since he was already visiting he decided to take an extra few minutes to talk to Mr. Son, who was a new Christian in the church and whom he heard was having a difficult time.

At 11:30 Mr. Son’s wife asked if he would like to join them for lunch. Realizing the time he apologized and returned home quickly for lunch with his family. After a short nap he went to finish repairing the goat pen. While completing that job, his wife reminded him that the pump on the well wasn’t working and said that while he had Mr. Son’s tools he should fix it as well. As the day finished, he had almost finished fixing the pump. Yet again, he hasn’t made it to the field for planting, but he felt somewhat satisfied in knowing tomorrow morning he just needs to finish fixing the pump and return the tools and then he can get started on planting.

• What happened in this story?
• Were the things he did bad things or necessary things?
• What will be the end result if the farmer continues to manage his farm like this and never gets the planting done?
• Do you ever have days like this?
• How can we ensure that this doesn’t happen to us?

Many projects run like this farmer’s day. We are so busy doing good things, going from one problem to another that sometimes the most important things don’t get done because we are so consumed by doing the urgent things. As a result, we fail to accomplish the important things in life. Even more worrying, some of our lives are run like this farmer’s life. We are so busy rushing from one place to another without taking time to determine what is really the most important and doing that. The first thing that we need to decide is what are the most important things to be doing. If we know what is important then it helps us to make good decisions about how to spend our time.
What do you think are some of the key things you need to do in the next three months to be successful?

- Teaching others – if we want to get more parts of the body serving we need to teach some of the lessons that we have already learnt.
- Coordinating Acts of Love – we need to continue to do Acts of Love on a regular basis.
- Meeting together regularly.

**Meetings**

You need to choose a group to get together regularly to plan Acts of Love. Typically this is the church committee and can happen during the usual committee meetings if the church committee already meets a few times a month.

- What things should you do when you meet together?
  - PRAY – it is only by God’s strength that we will see our communities transformed. We need to spend time together in prayer if we are serious about transformation.
  - Make decisions about new Acts of Love.
  - Think of ideas for things that you could do to help your community.

At your meetings you should take time to pray and discuss community needs. Pray about if you should help and how. Additionally you should take time to examine the last Act of Love and determine what went well or didn’t go well. Ask yourself what you could do differently next time.

**Acts of Love**

Look at the pictures of your community you made in Lesson 1.

Looking at all the pictures, make a list of all the major changes that need to happen to make each picture a reality.

As a group, pray about how you can start to make one of those changes a reality. Choose one of the changes and together plan an Act of Love to help bring this about.

Review the Acts of Love planning form (next page) and prepare a plan.
Lesson 7: The Truth Centered Transformation Program

Act of Love Planning Steps

Step 1: Prayer
The first thing to do is to pray. Take time now to pray. Ask God to show you what you should do for your Act of Love.

Step 2: Selecting an activity
As a group decide what you could do to show God’s love. Look at some of the ideas that you listed in Lesson 1 and agree on what you feel God is leading you to do.

Once you have selected a topic, make sure that it is something that you can do in just one or two days. If it isn’t, then can you just do one or two steps?

Step 3: Decide what is needed
The next step is to start planning. First we need to decide what we need to do the project – what people are required, what materials, what permission, etc. To help you think about this, you can use the worksheet in your student book. Once you have filled in the first column with everything that you will need, then you can decide who will be responsible and what date it needs to be completed by.

Step 4: Write the Plan
Once you have planned everything that needs to be done, you can write your plan in date order so that you know who is responsible for doing what by when. Choose one person to be the project leader. That person is responsible for contacting the people on the day before they need to complete their task to find out if it is being done, if there are any problems, and if they need any help.

Step 5: Pray
Once you have finished writing the plan take time to pray again. Ask God to help you to complete the activity and to multiply the results, that His name may be glorified. During the next week or two while you are preparing for your Act of Love you should be praying that God would help you with the activity.

Step 6: Do the Act of Love
The next step is to do the Act of Love that you planned. Start the day with prayer and dedicate your efforts to God. Remember that you are doing this to demonstrate God’s love to your community. Try to maintain an attitude that matches this goal.

Step 7: Evaluate and Report
The final step is to report and evaluate. Why do we need to evaluate? Because it helps us to learn; we can think about what we did well and what can we improve on next time. It doesn’t need to be a long process; you can just take a few minutes to discuss these questions:

- What went well?
- What didn’t go well?
- What improvements could you make next time?
- Was the response as you intended? If not, why not?
- Was God glorified?

The trainer has a report form for you. Why do we do a report? In Mark 6:30 we see that the disciples reported to Jesus all that they had done. We report as a matter of faithfulness and gratitude to those that have taught us and prepared materials and trainers for us. Reporting gives you the opportunity to share what you did and give testimony to how God used your efforts. It also gives the trainers the opportunity to see if there were any problems and to be able to serve you better in the future.