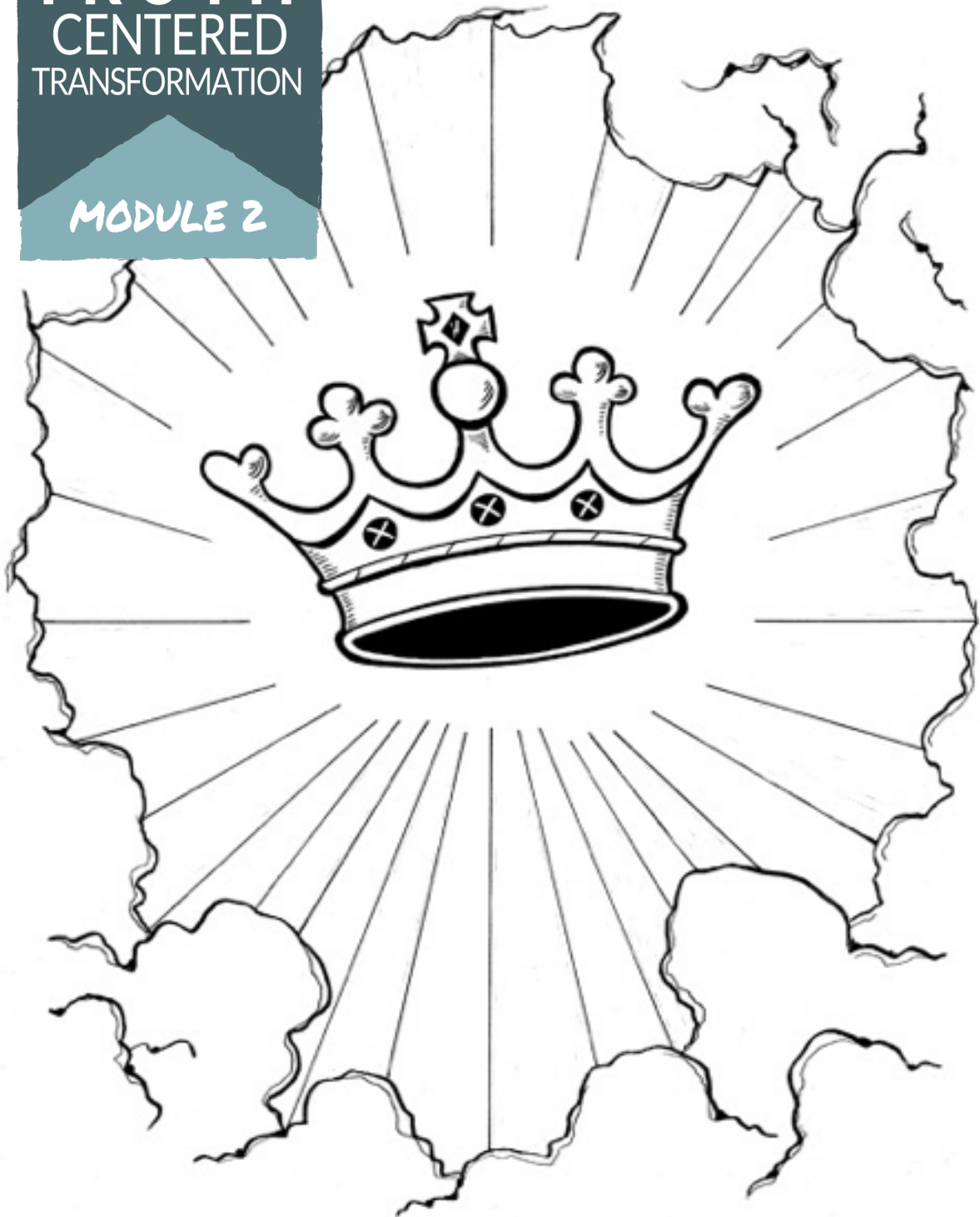


**TRUTH  
CENTERED  
TRANSFORMATION**

**MODULE 2**



# **KINGDOM OF GOD TEACHER GUIDE**

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# Before You Get Started

## Preparing for Teaching a Lesson

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1. Read through the **Teacher's Guide** carefully, several times if possible. Highlight or make notes on the sides of the pages to remind yourself of important points.
2. Look at the **main ideas** 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 them 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

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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 half 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 to do 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 lives – 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 (questions requiring more than a yes/no response)
  - c. Thank people for their participation
  - d. Don't tell people what they can learn better by discovery
  - e. Build on what people already know and recognize their experiences
  - f. Be patient and wait for people to respond
7. Encourage everyone to be participating, sharing and contributing to the discussions. Find ways to gently encourage shy people to participate without embarrassing them.
8. Pray throughout the day for God to reveal new things to you and the students.

## How to Use This Teacher's Guide

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1. **Main Ideas and Materials:** Each lesson begins with this section.
  - a. **Main Ideas** – These are the most important ideas that the students should clearly understand by the end of each lesson. At the end of the lesson take time to review and make sure the students understood these ideas.
  - b. **Materials** - The specific materials needed are listed for each lesson. You can choose to provide copies of the entire Student Guide to each participant or make the minimal number of copies as suggested in each lesson. If you do not use the Student Guide, you can write verses and questions on a whiteboard or poster or write the verses on small pieces of paper for each group. We also recommend having poster paper, a whiteboard, or a chalkboard to use with the large group.
  - c. This Teacher Guide will indicate when to use these:
    - i. **STUDENT GUIDES** – will be labelled like this.
    - ii. **VISUAL AIDS** – will be labelled like this.
2. **Facilitator Instructions:** There are special instructions in the lesson to help you lead the training well. These are not meant to be shared with the students. Read these ahead so you are prepared to lead discussions and activities. Some questions will also have italicized answers to help you as a facilitator know what ideas to emphasize with the students. These are not the only good answers, just some good answers.
3. **Managing Time Frames 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 time frame.
  - 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

## Main Idea

The Kingdom of God is wherever Jesus is King and His laws are followed. The Kingdom grows when more people come to obey God and when we obey Him more completely.

**Materials:** None

## What is the Kingdom of God?

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

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 encouraged to pray for it.

- Do you know what it is?

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

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?

### REPORT BACK

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. In fact, this was the topic that Jesus taught about in his last 40 days. Obviously if you know you only have 40 days to teach people, then what you teach is clearly very important. It should be important to us as well. However, many of us don't understand the phrase "the Kingdom of God."

### PAIRS ACTIVITY

- How you would describe the Kingdom of God to a new Christian?

### REPORT BACK

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

## Jesus our King

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- How does a king usually act?
- Do you think Jesus is like an earthly king? How is He the same? How is He different?

Jesus is a LOVING King. He knows everything. He is all powerful; He created the world. He has perfect knowledge; He knows how everything works best. He wants what is best for the world and all of us in it. His rules are for our good.

Listen to this story about the previous King of Thailand.

Thailand is a kingdom! The previous king, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, was a wonderful King and loved by all the people. Even though he has now passed away, the people still speak of him with great affection. He said he liked the colour yellow, so the people all wore yellow shirts on Mondays. He said his wife liked purple, so many people wore purple shirts on Fridays. He was **so loved and admired** that just saying he liked a colour affected how people dressed.

At one time during his reign, 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.

- How did the king's desires impact their behaviour?
- Have you ever known a king like this?
- Why did the people listen to the king? Was it out of fear or love?
- Do we treat King Jesus like the Thai people treated their King? Do we seek to please Him in all that we do?

We are a part of the Kingdom of God, and Jesus is our King. We should seek to please our King Jesus 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 colour he can impact the way people dress, shouldn't our lives be even more impacted by our love for King Jesus?

## God's Call to Build His Kingdom

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Matthew 6:9-10

- What does Jesus ask us to pray for?
  - *His Kingdom to come and His will to be done.*

God wants to build His Kingdom here on earth. There are two main ways we can build God's Kingdom.

1. Increasing the number of people in God's Kingdom by seeing people saved.
2. Seeing God's will done more and more by people.

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 be living as God intended in ALL areas of our lives. In a later training we will look at evangelism in detail. But for now it's important to remember we need to share the good news of Jesus with those who are not yet Christians.

## God's Call to Obey in ALL Things

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Colossians 3:17 and 1 Corinthians 10:31.

God wants us to please and honour Him at all times. These verses tell us that, whatever we do, we should do it to bring glory to God. Both verses repeat 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.' Paul repeats this because he wants us to understand that in EVERYTHING we should bring glory to God.

- How do you think that we could bring glory to God in the way that we eat?
  - *Eat with gratitude, not complaining. Thank God for what you have.*
  - *Encourage one another as you eat*
  - *Invite others who may not have enough or need encouragement to eat with you*
  - *Make sure that the food available is distributed fairly amongst family members*

**SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY**

**Facilitator Instructions:** Draw the following chart on the board. Go through the first two examples together. Then work together as a class to list 10 more common activities. Divide the class into small groups and give each small group some of the activities to discuss what would they put in the second and third column.

For each activity think about:

- What is the typical attitude of people doing this task?
- How you can do it to bring Glory to God?

Activity	Typical Attitude	Future Actions to Glorify God
Washing the dishes or clothes	<i>Done quickly and complain</i>	<i>I will do a better job to make them as clean as possible. I will sing a song to God, thanking Him that I can work, and that this work is for Him.</i>
Weeding the field	<i>Many weeds are left because it is hard work. People often start late and don't finish the job.</i>	<i>I will start early and remove ALL of the weeds. I will sing a song to God while I work and take pride that I have done a good job for my family and God.</i>

**Conclusion**

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Jesus is our King. He is a loving, powerful, wise King. He desires the best of His people. As His followers we are to obey His rules in every area of our lives. One of those rules is to bring glory to Him in all that we do.

**INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION**

Review the daily activity list. Choose 2 daily activities in which you want to bring God more glory. Commit to working on these areas over the next few months.

**PRAYER**

Take time to pray that God will help us to build His Kingdom and put our plans into action.

# Lesson 2: Kingdom Culture

## Main Idea

The Bible teaches us how to live as Kingdom people.

## Materials

1. Student Guide: Kingdom Values worksheet (Print this for each group)

## Seek First the Kingdom of God

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Matthew 6:25-33.

- What were the people worried about?
- Are these spiritual things or common things?
- What was Jesus response?
- 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). One of the ways we can know how to seek first the Kingdom of God is to look at His life.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Look at these verses. What do they teach us about some of the things Jesus did?

- Mark 6:3 – *Jesus was a carpenter.*
- John 21:9-14 – *Jesus cooked a meal for the disciples.*
- Mark 1:35 – *Jesus prayed alone.*
- Mark 4:38 – *Jesus rested.*
- John 2:1-2 – *Jesus attended a wedding.*
- Mark 2:15 – *Jesus was eating at a friend's house. (And many people were there. It was a dinner party.)*
- Matthew 14:14 – *Jesus healed people.*
- Mark 1:39 – *Jesus travelled, taught, and drove out demons.*

Jesus did everything from teaching the crowds to cooking a meal for the disciples to being a carpenter. At all these times He was leading the perfect life, not just when He was teaching or healing. There was never a moment in Jesus' life when He was outside of God's will for His life.

As we try to 'seek first the Kingdom of God', that doesn't mean that we just pray all the time or just preach. It means that we do everything in ways that please God and bring glory to Him.

## Our Source

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- How can we learn to live in ways that please God?
  - *The Bible!*



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 community changed.

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (Optional)**

- What are some instructions, rules, or commands that you have seen in the Bible?
- How do you think these instructions might be for our good?

**REPORT BACK**

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

God has given us the Bible, which tells us how we should live in a way that pleases God. If we are going to obey God in every area of our lives, then we need to understand what the Bible is teaching us. How is it the same or different from our traditions or culture? We need to know God’s ways if we are going to build God’s Kingdom here on Earth.

**SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY**

**Facilitator Instructions:** Start by doing the first line as an example for the large group. Then divide into small groups. Give each group 3-4 lines to work on and let them know, if they finish early, they can choose some other lines to fill in.

Fill in the table in the **STUDENT GUIDE**. 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.

**REPORT BACK**

When the small groups have finished, go through the table line by line, and have the groups that filled in that line share.

Value	Scripture	Our Culture/ Tradition	God’s Kingdom
How should leaders behave	Matthew 20:25-28	The people serve the leaders. The leaders tell people what to do.	Leaders serve people
How we should act as a husband	Colossians 3:19 1 Peter 3:7 Ephesians 5:25, 28, 33		
How we should act as a wife	Genesis 2:18 Ephesians 5:22-24, 33		
How we should treat children	Psalms 127:3 Ephesians 6:4		

How to treat people	Matthew 22:36-40 Luke 10:25-37		
How to treat enemies	Luke 6:27-31		
Our attitude toward work	Colossians 3:22-4:1 Ephesians 6:7-8		
Our attitude toward the environment	Psalms 24:1 Genesis 1:28-30 Genesis 2:15		
The most important thing	Matthew 6:25-34 Matthew 22:36-40		
Our attitude toward death and dying	John 11:25-26 Hebrews 2:14-15 Revelation 1:17-18		
Our attitude toward suffering	Luke 6:22-23 2 Corinthians 1:8-11		

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Which of these were your culture and God’s Kingdom most similar? Which were most different?
- Are there other areas that you can think of where our culture and what the Bible says is different?
- How can we start to change our lives so that our lives better reflect what the Bible tells us we should be doing?

### Conclusion

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There are many wonderful things about our culture. Some cultures teach people to serve one another, some teach about the importance of family and caring for your elders. Some encourage hard work and using what God has given us well. But all cultures also have some areas that are not aligned with the Bible. If we want to walk in obedience to God, we need to look for places where the Bible is different from our culture. Try to think about how you can be more like the Bible teaches and not just follow your culture.

Look back on the chart we made earlier; are there one or two areas that you can personally try to change?

# Lesson 3: A Biblical Understanding of Work

**Main Idea:** All types of work can bring glory to God. We need to do our work in ways that honour God.

## Materials

1. Student Guide: Biblical Understanding of Work Questions

## Introduction

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

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

Read Genesis 1:28.

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

Read Genesis 2:2.

- What does God rest from?

Read 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.

## The Dignity of Work

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In the book of Ruth, we learn that Ruth 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.

Read Ruth 2:15-16.

- What did Boaz do to help Ruth?
- 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.*

## God Intends for Us to Work Diligently

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### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

**Facilitator Instructions:** Use the **STUDENT GUIDE** for the small group discussion questions.

What are some reasons to work? Read the following verses and any ideas you have so far from this lesson.

- 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 – *Your life will win respect of others and you won't be dependent.*
- 1 Timothy 5:8 – *To provide for your family.*
- Ephesians 4:28 – *To have something to give to those in need.*

## REPORT BACK

## LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Do you think God intends for us to work?
- What attitude do people typically have towards work?
- What attitude do you think we should have about work?

God intends for us all to work. Even before sin entered the world Adam was given a job as a gardener. As we work, we are able to provide for our families and give to the poor and the church. Work brings dignity and allows us to serve one another through our skills.

## All Types of Work Honour God

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- In our culture, are there some types of work that are more important than others? What makes them more important?
- What job did God give Adam? (*To work the garden and name the animals - Genesis 2:15-20*)
- What job did God give Noah? (*To build an ark - Genesis 6:13-14*)
- What job did God give Gideon? (*To lead the battle against the enemy of Israel - Judges 6:14*)
- What job did God give Moses? (*To bring God's people out of Egypt - Exodus 3:10*)
- Do you think God would have preferred if these people had led a church or preached a sermon 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 influenced Christians until the time of the Reformation. The Greeks believed spiritual things were higher and more honouring 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. 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 honourable job, so is gardening, farming, 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.

## Brother Lawrence

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

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

**Facilitator Instructions:** Use the **STUDENT GUIDE** for the small group discussion questions.

- 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 praying of the monks in the chapel?

- Read the following verses and think how they apply to this situation:
  - 1 Corinthians 10:31
  - Colossians 3:23

### REPORT BACK

After ten years of being in the kitchen, Brother Lawrence realized he could serve and worship God no matter where he was. **What had changed?** He now knew that HOW he did his work, and his ATTITUDE towards his work was how he could honour and glorify God!

Brother Lawrence remained in the kitchen, but now felt he was as much in God's presence there—living in obedience to God and serving God washing those dishes—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, any work we do can be used to bring glory to God.

### PARTNER DISCUSSION

- If all work can honour God, then how does that affect the way you think about your work?
- Does this impact the way you do your work?

## God Cares About How We Do Our Work

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While the Bible never suggests some jobs are more important or less important, the Bible DOES have 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.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Look at the following verses. What do these verses teach us about work? Summarise the main idea in one sentence on the **STUDENT GUIDE**.

- 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 – *If you don't work, you don't eat.*
- Proverbs 10:4 – *Lazy hands bring poverty, diligent hands bring wealth.*
- Proverbs 19:15 – *Laziness brings on sleep and the hunger.*
- Proverbs 21:25 – *Those who refuse to work will bring on their own death.*

What do you think this verse teaches us about how we should do work?

- Colossians 3:23 – *Work as if working for God.*

### REPORT BACK

The Bible is very clear—we need to work hard and not be lazy. We need to do our work as if God is our boss!

### 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.

### **SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY**

**Facilitator Instructions:** Ask each group to choose a job (for example: teacher, farmer, cleaner) 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 DISCUSSION**

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?

## **Conclusion**

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### **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 honour Him more.

# Lesson 4: Kingdom Communities

**Main Idea:** The Kingdom of God should impact not only our own lives but our communities as well.

## Materials

1. Student Guide: The Kingdom on Earth Discussion Questions
2. Large sheets of paper
3. Crayons or markers

## Jesus as a Community Leader

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Can you imagine Jesus as the leader of your community?

- What do you think He would change?
- What would stay the same?

**Facilitator Instructions:** *If the group only focuses on changing political leaders, remind them that Jesus didn't change the political leaders while He was on earth. The disciples all expected Him to overthrow the political structure; however, He didn't.*

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?

## The Kingdom on Earth

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In the Bible we do see an example of what it would be like if a community of believers started to obey God in all things and formed God's Kingdom.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Acts 2:42-47, Acts 4:32-35 and answer the questions on the **STUDENT GUIDE**.

- What did the new believers do?
  - *Committed themselves to following the apostles teaching (obeying God's ways), met together regularly, shared with each other, prayed, praised God, gave to those in need, shared the gospel.*
- Are these spiritual or physical things? *(Both)*
- What was the result?
  - *No one was in need, other people looked on them favourably, and more people became believers.*
- What results should we see in our communities when we have fellowship like the early believers did?

### REPORT BACK

## LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Imagine if our communities were like those of the early church—that many were coming to Christ and walking in obedience to Him, that we were sharing what we had, and that there were no needy amongst us. This is not an unrealistic dream. It happened in the time of the early church, but we have also seen it today in communities around the world.

Let's read the stories of two areas that have been seeking to build God's Kingdom.

**Story 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. Sara, one of the more outspoken women, described a village where there was unity and solidarity. She knew Jesus was not honoured 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. Sara 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.

**Story 2:** 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 mobilised 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, one of the women 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 highway workers who were repairing a road nearby willingly came with a bulldozer and levelled the ground of the property at no cost. With God's help the small group of rural Christian women discovered and collected resources, saved money, solved dilemmas, and built a community market. Their spiritual lives grew as they served others on behalf of Jesus.

- What happened in each of the stories?
- Because of the people in the stories, did the communities move closer to how Jesus intended them to live? Why?
- What were some of the activities the groups did?
- How could you do the same in your community?

All of us can be involved in seeing our community become more like God intends.

## Community Change in All Four Areas

In this programme our focus is on living as God intends and helping others to do the same. As we do, we will see changes to our communities.

## LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Do you remember the four ways that we should grow like Jesus did? (Luke 2:52)
  - *Mental, physical, social, and spiritual*



As we obey God in every area of our lives, we will see the Kingdom of God built in our community. One framework that we can use to think about the different areas that we want to see our community change or grow to become more like God's intentions is by looking at each of the four areas—mental, physical, social, and spiritual

### **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

**Facilitator Instructions:** Ask each group to think of what changes they would like to see happen in their community under each of the headings—mental, physical, social, and spiritual (on flip chart or other paper). Remind the group that social is related to our relationships (for example, marriage, parenting, relationships between neighbours, and unity in the church). Physical includes things like money, work, and health. They can also refer back to the ideas that they generated in the first part of this lesson—Jesus as the leader of our community.

### **REPORT BACK**

### **LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

In our programme we often see these changes. Are there things that you would also like to see happen?

1. Spiritual
  - a. People coming to Christ – Evangelism
  - b. Increased maturity - Discipleship
2. Physical
  - a. Improved housing
  - b. Improved livelihoods – Agriculture/roads and better money management
  - c. Improved health
3. Social
  - a. Improved community and government relationships
  - b. Improved marriages
  - c. Improved parenting
4. Mental
  - a. Education for adults and children
  - b. Increased knowledge and skills

## **Conclusion**

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### **LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

God also longs to see our community transformed to become more like His Kingdom. Jesus encouraged us to pray that 'His Kingdom would come on earth as 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 lives in complete obedience to God in all four areas? There would be happy families and friendly neighbours, 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? Why?

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:

1. How can I build God's Kingdom today?
2. What can I do to increase God's Kingdom?

3. How can I live according to God's rules?
4. How can I help my family / community to do the same?

**SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY**

- Think of two things you can do this week to help bring God's Kingdom to your community.

Pray together asking God for His help to bring His Kingdom to your community.

# Lesson 5: Building God's Kingdom by Serving Others

**Main Idea:** As we serve others we will see our communities become more and more like God's Kingdom

**Materials:**

1. Student Guide: Mrs. Lee Stories and Needy Family Discussion Questions
2. Student Guide: One Christian Family Makes a Difference Story and Questions

## Start with You and Your Family

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Building God's Kingdom follows a simple model:

**Facilitator Instructions:** Draw this model on the board or on a poster.

You → Your Family → Your Community → Your Nation

#### 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 your nation is to examine yourself. Are you trying to be obedient to God in every area of your life?

#### 2. Teach and encourage your family

As you start to obey God in every area of your life, you need to encourage your family to do the same.

#### 3. Ask God to use you to love 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.

#### 4. 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.

## Learning to Serve Others

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In this lesson we are going to look at how we can serve others in our community—how we can help others without spending a lot of money or creating dependency.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Imagine there was a needy family in your community. What are some of the things that you could do to help that family?

### REPORT BACK

Mrs. Lee is a real woman in Asia, but her name has been changed. She longed to help the poor families in her community, especially those without work. She started to visit some of the families every month looking for ways to help them make a living. Here are three of the many stories of how she has been able to help families. These stories are all true.

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

In your groups read the three Mrs. Lee stories in the **STUDENT GUIDE** and answer the questions.

### Story 1 – Mrs. Lee and the flower garden

In her area, there was a poor family with two children. Both mother and father were unemployed. Mrs. Lee stopped by to visit and noticed there was a small piece of land with soil in front of their home. 'Why don't you plant some flowers?' she asked. 'You can make your home more beautiful and also sell them in the market nearby.'

The mother in this family did just that and began taking the flowers she grew to the market where she sold them. She soon found that buyers were asking for other types of flowers as well, but she only had a small piece of land and couldn't plant any other types. This mother, however, began purchasing flowers from other growers and selling them, alongside hers, for a profit. Now that she had a small space in the market to sell her flowers, she thought to herself, 'I could sell other things as well!' She wakes up early every morning to buy bananas and coconuts to sell at the market at her flower stand.

### Story 2 – Mrs. Lee and the sweet potatoes

Another family that needed help wanted to work but didn't know what to do and didn't have any special skills. They did work as daily labourers, but they often weren't able to find work. Mrs. Lee could see that this family was hard working and really did want to work, so she went to visit another family in the church that were sweet potato farmers. She asked them whether sweet potato farming was profitable, if there was a good market, and what supplies are needed to start sweet potato farming.

When she learned that it was a good job, she explained to the family that God has called us to love our neighbours and look after the poor. She asked them if they would be willing to teach the poor family how to be sweet potato farmers. They agreed. Mrs. Lee introduced the two families. The poor family was excited that now they would be able to do something, and they quickly went and rented a small piece of land and everything that was necessary to start. At the end of the year, they had a good harvest and were able to pay the rent on the land, the money for the seed, and still have a good profit for the family.

### Story 3 – Mrs. Lee and family reconciliation

The third family Mrs. Lee wanted to help had been separated from their parents. The parents believed that their son and his family were useless and wouldn't amount to anything. Mrs. Lee met with the family to try and reconcile the two sides. Mrs. Lee guaranteed that she would meet regularly with the family and help them to improve their lives if the parents were willing to accept the family back and help them a little. As a result, the parents decided to trust their son again and decided to loan him some money so he could start a scrap metal business. He now buys old, used things which are made of iron and sells them to the local recycling shop. Now he is able to support his family and feels like he has dignity.

1. What did Mrs. Lee do for each of the families?
  - *Gave advice and encouragement*
  - *Visited others, such as the family who grew sweet potatoes, to learn if it was profitable and if they would be willing to help.*
2. What was the result of Mrs. Lee's actions?
  - *People had jobs and were able to provide for their family.*
  - *People had pride because they were able to do something to help themselves.*
3. What would have happened if Mrs. Lee had just given money or food to each of these people?
  - *They wouldn't have changed.*
4. If Mrs. Lee had given them money each week for two years and then stopped, do you think that their lives would have improved as much as they did?

- *No, they would have gotten used to Mrs. Lee giving them money and would have relied on that rather than working.*
5. What is the difference between helping with money and the way that Mrs. Lee helped?
    - *She gave people skills and a practical way to help themselves.*
  6. Imagine if many of us started acting like Mrs. Lee—visiting families and listening, looking and trying to understand their problems, and then looking for solutions. What would be the impact on your community?

## REPORT BACK

### A Family in Need

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#### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Imagine there is a family that lives near your church. The husband is usually gone, but once every month or two he returns for a few days and brings back a little money for the family. The wife looks after their three children and none of them attend school. Usually, the children are running around barefoot and wearing very old clothes. Their house is extremely run down and leaks terribly in the rain. Sometimes the children can be heard crying because they are hungry.

- What are some of the needs that this family has?

More than anything, this woman probably feels hopeless. Many people who aren't working aren't necessarily lazy as we might expect. Often, they are overwhelmed by the difficulties of life and have trouble believing that they can change anything. Your most important job is to help them see that the situation can change by helping them to start changing. While a small gift of rice to this family is okay, if you do that more than once you are just encouraging them to believe that they are hopeless. What they need is hope that life can change.

#### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

**Facilitator Instructions:** Use the **STUDENT GUIDE: A Family in Need Discussion Questions**.

- What is a way that you could help by being like Mrs. Lee to this family?

Possible Answers:

- *Help the wife and younger children to earn some money. Do they have some land or any special skills?*
- *Help the younger children go to school. Take the mother with you to talk to people at the local government office and see if they can get a free school pass or if there is a literacy program running in your area. Find out what help is available.*
- *Collect used clothing at the church and try to provide some basic clothing for each of the children.*
- *Start visiting with the mother on a regular basis and encourage her to see that life can be different.*
- *Help the family to rebuild the house. Ask a few people from the church to come and help with the work, but use the materials that the family has and the labour of the children. Eight-year-olds have plenty of energy!*
- *Encourage the family to start a small garden to grow vegetables so that they have a better diet.*
- *Offer the family a few chicks and get someone in the church to help them learn about chicken farming. If necessary, keep the chickens at your house so the family isn't tempted to eat them immediately and ask one of the children to come every day to collect the eggs and look after the chickens. Make sure you teach them how to look after the chickens well.*
- *Contact the husband and wife's family. Can they help in any way?*
- *Help the family to better plan how to use the husband's money. Can they invest it into something else that will give them more money in the future? How can they better make it last for the whole time?*

## Communities

### SMALL or LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

**Facilitator Instructions:** For literate groups, use the **STUDENT GUIDE** and ask the students to read the story and discuss questions in groups. For non-literate groups read the story to the class to discuss.

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

#### One Christian Family Makes a Difference

This is the story of how one Christian family helped to build God's Kingdom in a non-Christian village. The village was located in the Himalayan mountains. A few kilometres 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 jobs.

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 up the mountain, 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 kilometres 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 kilometres 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 neighbours by sharing what they had learned. They had a very clean compound with a cooking house that had a raised fireplace, which made cooking easier and used less firewood. 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 have worms or diarrhoea as often as other children in the village.

Lepcha installed gutters on the tin roof of his house and placed rain collection barrels under them to collect water when the sporadic rains came. Others copied this idea and, now when it rains, they too have water.

Lepcha then 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 arrived, 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 them.

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.

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

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

## Conclusion

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Lepcha and Mrs. Lee are just two models of how to help others. In both we are reminded that we don't help others by giving things but by spending time with people, understanding their situation, building relationships, encouraging, teaching, and modelling change.

### SMALL GROUPS DISCUSSION

- Think about your community. Is there a family that you could serve? What are some ways you could serve them?
- Are there some good practices that you could put into action? What might you do?

### REPORT BACK

# Lesson 6: God's Wisdom and God's Power

**Main Idea:** If we want to see our community change, we need God's wisdom and power. Only God can transform a community.

## Materials

- Student Guide: God's Wisdom
- Student Guide: God's Multiplication Bible Stories

## Introduction

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### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Imagine you had just been elected as the leader of your community and asked to oversee the project of changing your community into a model community for your area. (A model community is an example of what a perfect community would be like so everyone can learn from you.)

- What are some of the resources that you would need? Try to think about everything including experts, money, new roads, etc.

### REPORT BACK

**Facilitator Instructions:** As you listen to the reports, thank everyone for their efforts. Make a note of any groups that mention ideas like prayer, God's power, God's wisdom, etc. If no groups mention any of these topics, then ask the class if they can think of anything they may have forgotten.

Read 2 Chronicles 7:14.

- What do we need to do to see our land healed?
  - Pray, seek God's face, and turn from our wicked ways.
- Who needs to do these things?
  - God's people
- As we do these things what will God do?
  - Hear, forgive, and heal our land!

We cannot transform our community or build God's Kingdom by ourselves. We already know the many efforts that we or the government or others have made. But we have not seen our community transformed. We may have seen some good changes, but complete transformation needs God's help. We need His wisdom and His power to overcome some of the obstacles that we see. As we pray and walk-in obedience to God, we will see our community change.

## God's Wisdom

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### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

**Facilitator Instructions:** Use the **STUDENT GUIDE** to assign each group a passage and questions to discuss or write each passage and its questions on separate papers. Then give each group one paper to read and discuss. If some groups finish early, have them trade sheets with each other.

Read 1 Kings 3:7-14.

- What did Solomon ask for?



- *Discernment to govern, a discerning heart*
- What was God's reaction?
  - *He was pleased. He promised to give him more discernment than anyone else before or after and to also give him wealth and honour and a long life.*

Read James 1:5.

- What does James tell us to ask for?
  - *wisdom*
- How does God respond according to James?
  - *He gives generously without seeing our faults.*

Read Psalm 81:11-16.

- What did the people of Israel fail to do?
  - *Listen to God (verse 11 and 13)*
- What would God have done if they had listened?
  - *Overcome their enemies and foes*
  - *Feed them with the finest food*

Read Isaiah 55:8-9.

- How does God describe His ways and His thoughts?
  - *His thoughts and ways are higher than our thoughts or ways.*

#### **REPORT BACK**

- What can we learn from all of these verses?

The Bible makes it clear that God wants us to ask for wisdom. He is happy when we do and generously gives wisdom. But if we fail to listen to God, then we miss out. God always knows better than us. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. His ways are higher than our ways.

#### **LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

Let's hear a story of how God gave wisdom in one community.

In one community their dream was to have a tractor. They had drawn it in their plan, but it seemed impossible that they would ever have enough money to buy one. Each month as they gathered, they would pray and ask God what they could do next to see their community become more like God intended.

One time as they were gathered, they felt like God spoke to them and said, 'If you widen the walking track to the crop area, then I will give you a tractor.' The church immediately responded and widened the 3-kilometre road so that it would fit a cart.

That year everyone could grow so much more, since they didn't have to carry the harvest out on their backs. And with the crops on carts, they were able to transport it more quickly. They took more to the market to sell, and it was much fresher when it got there, so they were able to get a better price. The villagers were so grateful to the church they brought them some of the extra profit. It was a large sum of money!

The church prayed and asked God how they should use the money, and He reminded them that He had promised them a tractor. The money was to buy that tractor.

- How did the church know what to do?
- What was the church's response to what God was showing them to do?
- What happened in the end?

This is a simple story of a church's obedience to God. But look how it starts. Each month they gathered and asked God what to do next. We need to be the same, we need to make sure we are gathering regularly to ask God what to do. Sometimes God might give us a very clear direction. Other times we just need to do the thing that seems like the best idea, trusting that God will show us if we choose the wrong thing. But every month we need to come back to God to ask for wisdom. Remember His ways are always higher than our ways.

## God's Multiplication

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Remember back to the story of the tractor.

- What did the people do in the story?
  - *They asked God for wisdom, and they widened the walking track.*
- What did God do?
  - *He gave them the idea, and He caused the people in the village to be generous towards the church so they were able to buy the tractor.*
- If they hadn't widened the walking track would they have a tractor?
  - *NO*

Almost always God has a part for us to play in building His Kingdom. We need to start by asking for wisdom, but we also need to do what He shows us to do. In the majority of Bible stories, the people had to obey God first before they saw the miracle.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

**Facilitator Instructions:** Divide the class into small groups of 3-5 people. Assign each group stories to read so that there is at least one group studying each story. Use the **STUDENT GUIDE** or make cards with each passage and questions to give to each group.

### David & Goliath

The Philistine and Israelites were at battle. The Philistines sent a giant named Goliath into battle and declared that the Israelites had to send someone to fight him. If that person won, then the Philistines would lose the war and leave Israel. If Goliath won, then the Israelites would lose the war and become slaves to the Philistines. David was too young to go to battle, but when he heard Goliath mocking God he volunteered to fight.

Read 1 Samuel 17:32-49.

- What did David do?
  - *He volunteered to fight Goliath.*
  - *He declared that God would give him victory.*
  - *He decided not to wear the king's armour. He used the tools he was used to—stones and a sling.*
- Why did David do it?
  - *He believed that God would rescue Israel, and he wanted to demonstrate the power of God.*
- What was the result?
  - *He succeeded in killing Goliath. Israel won the war.*
- Do you think this would have happened if David hadn't gone to fight?
  - *Probably not. God had not intervened before David came along.*

### Elisha and the Widow

Read 2 Kings 4:1-7.

- What was the situation of the widow?
  - *She had debt she couldn't pay. Her sons were to become slaves.*

- What did she do?
  - *She asked the prophet of God to help her.*
  - *She collected jars from her neighbours. She followed Elijah's instructions.*
- What did God do?
  - *Multiplied the olive oil to fill many jars.*
- What was the result?
  - *The debt was paid and her sons were saved.*

### **Jericho**

Read Joshua 6:1-5, 12-14, 15-17, 20.

- What did God show them to do?
  - *March around the city and blow trumpets.*
- What did they do?
  - *They obeyed God's directions*
- What was the result?
  - *They won the battle. The walls of the city collapsed.*

### **Naaman**

This is the story of Naaman. He was the commander of the army of Syria—a very powerful man. However, he had leprosy and heard that in Israel there was a prophet that could heal him. So he went to meet Elisha the prophet.

Read 2 Kings 5:9-14.

- What did Elisha tell him to do?
  - *Bathe in the Jordan river seven times.*
- What was Naaman's reaction?
  - *He was angry. The instructions didn't make sense to him, so he didn't want to obey.*
- What happened when Naaman obeyed?
  - *He was healed.*

### **REPORT BACK**

Sometimes the things that God tells us to do don't make sense to us. But almost always God has a part to play in seeing our community healed. We need to start by obeying the directions that He has given us—even if it feels small or irrelevant—and trust that, as we are obedient, God will bring healing to our community.

### **LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION**

Listen to this story.

#### **Building Materials**

In one TCT community, the church felt God challenging them to build stable homes for everyone in the community. They did a survey of the area and decided there were 35 houses that were about to fall down and needed to be rebuilt or repaired. Over time, the church members collected resources and volunteered their time to complete the work. They were able to finish 17 of the 35 homes. However, after completing the 17th house, they realized they had no resources left to rebuild the remaining 18 houses. Rather than becoming discouraged and giving up on the task they had set out to complete, the church members decided to get together to pray and fast one night to ask God to help them finish the project.

The next morning as they left the church, large trucks filled with building materials pulled up outside the church and started dumping their loads. Confused, the church members rushed to tell the truck drivers that they had the wrong address. No one had ordered any building materials, and no one there was able to pay for all these supplies. The truck drivers quickly responded that the materials were the church's responsibility now,

and if they didn't want the materials, they would have to move them. Further discussion revealed that the materials were surplus from a nearby warehouse, and they were being disposed of to make space for new materials. When the church leaders asked the truck drivers why they had dumped the materials there in front of the church, the drivers simply replied, "We were tired of driving, and just felt like dumping the materials so we could get back to the warehouse."

So the church received all these building materials for free. It miraculously turned out to be enough to finish the rest of the houses for the community.

- Why did the church want to build a house for everyone?
- What did the church do?
- What did God do?
- Do you think that God would have provided the materials if the church hadn't done what they were able to (building 17 houses) first?

Similar to the passages we looked at in the Bible, God multiplied their efforts after they had done what they could—not before. There are times when God may surprise us out of His loving grace, but typically—as we see in scripture—He looks for us to obey first.

## Prayer

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Let's read the following verses. What do they teach us about prayer?

- John 14:13
- John 15:8
- John 16:23-24

Look again at the list of changes you long to see in your community that you made in Lesson 4. (If you have lost this list, then make another list of changes you long for in your community—think about mental, physical, spiritual, and social changes).

- Do you think these are changes that God would also want to see in your community?
- Are they building His Kingdom?

### PRAY

Let's take time to pray together to ask God to bring these changes to our community.

**Facilitator Instructions:** *Once you have had a time of prayer, pause for a few minutes to be silent before God. Instruct people to ask God if there is anything that He wants to show them or any wisdom that He wants to give to begin to make these changes. Allow for 2-5 minutes of silence, then ask the group if there was anything that they felt God was showing them.*

## Conclusion

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some of the key ideas that we learned in this lesson?
- How can we be more faithful as a group to take time to pray and listen to God?
- As we prayed today, is there anything God showed us that we need to do? (If so, take time to make a plan to put that into action.)

# Lesson 7: The Church's Role in Building the Kingdom of God

## Main Ideas

1. The church plays an essential role in building God's Kingdom in our communities.
2. Every person in the church is important and all should be involved in building God's Kingdom in some way.

## Materials

1. Visual Aid – The Church's Role in Building God's Kingdom poster
2. Visual Aid – Parts of the Body cards (14) (cut apart)

## Introduction

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

In lesson 5 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 fulfil the work of Jesus*

Read Ephesians 3:10.

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

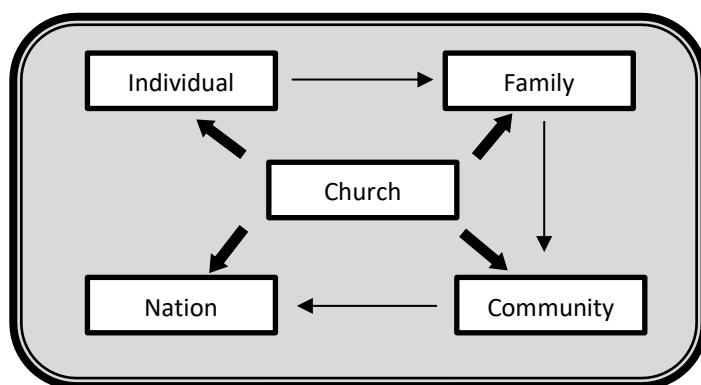
These verses are not always easy to understand but they remind us that God has given the church a special role in building His Kingdom. The church is Christ's body. It is the church's role to fulfil the work of Jesus, bringing reconciliation to ALL things.

- 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 a diagram using the simple model we learned in lesson 5 about Building God's Kingdom. We start with the individual, then the family, then the community, and then the nation. *(Draw the four boxes on the board or show **VISUAL AID** - The Church's Role in Building God's Kingdom poster)*

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



## Equipping Individuals

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### LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

**Facilitator Instructions:** Give out the **VISUAL AID:** Body Parts cards to different people in the group. Have them stand and identify each body part. Then ask the following questions to the large group.

- Which parts 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?

**Facilitator Instructions:** Have various members put down their cards.

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

**Facilitator Instructions:** 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, right?

Read I Corinthians 12:12-20.

Now, let's make a list of activities that the church is involved in.

**Facilitator Instructions:** Make a list on the board or poster. Then go through the following points:

- 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 church playing an essential role? Are there any people who, 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? (If percentages are difficult then ask - how many people are there in the church? How many usually participate in service activities?) 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 participating?
- What can we do to start to address this problem?

## Why Does Everyone Need to Be Serving?

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

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 Matthew 25:14-30 - the Parable of the Talents.

- 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, we can build God's Kingdom more effectively 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. 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?

Read 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. Is that true in your church? How can we change it?
- How can we be better at building up others, so they are able to do works of service?

Here is an example:

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 the missionaries were teaching the youth 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 knew they needed to read their Bibles and pray. They realised they needed to trust God to help them to be able to really help others.

- 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?
- What is the main point or the lesson we can learn from this story? (*serving others builds our faith*)

## Transforming Families

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The church can play a role in helping families to live as God intends.

The Bible has a lot to say about the importance of the family. In fact, in Ephesians 5:25-33, God tells us that the relationship between a husband and wife should be a reflection of the relationship that Jesus has with the Church. In other words, people should be able to look at Christian couples and the way that the husband treats his wife and know how Jesus treats the Church. The family is important.

If families in the community are strong, then the community will also be strong. However, if families are broken or weak, the community will also be broken or weak.

Therefore, it is VITAL for the church to look for opportunities to help individuals serve their families and help their families live as God intended. In doing so, others will notice and learn from the families in the church, which will make an impact on the community. As our families become stronger, so will our community and nation!

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some ways the church can support families to grow stronger?
  - *Marriage and family courses for church members and community*
  - *Parenting courses*

- *Youth groups and children's classes to help train the children*
- *Provide opportunities for families to serve together in church, in the service, in the community (Acts of Love)*

## REPORT BACK

## Transforming Communities

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

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—taking believers from other churches.) Increasing the number of Christians means that more and more non-Christians come to know God and accept Christ as their Saviour. Churches play an important role in helping people to understand the gospel and in discipling 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 yet 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

It's important for our community to not only hear about God's love and His will for every area of life, but to see it! Let's look at what the Bible has to teach us about this.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Read the verses and answer the following questions:

- Matthew 20:28 - Why did Jesus come?
- Philippians 2:4-9 - How does Paul describe Jesus?
- James 1:27 - What type of religion is pleasing to God?
- Mark 12:31 - What does God command us to do?

## REPORT BACK

Jesus came to serve. In fact, when the Bible says, 'being in very nature God,' it also means, '**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.

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Our love for God and for our neighbour 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. Let's read a story 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 learned that obeying Jesus is not optional!' So Meshack, an elder named Dismus, the pastor, and the pastor's 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. Meshack's first salary came during the seventh month—one US dollar paid by fees and offerings from children's parents.

Meschack and Dismus invited neighbourhood 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. As neighbours moved out, 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, and built 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").

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

### **Harvesting the crops**

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 landowner would make very little profit from their harvest.

The church decided that, 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?

## **Conclusion**

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### **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY**

- 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?

### **REPORT BACK AND PRAY**

Have each group share their ideas with the class. End with a prayer asking God to show us how we can serve our community and live as God intends.

# Lesson 8: Next Steps

**Main Idea:** We need to make plans and to be intentional about the important things in life like Acts of Love.

## Materials

1. Student Guide: Act of Love Planning Steps
2. List of changes from Lesson 4

## Why Planning is Important

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Let's read another story:

Mr Lim, a farmer, went out to prepare his piece of land for planting. 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 neighbour's, Mr. Son, and asked to borrow tools from him. Since he was already visiting, he decided to take a few extra 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. Realising the time, Mr. Lim apologised 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 hadn't made it to the field for planting. But he felt somewhat satisfied in knowing tomorrow morning he would just need to finish fixing the pump and return the tools. Then he could 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 times our efforts to serve the community are like this farmer's day. We are 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 are some of the key things you need to do in the next three months to be successful in building the Kingdom of God in your community?
  - *Praying and spending time with God – bringing God into our daily activities helps us to determine what IS most important!*
  - *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 learned.*
  - *Coordinating Acts of Love – we need to continue to do Acts of Love on a regular basis.*
  - *Meeting together regularly as the body of Christ to strengthen and encourage each other.*

## Meetings

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### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

In this lesson, we are focusing on Acts of Love. In order to follow through on your desire to do Acts of Love, you will 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.
  - Think of ideas for things that you could do to help your community.
  - Make decisions about new Acts of Love.

At your meetings you should take time to pray and discuss community needs. Pray about **if** you should help and **how**. Additionally, you should also discuss the last Act of Love and try to understand what went well or didn’t go well. What could you do differently next time?

## Acts of Love

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### LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

As a group, review the characteristics of an Act of Love.

***Facilitator Instructions:** As you go through each of the characteristics, see if the class can remember the explanation of that characteristic.*

1. **Done to show God’s love**

Our goal is not to convert people (although we always hope that people will know God) but to show them love. We don’t want them to feel manipulated through our Act of Love, like we are making them attend church.
2. **Done in obedience to God**

Sometimes this means the Acts of Love that we do just don’t make sense. We don’t automatically choose to do something for the poorest person in the community. Instead, we are doing what God shows us to do—even if it means loving the gang leader!
3. **Small and Simple**

We want to keep our Acts of Love small and simple so that they are easy to complete and many people can get involved.
4. **Done using local resources**

We want to use the resources in our community. Using our own resources—rather than looking for a donor to provide—is more of a demonstration of love to our community. Often as we use what we have, God multiplies it.
5. **Done through God’s strength**

We will run out of energy if we try to do Acts of Love in our own strength. Pray and ask God to give you the strength that you need.
6. **Involve as many people as possible**

We want to involve as many people as possible in our Acts of Love, not just as givers but using their talents and energy to serve. We want to see the whole body of Christ active in our community.
7. **Done so God is praised**

We want the glory to go back to God at the end of the activity!

Now, look at the list of ideas for changes in your community that you made in Lesson 4.

## **PRAY**

As a group, pray about how you can start to make one of those changes a reality. Take time to listen to God and share what He is showing you.

## **MAKE YOUR PLAN:**

Review the Acts of Love planning steps *in your* **STUDENT GUIDE**. Then choose one of the changes and together plan an Act of Love to help bring this about.

### **Act of Love Planning Steps**

#### **Step 1: Pray**

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. Make sure you take a few minutes of silence to listen to God.

#### **Step 2: Select an activity**

As a group, decide what you could do as an Act of Love. Did God give any inspiration? If anyone has any ideas of what would make a good Act of Love, ask them to share. Also look at some of the ideas that you listed in lesson 5: God wants the church to help and Lesson 6: What are some needs we can help with. Together, agree on what you feel God is leading you to do.

Once you have selected a topic, make sure it is something that you can do in just one day. Some groups choose something too big. Keep thinking until you have something you can do in one day, using local resources, and involving as many people as possible.

**Facilitator Instructions:** *If you are making plans in small groups, have each group share their idea and get feedback from the others.*

- Does it show love?
- Is it small and simple?
- Can it be done using resources you have available?
- Does it involve as many people as possible?

#### **Step 3: Prepare a plan**

Discuss the following questions. If possible, have someone record the answers so that you don't forget.

- What are you going to do?
- What resources do you need? Where will you get those things? Who will get them?
- Who are you going to help?
- Who is going to participate in helping? Who will invite everyone?
- What date are you going to do it?

**Facilitator Instructions:** *If the class is working in small groups, have each of the groups present their plan. Ask the group for any suggestions that they may have to strengthen the plans.*

#### **Step 4: Pray**

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

**Facilitator Instructions:** *Explain to the group that there are two more steps that we are not going to do today. Then read the description of the two remaining steps.*

#### **Step 5: Do the project**

The next step is to do the project that you planned. Start the day with prayer and dedicate your efforts to God. Remember that you are doing this project to demonstrate God's love to your community. Try to maintain an attitude that matches this goal.

#### **Step 6: 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 we can do to improve 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 to the plan?
- Was the response as you intended? If not, why not?
- Was God glorified?

**PRAYER**

**Facilitator Instructions:** *Close in prayer—as a large group, in small groups or with a partner as time allows.*