

**TRUTH
CENTERED
TRANSFORMATION**

MODULE 1



INTRODUCTION TO WHOLISTIC MINISTRY TEACHER GUIDE

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Acknowledgements

There is little way to thank everyone who has inputted into these materials and made this program all that it has been. Much of the early inspiration came from the teaching of Darrow Miller of Disciple Nations Alliance and Bob Moffitt of Harvest Foundation. This program was developed and implemented through my years with Food for the Hungry. I am grateful to them for making space for me to test these ideas and providing the funding to make that possible.

In this first module, I have borrowed heavily from Bob and Darrow's materials, specifically "Development Ethic" by Darrow Miller and "Leadership Development Training Program" by Bob Moffitt. Some of the ideas for presenting the materials have also come from Mark Wilson. The River Crossing story in Lesson 8 is not my own, however it appears in so many materials that I have been unable to find the original author.

I am immensely grateful to those who I have been able to work with through the years as they studied and implemented these ideas. They are my true heroes. It's their application and feedback that made this possible, and their encouragement that kept me going on the many days when I wanted to give up. I still hold a special affection for the first team of trainers who sat in absolute confusion as I learnt how to teach and what to teach. They patiently tried to understand and even teach ideas that we later realized were just too complicated for their context. And yet God moved those communities out of poverty as well. An endless reminder that this never was about me or what I was doing, but about God and what He was doing. I am immeasurably touched that God would allow me to be part of this story and would use me despite all my weaknesses. To Him alone be the Glory.

Lastly, I want to thank my husband who gave up his own ministry to work together with me on this program. Without him none of this would have been possible. I know the many sacrifices you made through the years to make this happen. You are the wind beneath my wings, and I love you.

Anna Ho
Executive Director

Introduction to Wholistic Discipleship: Sample Schedule for a 3-day Training

TIME	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
8:00-9:00	Welcome, worship (8:00-8:30)	Worship, devotions, review Day 1	Worship, devotions, review Days 1&2
	*Onboarding 1 Session 1 & Session 2 (8:30-10:30)		
9:00-10:30		Lesson 4: Growing in All Areas	Lesson 7: Kingdom Math
10:30-11:00	Break		
11:00-12:30	Lesson 1: The Whole Story	Lesson 5: God Wants the Church to Help	Lesson 8: Acts of Love
12:30-14:00	Lunch Break		
14:00-15:30	Lesson 2: Humans are Important to God	Lesson 6: Some Needs We Can Help With	Lesson 9: Organising an Act of Love
15:30-15:45	Break		
15:45-17:15	Lesson 3: Love God, Love Our Neighbour	Sharing and prayer for each other and our ministries**	Onboarding 1 Session 3

*The Onboarding 1 Sessions are close to 1 hr each. If you start at 8:30 a.m. you should have time for both Session 1 and Session 2 between 8:30-10:30 a.m.

**If there are many participants, do sharing and prayer in smaller groups.

Tips for Teaching TCT Lessons

PREPARE AHEAD OF TIME

1. **Read through each lesson several times.** Make sure you understand the key idea for each lesson. Imagine that you are teaching it. Note sections that may be shorter or longer than the suggested time. If you don't understand something, ask for help.
2. Gather the **materials** needed to teach each lesson. Print enough copies of each **Visual Aid**. If there is a **game or activity** that you are unsure about, **practise it** with your family before you teach.
3. Read all **Scripture passages** that are referenced.
4. **PRAY.** It is only through God's grace and power that we will see people change.

WHILE YOU ARE TEACHING

1. Arrive early and **set up ahead of time.**
2. **Review** often. At the beginning of each session, have the class review the key ideas they have learned so far in the training. Repetition will help them to recall the information later.
3. **Follow the lesson plan.** Don't skip anything. Don't add anything. Limit your talking. Remember that you want the participants to interact with the main idea, not just listen.
4. **Watch your time.** The teacher guide gives suggested time frames for each section. If you follow the lesson plan and don't let the conversation get sidetracked, you can stay fairly close to these. Then you should have enough time to cover every section.
5. **Encourage everyone to participate.** Help people feel comfortable. Make opportunities for quieter people to answer questions. Wait a few seconds in silence after asking questions.
6. **Respond to wrong answers with more questions.**
7. **Don't rush.** Give time for discussion, activities, and breaks. People need time to understand and to be involved in the learning process.
8. **PRAY throughout the day,** that God will help you teach well and that people's hearts and minds will be open to the Spirit's work.

Lesson 1: The Whole Story

Key Idea

God's plan is not just to see souls saved but also to see the restoration of the three relationships that were broken in the fall—our relationships with God, with each other, and with the rest of creation.

Materials

1. Visual Aids:
 - a. Three Relationships (Four pictures: Creation, The Fall, The Cross, The Return)
 - b. Role Play of Adam and Eve (2 copies)

Introduction - 2 min

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Why did Jesus die?

Facilitator: Encourage many answers. Remind students that there isn't one correct answer. Appreciate all the correct answers.

We usually say that Jesus came just to save us from our sins. This is true, but He came to do so much more than that. His death on the cross is only one part of the whole story. To really understand the message of the Bible, we need to understand the whole story from beginning to end.

Creation - 8 min

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Based on what you already know about how God created the world, how would you answer these questions?

- What was the relationship like between Adam and God? (*Gen 1: 26-27, 31*)
- What was the relationship like between Adam and Eve? Do you think they argued much? (*Gen 2:23-25*)
- What was the relationship like between Adam and Creation? Did Adam have all that he needed? Did he have enough food? (*Gen. 1:29-30*)

Facilitator: Show **VISUAL AID Picture 1: Creation** and help students to see that in the beginning before the fall each of these three relationships were perfect

The Fall - 10 min

Read Genesis 3:1-20.

ROLE PLAY

Facilitator: Ask two people to do the following role play. Give the two volunteers the role play.

"A Conversation Between Adam and Eve"

Adam: (Gardening) Eve, working in the garden sure got hard after we upset God by eating that fruit!

Eve:	Yes, and our boys aren't getting along well anymore either. They argue and hit each other all the time. I hope it doesn't get any worse! And these stupid fig leaves I have to wear. They're so ugly!
Adam:	(Arguing) Well, we can't afford to buy new clothes, so don't complain! (Pause) I miss the old days, when God used to walk with us and talk with us. Now He's sorry we're even around. And remember how the animals used to obey us? Now they run scared of us!
Eve:	Yes, or they try to bite us! Ugh... I hate snakes! I can't believe I took advice from a snake! This whole mess is all the snake's fault!
Adam:	No, it's all your fault! You never do the right thing! Why would I take advice from a person who took advice from a snake?
Eve:	Well, don't blame me. That's your fault! (Stopping, sadly) I'm sorry. It doesn't help to yell. Adam, do you think things will ever be like they used to be?
Adam:	I don't know. Only God could fix this mess!
Eve:	Oh, no—what now? (Yelling, running out) Stop fighting you two boys! Stop it right now. Do you hear me? I'm going to tell your father, and he's not going to be happy!
Adam:	(Returning to garden, sighing) Work, work, work, work, work, work, ...

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

From the role play and what you read in the Bible, what are some of the problems that people now face as a result of the fall?

- Read Genesis 3:8, 10 - What happened during the fall to people's relationship with God?
- Read Genesis 3:12 - What happened during the fall to people's relationship with each other?
- Read Genesis 3:15 - What happened during the fall to people's relationship with creation?

In the fall, evil entered the world; not just moral evil, but physical evil as well. Before the fall, there was enough food and there were no earthquakes, no floods, no droughts. As a result of the fall, we now have all these things.

The fall damaged all three of the relationships.

Facilitator: Show **VISUAL AID Picture 2: The Fall** and help students to see that *The Fall* damaged each of these relationships.

The Mission - 15 min

The next stage of the story between God and His creation is found between the account of the fall and the end of the Old Testament.

Facilitator: Show the class the large section you are referring to in the Bible.

This is the stage where God is seeking His people. He has a desire to restore what was broken.

ABRAHAM – Read Genesis 12:1-3. In this section God raises up Abraham and blesses him.

- Why does He bless Abraham? (*God wants to bless the nations.*)

In this one passage, we see God’s plan to save the whole world. Through the Church, He wants to bring blessing to the nations.

MOSES – God gave the world the 10 commandments so that we could know how to restore the broken relationships.

- Does the law just cover spiritual things, or does it cover our relationships with each other and nature?

The first four commandments restore our relationship with God.

- Which relationship do the last six restore? (*our relationship with each other*).

The whole law covers our relationship with God (Exodus 21:3), our relationship with each other (e.g. Exodus 21:12), and also our relationship with creation (Exodus 23:10-12). There are specific laws to help people stay healthy (e.g. Leviticus 13) and that show how to treat each other (e.g. Exodus 23:1-9). God doesn’t just care about spiritual things. He cares about all aspects of our life. That is why He created laws for every area that was broken by sin.

Read Deuteronomy 28:1-14.

- What does God say will be the consequences if His people obey these commands?
- Are the blessings that God promises only for spiritual things, or are they blessings for their physical life as well?

God raised up kings and prophets, but again and again Israel suffered through poverty and war because they turned their backs on God and did not follow His commands.

Read 2 Chronicles 7:14.

- Who does God call on to humble themselves and pray? (*Not all people, but all His people—today the Christians.*)
- What did God say would happen if they were obedient? (*God will heal our land*) This is still true today. It does not only mean we will see lives saved. This verse tells us God will bring healing to all three of the relationships—our relationships with God, with each other, and with creation.

The Cross - 10 min

This is not only the most wonderful part of the story, but also the most important part. In most religions, people are required to sacrifice in order to please the gods. In Christianity, God so loved mankind that He sent His son to die for us.

Read Colossians 1:19-20. Why did Jesus die?

- *To reconcile all the relationships.*

Facilitator: Show **VISUAL AID Picture 3: Restoration** and explain to the class that Jesus came to reconcile everything that was broken in the fall. However, everything will not be finally perfect until the end of the story.

Jesus left us with The Great Commission. We are responsible to not only see people become Christians, but also to disciple nations. Discipling nations means helping the nation to follow God’s intentions in all the areas that Jesus came to reconcile.

The Return - 8 min

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Revelation 21:1-7.

- At the end, what is people's relationship with God going to be like?
- What are people's relationships with each other going to be like?
- What is people's relationship with nature going to be like? Will we have enough to eat? Will we ever be sick?

Facilitator: Show **VISUAL AID Picture 4: The Return** and help students to explain that, when Jesus returns, all of our relationships will be completely restored to how God intended them to be in the beginning.

Conclusion - 2 min

This is the whole story—the wonderful story from beginning to end of how God created a perfect world; of how sin entered that world and broke our relationships with God, each other, and nature; of how God loved us so much that He sent His son to restore relationships that were broken in the fall; and of how God will one day come again and make all things new.

God loves you so much. He sent His Son to die so that you may have a relationship with Him and good relationships with each other and with creation.

Lesson 2: Humans Are Important to God

Key Idea

All people are made in the image of God and are valuable to Him. We need to treat everyone, even those who are commonly mistreated, as if they are God's precious creation.

Materials - none

Introduction - 5 min

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

In Congo, a number of churches started to reach out to prostitutes, allowing them to live in the church buildings and teaching them to sew. The prostitutes were girls who were living on the street because they became pregnant before they were married, and their families had kicked them out.

- Do you think this is a good group for the church to help?
- Would there be other people who you think churches should focus on instead?

Made in the Image of God - 20 min

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator: Write the passages and questions on the board.

Read Genesis 1:26-27.

- How are people different from the rest of creation? What did God use as His model for humans?
- What are some of the characteristics of God that can be found in humans? Identify as many as possible.

Read Psalm 139:13-16.

- What does this verse tell us about the importance of humans?
- Do you think that this verse only applies to some people or all people?

REPORT BACK

God designed us, we are carefully made, and He has written all the days of our lives in a book. We did not just happen, but God made each person.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read John 3:16.

- What did God do to restore the world?
- Did God die for us because we were good? (*If they are unsure, look at Romans 5:8.*)
- If God was willing to send His son to die for people, then how important does He think people are?
- What does this mean for the way that we treat people?

Summarise: In these verses, we can see that God obviously thinks people are very important. He made us in His image—each of us is carefully created and knitted together in our mother's womb. He cares so much for people that He sent His Son to die for us.

Think again about the churches who were helping the prostitutes.

- Can these ideas help us to understand why they would choose to help them?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Each one of us is very valuable to God. So is every person in your community. Take time to think quietly about whether you treat the people in your community as if they are precious to God.

Case Study: The Early Church - 15 min

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

The Christians in the early church understood that people are important. At that time, most people believed that the gods fought each other for superiority and demanded humans make sacrifices to avoid punishment by the gods. The Christians understood that the true God was different. Instead of requiring sacrifices, He had sacrificed for humans, sending His only beloved Son to die for them (John 3:16). Jesus' sacrifice proved that every single human was of great importance and value. This understanding of God's incredible love for His world and for mankind led the early church to oppose common practices such as abortion and infanticide. At that time, if a baby girl was born, it was often discarded in the streets. However, the Christians understood that every life—handicapped, unborn, male or female, slave or wealthy—was extremely valuable to God. They would rescue female babies from the streets and raise them as if they were their own.

The early church also believed that, since God demonstrated His love by sacrificing His life on our behalf, it was their duty to sacrificially serve others as well. The followers of Jesus understood they were to be compassionate and merciful to all people in the same way God was compassionate and merciful to them. During that time, a cholera epidemic broke out. If someone with cholera drinks water, the chance they will survive is good. Without water, they will die. However, cholera is extremely contagious. Because the Romans feared getting the illness, as soon as they saw a person had the disease, they threw them out into the streets to die rather than giving them water. Human life was not important to them. The Christians, however, were different. They went to those who had cholera, brought them water, and nursed them. They believed in sacrificial service and mercy. Many Christians did die of cholera, but as others witnessed their love, many more people gave their lives to Christ. The church grew rapidly.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Take time to think about this story quietly to yourself.

Ask God to help you see how you treat others.

- Do you treat them as if God thinks they are so important that He would die for them?
- Do you only treat some people well and other people not so well?

Ask God to forgive you where you have not treated people in a way that pleases Him. Ask Him to show you how He sees people.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Who are some of the people who are typically undervalued?
- What are some ways that we can demonstrate to people that they are important to God?

REPORT BACK

Lesson 3: Love God & Love Our Neighbour

Key Idea

God has called us to love our neighbour as a way to show our love to Him. We can show love to our neighbour by meeting their needs.

Materials

1. Visual Aids - The Evangelist Role Play (3 copies)

Introduction – The Evangelist Role Play - 15 min

ROLE PLAY

Facilitator: Select three members of the group to participate in the following role play. Give them copies of the **VISUAL AID** -The Evangelist Role Play.

Narrator's Introduction: Christians sometimes have what we call a "narrow view of the Gospel." They understand that accepting Jesus is a life-and-death decision, but they don't understand something else. When they are blind to their neighbour's needs, their message is actually lost. [pause] Today, we'll visit a very poor home. The only resident, a poor sick person, is ill and in bed. A visitor, a Christian evangelist on a door-to-door ministry campaign, has just arrived.

Evangelist (EV): Hello, hello! Anyone home? May I come in? (Enters)

Poor Sick Person (PSP): (Weakly) In here...

EV: Hi. I'm _____ from _____ Church. I just came today to invite everyone to our church. The Lord has been blessing us with a powerful revival. You won't want to miss it.

PSP: (Groans, speaks haltingly) Can't come...can't get out of bed... too sick to move... lost my job... no money for medicine... or food... or rent...

EV: Those are big problems, but I know someone who has the answer to all of life's problems. Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour?

PSP: (Weakly) My family and friends left me when I got sick and lost my job... Could anyone from your church help me? Please?

EV: The best help you could get is found right here in this little tract. It explains God's plan for your life. You know, it isn't His will that you're laying here! Take this, read it, pray the sinner's prayer, and believe!

PSP: (Weaker) Can't... too weak... (Stops talking, lies motionless.)

EV: (Checks pulse) Still alive! Praise God, I got here in time to witness! I'll leave the tract. I'd better get going so I can minister to other lost souls. (Talks loudly in PSP's ear) We'll pray for you. Remember, Jesus is the answer. (Leaves)

PSP: (Watches him leave, groans) Ohhhhhhhhhhh...

(Do nothing else – or whatever seems appropriate)

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- What happened in this role play?
- Have you ever seen or known of people who shared the gospel like this?
- How successful was it in the long term?
- How does this method of evangelism compare with the way that Jesus ministered?

Scripture is clear that God is concerned about hurting people—and we must be also. One of the best “clues” to help us understand God’s heart for people is found in the commands of Jesus.

The Great Commandment - 15 min

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION - 7 min

Facilitator: Write the passages on the board. Have the groups look up each set of verses and answer the questions.

Read Matthew 22:36-40 and Luke 10:27.

- What are the two things that we are commanded to do?

Read Matthew 7:12, Romans 13:9, and Galatians 5:14.

These verses only mention one of the two things from above. Which is it?

REPORT BACK

- What are the two commands we see in the first set of verses? (*Love God, Love our neighbour*)
- What does Jesus say is the greater of the two commandments? (*Read again Matthew 22:37-38*) (*Love God*)
- When the Law and the Prophets are summarized by only one of the Great Commandments, which is it? (*Love your neighbour*)
- Why do you think Jesus chose to summarize the Law and the Prophets using this command? (**Facilitator:** *If they don’t conclude that it is because we demonstrate our love for God through our actions, then return to this question at the end of this lesson.*)

Loving Our Neighbour - 10 min

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Read I John 3:17, I John 4:20, and James 1:27.

- What do these verses teach about loving our neighbour?

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

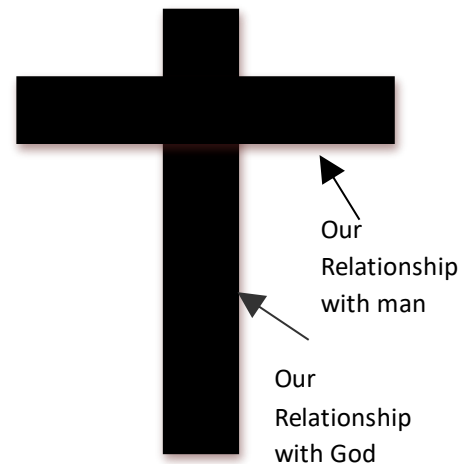
- What is the relationship between God’s love and our response to people’s needs? (*If we love God, then we will demonstrate that by loving our neighbour. If we say that we love God, but do not love our neighbour, then it shows that we don’t truly love God.*)
- Is it possible to share the love of God without helping people with their needs? (*No*)
- Are we disciples of Jesus if we are not ministering to the social and physical—as well as the spiritual—needs of people? (*No. If we look at the parable of the sheep and the goats, we are clearly divided by what we do and do not do. “I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink...” (Mathew 25:35). Jesus clearly shows in this parable that He expects us to care for the needs of those around us if we are truly His followers.*)

The Cross - 2 min

Facilitator: Draw a picture of the cross on the board as shown. Explain the picture to the group.

This diagram is designed to help us remember this principle. The upward line represents our relationship with God. It is the biggest line.

The horizontal line represents our relationship with others. The horizontal line is supported by the vertical line. Without the vertical line, the horizontal line would be in the dirt. This is true not only for this picture but also for our lives. We need God to help us have good relationships.



Who is your Neighbour? - 15 min

Facilitator: In this activity, you will read the story of the Good Samaritan while people in the class act it out. Ask one person to be each of the people in the story. Seven people are needed: 1 man, 2 robbers, 1 priest, 1 Levite, 1 Samaritan, 1 innkeeper.

Someone asked Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” (that is, “How do I get to Heaven?”) Jesus told him two things are required—that we love God and that we love our neighbour. The person then asked, “Who is my neighbour?” Jesus replied with the following story.

Read Luke 10:30-37.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Did the Good Samaritan know the person on the ground?
- What was the Good Samaritan’s reaction to that person? How was it different from others?
- How did the Good Samaritan show love to his neighbour? Did he do just enough or more than necessary?
- What does this story teach us about who our neighbour is?
- What can we learn from this story about showing love to our neighbour?

Application - 3 min

Think about the people who you see often. What is one thing that you can do for someone else?

Lesson 4: Growing in All Areas

Key Idea

Jesus grew in four areas—physical, spiritual, social, and mental. We also need to grow in these four areas and can help our community and church to also grow in the same way.

Materials

1. Visual Aids - 'Areas of Jesus' Growth' Chart (one per student)
2. Poster or whiteboard
3. Small pieces of paper that can be taped or placed on a poster or whiteboard

Introduction - 8 min

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- What does a child need to grow between the ages of 0 and 18?

Facilitator: Write the group's answers on small pieces of paper (You will use these papers in the next activity). If they are missing examples from any of the four areas (see below), then prompt them by giving an example. Example: Social area: Do you think this person would need a family or someone to love them?

Luke 2:52 - 7 min

Read Luke 2:52: "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

What four ways did Jesus grow? What common terms describe these four kinds of growth?

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| - Wisdom | Mental |
| - Stature | Physical |
| - In favour with God | Spiritual |
| - In favour with man | Social |

Facilitator: Write the four common terms on a poster or whiteboard. Use the small pieces of paper made in the introduction and ask the group to sort them into each of these areas.

Like Jesus, we need to grow in these four areas. We can use Jesus' growth as a model to think about the way people need to develop.

Jesus Growth - 10 min

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- What were the physical/material/social living conditions in which Jesus grew? (Did He go to university? Did He have electricity at His house? Did He have enough food? Could He read and write? Did He have loving parents?)
 - Jesus grew up in a poor family. They had to give an offering of two pigeons. (See Luke 2:24 and Leviticus 12:8.)
 - He did, however, have sufficient food. His father had a job, and He had a loving family.
 - He also learned to read and write in His studies in the synagogue.
- Did Jesus have the resources necessary to fulfil God's purpose for Him? Why or why not?

- *John 17:4 tells us Jesus completed the work God had given Him. He was able to achieve His purpose.*
- What amount of wealth is necessary to reach God’s intentions?
 - *Jesus was poor, but He was able to achieve God’s intentions for His life.*
- Jesus grew in four areas. Can we help others grow in these areas? How?
 - *Yes, these four areas give us a model that we can use to help others.*
 - *Growing in these four areas is a process that takes time.*
- Did Jesus’ growth happen immediately, or was it a process over time?
 - *Jesus’ growth was a process over time—about 30 years!*
- If Jesus’ development was a process of many years, how much time is needed for other people’s development? How much time must we be prepared to invest in people’s development?
 - *It takes time for people to develop. If we want to help them then we have to be willing to invest hours over many years.*

Application to Our Own Life - 30-40 min

We not only need to develop in the four areas just as Jesus did, but also help others grow in these four areas.

Facilitator: Give each person a copy of ‘**Areas of Jesus’ Growth’ Chart** (**Visual Aids**).

First, fill in this chart giving examples of how you can grow in each of these areas and encourage your family, church, and community to grow in these areas.

Remember to...

- Choose things that can be done in a week. If you choose something that is too large, it will be difficult to complete, and the result will be discouragement. Choose something small so you can have success and can choose another thing next week.
- Choose something you are not already doing.





Lower Literacy Groups—if it is difficult for the group to fill in the table then just discuss the following areas:

- Think about ways you can grow in each of the four areas. What are some things that you are not already doing?
- Think about your own family. Are they growing in all four areas? What is one thing that you could do this week to help your family or someone in your family grow in one of these areas?
- Think about your church—who could you help to grow in one of the four areas? What could you do?
- Think about your community—who could you help to grow in one of the four areas? What could you do?

Fill out the rest of the chart with ideas for helping your family, church, and community grow in the areas Jesus grew.

Facilitator: Give the students plenty of time to think. It is important that they have time to get good ideas rather than rushing to try to think of the first idea that they can.

Once they are finished, ask for volunteers to share their ideas with the class. Ask if there are any boxes that are hard to find examples for and see if the group can think of some good examples together. (If there is not sufficient time for everyone to finish, encourage the students to take it home and continue to work on it.)

Context	Areas of Jesus' Growth			
For Growth	Wisdom	Physical	Spiritual	Social
 Self	Read a book or article about an area that I want to learn more about	Take a long walk	Take a half day retreat to spend time in prayer	Send an encouraging note to a friend
 Family	Discuss applying two Proverbs with my family	Wash dishes after family meal	Lead my family in a daily devotion	Take spouse on a "date" (without the children)
 Church	Do Monday devotions on applying Sunday's sermon	Repair the walkway in front of the church	Pray each day for pastor and elders of the church	Invite different church members to our home for coffee
 Community	Discuss community problems with a community leader	Walk around neighbourhood and pick up trash	Invite neighbours to a Christmas celebration at our home	Play soccer with neighbourhood kids

Conclusion - 5 min

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (2-3 PEOPLE)

In groups of 2-3 people (no more than 3!), share the one thing you will commit to doing. Pray for each other that God will give you the ability to complete your commitment.

Lesson 5: God Wants the Church to Help

Key Idea

The church is called to love their community through actions, especially by addressing the needs of the poor.

Materials

1. Paper - two pieces for each group of 4
2. Visual Aids - Ways to Help Chart - one copy per group

Introduction - 15 min

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (4 PEOPLE)

Make a list of all the activities your church does (use the paper to draw to represent each activity if necessary).

Facilitator: When finished, ask the groups to go through the list and mark whether the activity is designed for people who attend church or those who don't attend church. How many are there for each? Then make a different mark for the activities that are focused on those that are poor and needy. How many are there?

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What do people in the community think about the church?
2. What do people in the community think the church does?
3. What do people in the community think about Christians?
4. Do people in the community want to come to church or do you have to go and invite them?
5. How do you think the people in the community would feel if the church wasn't there anymore?
6. Do you think this makes God happy?

Isaiah 58 - 15 min

Isaiah was writing to the Israelites, who were God's chosen people. They are an example for the church today.

Read Isaiah 58:1-10 and discuss:

- What were the people doing?
- What was God's reaction to these people?
- Why did God react in this way?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (4-5 PEOPLE)

Ask each group to summarise this passage by either drawing a picture or writing a sentence.

After each group has presented their sentence or picture, ask them what they think these ideas mean for the church today.

Salt and Light - 10 min

SMALL OR LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Matthew 5:13.

- What are some uses for salt?
 - Cleans, keeps things from decaying, adds flavour.
- Why does Jesus say that Christians are "the salt of the earth"?

- *We are to have a good influence on the areas where we live. We should bring a purifying influence and keep our society from decay. That means we should be seeing our communities become more like God intends, not less.*
- *The same way even a little salt can change the flavour of food, just a few Christians can have a big impact in the community.*

Read Matthew 5:14-16.

- How can we shine more brightly?
 - *By doing good deeds.*
- What should be the result of doing good deeds?
 - *Our Father in heaven is glorified.*

Salt and Light Stories - 10 min

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Story 1 – Saris (Dresses) for Hindu Women

The church members in this church considered themselves an oppressed religious minority. They were fearful of ministering outside the Christian community. After learning that they should demonstrate Christ's love to the entire community, the pastor encouraged the women of the church to investigate community needs during the next week.

At the next week's service, the women reported they had found twelve Hindu women who each had only one sari (dress). In the hot climate, the saris must be washed daily. If a woman has only one sari, she stays inside until her washed sari has dried in the sun. The pastor asked if there were women in the congregation who had three saris and who would be willing to donate one to those Hindu women. Enough women volunteered to meet the reported need. The following week, the women of the church visited the homes where the women had only one sari, and they offered a second sari. The Hindu women were so impressed with this gesture that they invited the Christian women to pray for them. Some of the pregnant Hindu women also asked the Christian women to pray for their unborn children.

Read Story 2 – Water for the Community

In one area the people faced a huge water shortage. After learning about God's desire for the church to reach out to their community, the church leadership decided to explore what they could do on their own to meet the need for water. They found a place to rent equipment that could be used to dig wells by hand. At first, people rejected the idea—they thought that the water was too deep. If hand-dug wells were possible, they reasoned, why hadn't they been dug before? However, the church leadership decided to try. They rented the one-by-one-metre collapsible steel cylinder and winch. They moved it to their community and began to dig for water at the back of the church property. When water was struck at forty-five feet, everyone celebrated enthusiastically.

Non-church members, however, were not pleased. They thought that church members would keep the water for themselves. But instead, the church invited the community to share in God's blessings of their successful well. Soon, representatives from nearby parts of the rural community began to ask church leaders if they would help dig wells near them. The church responded positively. In little more than a year, fifteen wells were dug by hand—one more than eighty feet deep.

The people were so impressed by the way the church showed God's love that when the church invited the community to come to hear the message of God's love, the building was filled with people who were curious to know more about the God and His people who had provided water.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- What did these churches do?
- Were they rich churches?
- What resources did they use?
- Why did they do these things?
- What was the impact of their actions?

Sheep and Goats – Matthew 25:31-46 - 10 min

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator: Help the students see that the emphasis of this passage is on physical things. Jesus didn't say "I was hungry and you gave me a tract" or "I was in the hospital and you sent me some sermon tapes." They were physical solutions to physical needs.

Read Matthew 25:31-46.







1. What was the difference between the sheep and the goats?
2. What are some of the things that the sheep did? Are they spiritual things or physical things?
3. How often does your church do the things mentioned by Jesus?
4. What would be the impact on your community if all the members of your church did these things?
 - They would have a positive impression of the church.
 - Their lives would improve.
 - They would be more open to learning about God.

Ways to Help Others - 15 min

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Facilitator: Give each small group a copy of the 'Ways to Help' Chart from the **VISUAL AIDS**.

Think of some specific ideas of how the church can help people in these situations – hungry, thirsty, naked, lack of shelter, sick, imprisoned. Use the 'Ways to Help' chart and work together to fill it in.

Situation	Ways that the Church Can Help
Hungry 	
Thirsty 	
Naked 	
Lack of Shelter 	
Sick 	
Imprisoned 	

Lesson 6: Some Needs We Can Help With

Key Idea

God wants us to address all types of problems in our communities. He has good intentions for our community.

Materials - none

Pastor Wong's Vision - 20 min

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

I am going to tell you a story. Listen for the answers of the following questions while I read.

- What are some of the problems that are found in Pastor Wong's community?
- What are God's intentions for this community? What did Jesus show the solutions to be?
- What did Jesus tell Pastor Wong to do?

Read Pastor Wong's story.

There once was a pastor of a small church in a very poor, slum of a large city. His name was Wong. Wong had recently moved into the community because he felt God had sent him. The church was small—about 40 people. They were mostly women and children. Wong had two jobs. He did his best to pastor his little flock, and he also worked at another job in order to provide for his wife and two small children.

One day, as was his custom, he rose an hour before daybreak to have a private time with God. He got up, dressed, and slipped quietly past the curtain that separated the living quarters of his one-room house from the area where his wife and children continued to sleep. He lit his kerosene lamp. He began to read from his Bible. On this particular morning, he was reading from Isaiah, chapter 58, and was hearing God's cry for the kind of worship He wants:

Is this not the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Wong could go no further. His heart fought with his mind. If God cares so much for the poor, why did Wong find himself in the midst of poverty and suffering that broke his heart? He knew how the people of his community struggled to survive. They were truly oppressed. Wong himself had barely enough to feed his family and often couldn't buy them the medicine they needed. He thought, "Where is God? How can this Scripture fit in with the needs here in this community?"

While he was struggling with these thoughts, there was a quiet knock at the door. "Who could that be, so early in the morning?" Wong thought. He went to the door. "Who is it?" The voice on the other side said, "I'm Jesus, Wong." "Who?" asked Wong. "I'm Jesus, Wong," the voice replied. "Who are you, really?" asked Wong. The voice responded, "Wong, I'm Jesus. I've come because I heard the cry of your heart. I want you to show me what is troubling you."

The voice sounded genuine. Wong carefully unhooked the latch and opened the door. It was still dark and Wong could see only a silhouette, but it looked like who he imagined Jesus to be. "Come in, Lord," Wong said. "No, Wong, I want you to take me through your community and show me what it is that breaks your heart."

Still surprised, Wong agreed, warning, “We’ll have to walk carefully—it’s been raining hard, there’s lots of trash, and we don’t have many latrines.”

As they walked through the streets of the community, Wong told Jesus the stories of the houses they passed. In that one lived a woman who sold herself to feed her kids. In the next shack there was an alcoholic husband who beat his wife and kids every time he got drunk—which was often. Over there was the home of the community president, a corrupt man who extorted money on the promise of getting electricity for the community—but drank and gambled it away.

They passed an open place in the middle of the community. It was supposed to be a community square, but it was filled with foul-smelling garbage and scurrying rats. “See that house?” asked Wong, pointing to a shack on the brink of the hill. “A woman and four kids live there. The roof leaks—badly. They are very poor. They have very little to eat or wear, and they’re almost always sick.” By this time the two were at the edge of the hill on which the community was built. Wong pointed in the distance. “Way down there—that’s where the women and children walk to get water. There isn’t any water in this area.”

Wong started to turn the corner, but he heard a soft weeping. He looked toward the sound. It was Jesus — Jesus was crying! Wong could see that the same things that broke his own heart also broke the heart of Jesus. Wong started to speak, but Jesus reached out and put His arm around Wong, looked at him, and said, “Wong, I want to show you what my intentions are for your community.”

Suddenly, Wong found himself looking down on the community. Jesus began to speak, and Wong could see the things that Jesus described—they were taking place! Jesus talked about the people in Wong’s church—as poor as they were—sharing what they had with their poorer neighbours. Daily, they saved a little rice and put it in a can. At the end of the week, they each had a full can of rice which they brought to the church to share, in Jesus’ name, with community people who had less than they did. They did the same with soap. The church ladies visited the widows in the community and “adopted” them—helping them wash, cook, and care for their children when they were sick.

Jesus talked about employment, and Wong could see that the people had work. Not high-paying jobs, but jobs that gave dignity and paid enough to meet basic necessities. Jesus talked about housing, and Wong saw the shacks that let in the cold and rain were changed into houses. Not fancy houses, but houses that were safe and clean. Jesus talked about water, and suddenly there were standpipes in strategic places where women and children were getting clean water. Jesus talked about sanitation, and Wong could see that there were latrines—not one for every house, but enough that everyone had access to one. And the garbage heap in the centre of the community was gone. Instead, there were little trees, and there were children laughing and playing, kicking a ball. Jesus also talked about transformed lives, and Wong saw that the woman who had been selling her body now supported her kids with a respectable job. The drunkard was now a loving husband and dad. The president wasn’t using money dishonestly but was really helping the community.

Then Jesus said, “Wong, look at the church!” Wong looked. It was full. There were men there! The people were happy. They were praising God for His goodness. There was Wong, preaching, teaching, and leading his people in the Spirit and in acts of obedient love. Jesus explained, “Wong, this vision is my intention for your community. I want you to share this vision and begin to lead the people toward it.”

Wong started to protest, “But, Lord, we’re so poor!” “Wong,” asked Jesus quietly, “Who led the children of Israel across the Red Sea? Who multiplied the loaves and fish and fed five thousand men plus women and children? Who stretched the oil and flour of the widow of Zarephath so that there was enough to feed her family for three years of famine? Who calmed the Sea of Galilee?” “You did, Lord,” said Wong. “Then, Wong,

be obedient to what I have asked you to do. Share what you have, even though it is little. Proclaim my good intentions for your people—both spiritually and physically. And I will heal your land!”

Wong heard a rooster crow. His wife coughed and stirred on the other side of the curtain. He was sitting at the table, but his lamp had gone out. It was becoming light. Wong looked around for Jesus but didn't see Him. He wondered, “Did I have a dream? Was it a vision?” He didn't know, but Wong did know that he had been met by Jesus and that he had a new understanding of God's concern for the poor... and a fresh vision of how he was to lead his people to exhibit God's love in his community.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator: *Split the class into small groups. Repeat the questions and ask them to discuss the answers together.*

- What are some of the problems that are found in Pastor Wong's community?
- What was God's intention for this community? Go through each of the problems and look at what Jesus showed the solution to be.
- What did Jesus tell Pastor Wong to do?

REPORT BACK

- What did you learn from the story of Pastor Wong and your discussion questions?
 - *God has good intentions for his community both physically and spiritually.*
 - *Jesus told Pastor Wong to proclaim His good intentions for the community.*
 - *Being poor is not a problem for God. We are just to obey Him.*
 - *God will heal our land when we follow His ways.*

Bible Study - 5 min

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Jeremiah 29:11

- What are God's plans for us? (*to prosper us, not to harm us, to give us hope, that we live (i.e. have a future)*)

Pastor Wong's community was dealing with prostitution, drunkenness, abuse, corruption, and severe poverty. People lacked clean water, food, and lived in an unhealthy environment. But this is NOT what God wanted for that community. **God has good intentions for our communities.**

Read 2 Chronicles 7:14

- What does God want His people to do? (*humble ourselves, pray, seek Him, repent of sin*)
- What will God's response be if we do these things? (*He will hear our prayers, forgive our sins, and heal our land.*)

We can see changes as we start to live in obedience to God. Our responsibility as a church is to proclaim God's good intentions for the community by addressing the needs we see. When we follow His ways, God will heal our land.

Jose & Maria Case Study - 10 min

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator: For each of the questions, some sample answers have been listed here in italics. Remember, these are not the only good answers, just some good answers.

Assume Jose and Maria's community is similar to your community.

Jose and Maria's house has just burnt down; absolutely nothing was left. Yesterday, they—with their five children—stayed with relatives. However, there are already 10 people living in this very small house, so there isn't space for seven more. Jose is a farmer, and he has already finished planting his small field, but there are still another three months until he will harvest. He spent all the money he has on seed for his field and all he owned was burnt in the fire.

- What are some of the needs of this family?
 - *Food*
 - *Shelter*
 - *Clothing*
 - *Things to cook with*
 - *Somewhere to sleep while their house is being rebuilt*

- What are some of the things available in the community to help?
 - *People*
 - *Labour to help build a new house*
 - *People to help prepare a meal for the volunteer builders*
 - *People to help look after the children*
 - *People to comfort and support the family*
 - *People to help clean up the spot where the house burnt*
 - *Government officials that can provide emergency support*
 - *Materials*
 - *Spare pots and pans*
 - *Food*
 - *Clothing*
 - *Blankets*
 - *Facilities*
 - *Somewhere to stay*

Our Community - 30 min

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

If you are able, encourage the groups to walk around their community for 10-20 minutes to remind themselves of some of the key problems in their community. Then answer the following questions:

1. What are some of the problems in your community?
2. What do you think God's intentions for those situations are?

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

Facilitator: Use seed voting to select the top three problems from those the groups identified.

Seed Voting Instructions:

Give each person ten "seeds" (Any small items can serve as seeds: toothpicks, leaves, stones, etc.) and ask them to distribute them among the problems, giving more seeds to those projects they feel are most important. Add

up the number of seeds on each problem – the one with the most seeds is the most important, second highest number of seeds the second most important and third highest number of seeds the third most important.

- What is God asking your church to do?

Take the three problems you identified and, for each of them, talk about what you have in your community that could help. Talk about what people, materials, funds, and facilities are available to help solve that problem.

Pray together about what you will do to act on what you have discussed.

Lesson 7: Kingdom Math

Key Idea

Even the poorest are able to give. As they do, they will see God multiply their efforts in remarkable ways.

Materials

1. Visual Aids:
 - a. Set 1: Isaiah 40:29 Signs (5 pages/1 set only)
 - b. Set 2: Five Loaves, Two Fish envelopes (1 envelope per group)
 - c. Set 3: Elijah & the Widow envelopes (1 envelope per group)
 - d. Set 4: A Widow and Her Two Coins envelopes (1 envelope per group)
 - e. Set 5: Parable of the Talents envelopes (1 envelope per group)

Facilitator: *In this lesson, you will retell five Bible stories and then ask the students to create a “maths formula” from the story using visual aids. If the group has low maths literacy then only use the cards that describe what they had before and after. Ask the group to sort the pictures into two piles – before and after. Ask them, “What is the difference between these two piles? How did the people go from pile one to two?” The answer is GOD. Make sure they understand God caused the multiplication.*

Introduction: Isaiah 40:29 - 7 min

Have you noticed that the Bible has mathematical principles in it? In this lesson, we are going to look at some of the mathematics found in the Bible.

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

Read Isaiah 40:29. Explain that this will be our key verse for this lesson.

- Who is strong? Who is weak?
- What does God do for us?
- Can we put this verse into a mathematical formula? Let’s try...

Facilitator: *If you have a large group, invite five of the people to the front and give them each one of the words or mathematical signs (**VISUAL AID: Card Set 1**). For a small group, put all the cards on the floor and work together to get them in the correct order.*

“Our Weakness x God = Strength”

- What can we learn from this verse—this “formula”?
 - *It is God who multiplies*
 - *God’s strength is most important, not our weakness.*

‘A Boy and His Lunch’: John 6:1-14 - 10 min

Facilitator: *For each of the stories in this lesson, be prepared to tell the story in a creative manner.*

Once there was a little boy. He heard that a famous teacher was coming to the Sea of Galilee and wanted to go and hear him speak. He asked his mother, but she said no. It was too far, and lunch was almost ready. He begged again and again, and finally his mother agreed. She packed him a small lunch in his handkerchief, and he took off.

When he finally reached his destination, he discovered it was already packed with people. As with any young boy, he pushed through the crowd to the front. Finally, he found a place where he could easily hear the teacher and his followers. He couldn't believe the way the teacher spoke and the things he said. He completely forgot he still hadn't eaten his lunch.

Finally, he felt hunger pains and remembered the lunch his mother had packed for him. He reached slowly into his handkerchief, trying not to draw attention to himself.

All of a sudden, the teacher stopped and told his disciples to feed everyone. The boy looked around and realised the crowd had grown to 5,000 men as well as many women and children. "Wow," he wondered, "How are they going to make food for so many people?" Just as he was wondering, the helpers seemed to have the same thought, and one asked the teacher where they were going to get the money to feed such a crowd. It would take at least half a year's wages for them all to have just one bite.

The teacher asked them, "What do you have?" The small boy started to hide his lunch, but it was too late. One helper, Andrew, saw him. "Teacher," he said, "This boy has 1,2,3,4,5 loaves of bread and 2 fish." The teacher replied, "Bring them to me."

Can you imagine what happened next?

Andrew said to the boy, "The teacher wants your lunch." The boy agreed to give his lunch to Andrew, who in turn gave it to the teacher.

The teacher took the boy's lunch and gave thanks to God, then started to divide the food. The boy stared in disbelief as the helpers kept passing food out. Everyone was eating and continued to eat until they were full. He looked around and saw that there were 12 baskets of food left.

Now he couldn't wait to get home and tell his mother. He ran all the way home and told her with great excitement that his lunch had fed 5,000 men, women, and children! His mother turned to him and sighed, "Son, how many times do I have to tell you not to make up stories?"

- How can we turn this story into a formula?

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY (3-4 PEOPLE)

Facilitator: Give each group an envelope with the "boy and his lunch" cut outs (**VISUAL AID Card Set 2**) OR make large signs and ask the group to work together to make a formula. Give them suggestions to help them find the answer. Once the group has done one maths formula together, they can do the rest in small groups.

Answer: "boy + 5 loaves + 2 fish x God = food for 5000 men + food for women and children + 12 baskets"

Now that's Kingdom Math!

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Did Jesus need the boy and his lunch? Was there another way that He could have fed the people?
- Why did Jesus choose to take a little boy's only food?

While we consider these questions, we will continue to do more Kingdom Math.

'The Widow and Her Last Meal': 1 Kings 17:7-16, 18:1 - 10 min

It was a very difficult time in Israel's history. The country had been in a terrible famine for three and a half years. People were dying. Even Elijah, God's prophet, suffered.

But God used a widow woman to care for Elijah. As Elijah walked through the town, he saw a woman picking up sticks and God told him to go to her and ask for "a little water in a jar to drink." The woman agreed to get the water for Elijah, but before she could, Elijah then asked if she would also bring him bread to eat first, even before she and her son had eaten.

The woman replied, "As the Lord lives, I have only enough for one meal, for my son and I, and then we will surely die!" To this Elijah answered her, "Don't be afraid, the Lord will provide."

The woman turned to leave and make food for Elijah from the small amount of oil and flour she had. Yet when she had used all of her oil and flour to prepare bread for Elijah, she was surprised to discover her jars of oil and flour were full again, as if they had not been touched. The woman said to Elijah, "I used all I had for you, but now it's back. Praise the Lord!"

The Bible tells us that not only did God provide enough for Elijah, the woman, and the woman's family on that day, but He provided enough for her and her family to eat for another three years! A miracle.

- How can we turn this story into a formula?

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Facilitator: Distribute the envelopes (**VISUAL AID Card Set 3**) and allow each group to try to create a formula. In the low literacy envelope, place the words or symbols for:

- Widow
- 1 cake
- Food for three people for 3 years

Answer: "Widow + 1 cake x God = 1 cake x Widow, Boy and Elijah x 365 days x 3 years = 3,285 cakes"

That's Kingdom Math!

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Was the woman poor?
- Could God have fed Elijah another way?
- Why did God ask Elijah to go to the poor widow woman and ask to be fed?
- Why did God ask the little boy for his only food in the story of the loaves and fishes?
- Does God have a heart for poor people and widows?

'Widow and Her Two Coins': Mark 12:41-44 - 10 min

One day when Jesus was at the temple sitting near the offering basket, He saw the rich drawing attention to themselves as they gave offerings. One poor woman had only two small coins. Because it was all she had, she felt ashamed and did not want others to see, so she gave her offering quietly, as if in secret. Jesus gathered His disciples and made an observation saying, "This woman gave more than all of the others."

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- What did Jesus mean? How did she give more?
- Why didn't Jesus tell her "No, mother, you need it more than the temple." He could have, but He didn't. Why?

Instead of stopping her, Jesus took special note of her sacrifice. Since then, the story of her giving has been written down for many to read. While true that she gave proportionally more, it is literally true as well. For more than 2,000 years, Christians have been inspired by her. Think how much has been given as a result of her example. This is the BIGGEST multiplication of all. She gave what she had, and God multiplied it. That is Kingdom Math!

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Use the **VISUAL AID** cut outs to try to create a maths formula

Answer: "widow + 2 coins x God = Over 2,000 years of inspiration!"

Remind the class:

- *God asked a little boy to give his only lunch...*
- *He asked a widow to feed Elijah first, giving him her last meal...*
- *He allowed this widow to give all that she had...*

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Did Jesus excuse the poor from giving?
- Is anything "too little" or "too insignificant" to give to God?
- Does God bless the giving of the poor?
- What are some of the ways that God blesses our giving?
 - *Material blessing*
 - *Seeing others' lives changed*
 - *Improvement of the community*
 - *Lives saved*

While sometimes we do experience material blessing that isn't always the case. Sometimes God blesses us by allowing us to be part of making a difference in our community or seeing someone come to Christ. Other times He does bless us materially. We are reminded in 1 Corinthians 9:11 that the reason God does bless us is so that we can continue to be generous on every occasion so that God will be praised.

One last story. This one is not so happy...

'Parable of the Talents': Matthew 25:14-30 - 10 min

There was once a wealthy man going on a long journey. Before leaving, he called his three servants. To the first, he gave five talents (a talent is a large sum of money) and said, "Put it to work until I return." To the second, he gave two talents and said, "Put it to work until I return." And lastly, to the third, he gave one talent and repeated, "Put it to work until I return."

The wealthy man went away and, after a very long time, he came back. He once again called his three servants and asked how they had done in his absence. The first servant reported he had used the master's five talents to earn five more talents. To this, the wealthy man replied, "Well done! Faithful with few, now have more."

The second servant then reported he had gained two more talents and again the wealthy man replied, "Well done! Faithful with few, now have more."

Then lastly, the third servant explained, "I know you are a hard and difficult man. I was afraid to lose the money you gave me, so I buried it. It is not lost." To this the wealthy man replied, "Lazy and wicked servant!" He took his coin, gave it to the first servant, and threw him out of the kingdom.

This, too, is Kingdom Math. Let's see...

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Facilitator: Distribute the envelopes (**VISUAL AID Card Set 5**) and allow each group to try and create a formula.

Answer: "servant + 1 talent x 0 (doing nothing) = 0 increase + servant thrown into darkness"

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Who was given the least? But look what happened!
- Doesn't God care about the poor? So why was he thrown out of the kingdom?
- What consequence is there, even for the poor, if they do not obey Jesus?

Conclusion - 8 min

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Are we generous with what God has given us?
2. Is our church generous with what God has given, or do we only use it for ourselves?
3. What ways have we seen God bless us as we have been generous?
4. What changes can I make to apply these principles more in my life and church?

Lesson 8: Acts of Love

Key Idea

We can love our community through Acts of Love. The characteristics of an Act of Love are: done to show God's love, done in obedience to God, done in God's strength, involve as many people as possible, done so God is praised, done using local resources, small and simple.

Materials

1. Small Prize for local resources activity

Facilitator: This lesson involves remembering the 7 characteristics of an Act of Love. We recommend putting these to simple hand actions so that they are much easier to remember. For example – done using God's strength could be demonstrated by flexing your arms. Done in obedience to God could be hands praying. As you introduce each characteristic, go through the hand actions for all the preceding characteristics.

Introduction - 10 min

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- What are some of the things that you usually do as a church to show love to the non-Christians in your community?
- How many people are involved?
- How often do you do those things?
- How do you decide what to do?
- How do people respond?
- Why do you do these things?

Acts of Love - 45 min

In the last few lessons we have been reminded how much God loves every person. We saw that we are also commanded to love our neighbour. Acts of Love are one of the ways that we can do that.

Acts of Love are small projects that are done by the church to demonstrate God's love to their community. Usually they are very simple and can be done in a day.

There are seven specific characteristics of an Act of Love. In this lesson we will review the seven characteristics.

1. Done to show God's love - 5 min

One of the key goals of an Act of Love is to show God's love to your community.

In one community, the church decided to do an Act of Love. They felt that God was telling them to help the wife of the gang leader in the area. They were fearful, as the gang leader had a reputation for becoming very angry and beating up people with little reason. However, the church wanted to obey God. They waited until the gang leader was out of town, and then they helped his wife to harvest the fields and prepare the crops for selling. When the gang leader came home, he saw all the crops harvested and started to shout, "Who did this?" His wife was afraid to tell him, fearful he would make trouble, but eventually confessed that the church had helped. The gang leader stormed off to the church and pounded on the door. After calling the deacons for

back up, the pastor opened the door, and the gang leader came in. “Why did you do that?” He demanded. They replied that they simply wanted to show God’s love. The man started to cry, sharing that no one had ever loved him before in his life. He became a Christian, turned his life around, and went on to lead six more families from the gang to Christ.

- What was the impact of this Act of Love?
- Do you think the gang leader would have had the same reaction if they had just shared the gospel with him?

The main goal of an Act of Love is to obey God’s command to love our neighbour. We want to show God’s love to our community. To begin with, it’s good to think about those we don’t usually show love to, for example those who don’t attend church.

- Why do you think it’s important to show God’s love to non-Christians?
 - *Many non-Christians are unwilling to come to church to hear about God. However, similar to the story, when they see God’s love, it can have a significant impact.*

2. Done in obedience to God - 3 min

As with everything, we want to make sure we are always walking in obedience to God. Rather than doing a community survey to understand the needs and making our own plan to help, we want to start with prayer, asking God what He wants us to do. **Often the most impactful Acts of Love are the things that do not make sense.**

Think about the story we just heard of the gang leader.

- How did the church decide who to show God’s love to?
 - *They prayed and God showed them to love the gang leader.*
- Do you think they would have focused on the gang leader if they had done a community survey of needs?

Sometimes the things that God asks us to do don’t make sense to our way of thinking—like loving the gang leader. But we can be confident that if God is leading us to do something, it will accomplish what He desires, and we will be blessed by participating in His plans.

3. Small and Simple - 5 min

When you first start doing Acts of Love, we encourage you to choose things that are very simple. Ideally, they should be able to be done in a day.

- Why do you think it is important to start with small and simple Acts of Love?

Consider these four ideas: When we start with something small and simple...

1. **We are able to complete it.** If we do something large, then it is easy to get overwhelmed and harder to achieve it. However, if we do something small and simple, then we are more likely to actually do it and get finished.
2. **More people can get involved.** It is easier for people to sign up for a small project and commit to it if they know that it’s just one day or an afternoon. They will say, “Oh, I can do that. I am free that afternoon.” But if it is a big project that takes many days to finish, then people are more hesitant to commit their time and resources. This is especially true when the idea of doing something for other is still new to them.

3. **We have opportunity to build our skills.** Maybe we haven't had much experience in doing projects. This gives us the opportunity to do something simple and get experience before we try to do something complicated.
4. **We get quick success.** As we are successful in small projects, others will join who are attracted by the success. When you first start only a few in the church may be interested in participating. But as you teach more and model successful projects, more people will be interested in joining.

It is better to do small Acts of Love frequently (once every week or two weeks) than to do one big project. In addition to the above list of advantages of doing small Acts of Love, doing frequent Acts of Love also helps to imprint the image of the church caring in the minds of people in the community.

4. Done using local resources - 12 min

PARTNER ACTIVITY

We are going to play a game. Think of Acts of Love that could be done by your church to help people without spending any money at all. Try to list as many as possible. The partners with the most answers after 5 minutes will receive a prize.

***Facilitator:** After two minutes, remind them to think about all the skills that people have in their church that could be donated. After five minutes, have partners share how many Acts of Love they thought of. Give a small prize, like a favourite food item, to the partners who thought of the most.*

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

- Why do you think it is important to do Acts of Love using the resources that you have in your community?
 - **More of a demonstration of love**
Think about the story of the saris in lesson 5. Do you think it would have had the same impact if a large NGO had brought the saris to the community? No, it would not.
 - Why did the people feel loved?
It was because they saw the love of the church as they sacrificed. If the community doesn't feel that any sacrifice or effort went into it, they will not see God's love towards them in the same way.
 - **The blessings of giving.** Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-11. God has told us that He will bless us in the same measure as we give. However, look again at these verses.
 - Why does God bless us?
 1. So we can be generous on every occasion.
 2. So that God will be praised.

As churches have given generously, we have seen them blessed by God. They have started to move out of poverty. But even more importantly, they are able to be even more generous and do even more Acts of Love.

5. Done through God's strength - 5 min

Read John 15: 1-8.

- What does this passage tell us about how much we can do by ourselves? What do you think this means?
- How do we bear much fruit?

Helping people can be really hard. Only God can bring the change we hope to see in our communities. If we want to see our communities changed through Acts of Love, we really need to be looking to God and asking Him for help.

We should always be praying before, during, and after we do Acts of Love. When we face a challenge or obstacles, we need to ask God to make a way through it. If we get tired or discouraged, we must trust God to give us His strength to keep going.

6. Involve as many people as possible - 10 min

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITY

Facilitator: Divide the group into two groups – A and B. Ask group A to choose just one person to represent them. Tell the second group everyone will be involved. Explain to the two groups that they have to connect the two sides of the room using anything they can find. In Group A, the one person must do all the work, but they can borrow things from the rest of the group. In Group B, everyone can work together to collect and place things to connect the two sides of the room. Explain to Group A that the rest of the group cannot speak during this exercise. (If they do, say, “Please be quiet; the ministry team is working.”)

Once both groups are finished ask:

- Who completed first?
- What do you think we can learn from this exercise?
- Group A
 - How did the one person who did all the work feel?
 - How did the rest of you feel? Did you wish to be involved?
- Group B
 - What do you think were the benefits of having many people working together?
- When we do Acts of Love, we try to involve as many people as possible—why do you think that is important?

Often, in the church, just a few people do all the work. Those people can quickly get tired and feel like giving up, while the rest of the people can end up feeling bored or like their talents aren't being used. They don't grow in their skills or in their faith. Sometimes we get frustrated at being asked to give money but having no involvement. When you do an Act of Love, you want to involve as many people as possible from the church in what you are doing. Then we benefit from many people's creativity and energy. A good Act of Love is not just collecting from everyone to give, but involving everyone in doing a project together. Some projects that other churches have chosen to get everyone involved are: cleaning a water system, clearing litter from drainage ditches or roads, and cleaning a medical clinic.

7. Done so that God is praised - 5 min

Read John 15:8 again.

- What is the purpose of bearing much fruit?

Read Matthew 5:13-16.

- Why do we do good deeds?
- What should our goal be when we do Acts of Love?

After we do each Act of Love, we should take time to evaluate. What was the result? Think about three areas:

1. Were the people helped?

2. Was the project done in a loving way?
3. Was God praised?

Sometimes people will see our Act of Love and be open to hearing about God. But not always. The reality is that we won't have the opportunity to speak about God every time we do an Act of Love. But we can seek to glorify God at all times by doing things in a way that honours Him. Even our attitude, our joy, and our motive to serve others can be a testimony that brings God honour and praise.

Conclusion - 5 min

***Facilitator:** Explain that in the next lesson we are going to plan an Act of Love. If you are teaching week-by-week then take time to think this week about what your church could do as an Act of Love.*

Conclude by reviewing the hand actions a few more times.

Lesson 9: Organising an Act of Love

Key Idea

The purpose of this lesson is to give time to prepare an Act of Love.

Materials

1. Large sheets of paper for every 5-7 people

Parable of the Two Brothers - 7 min

Read Matthew 21:28-32

- What does the father ask his sons to do? (*work in the vineyard*)
- Do both sons understand their father's will? (*yes*)
- What is the difference between the two sons?
 - *The first son said he would not obey his father, but then he changed his mind and obeyed.*
 - *The second son said he would obey but then didn't.*
- Which son did Jesus praise? (*The son who was obedient.*)

Jesus was using this parable to expose the disobedience of religious leaders. He said that tax collectors (corrupt government officials) and prostitutes who repented and began to obey would go into the Kingdom of God before the religious leaders who said they loved God but weren't obedient.

It's not enough for us to study and hear God's truths declared. Now we need to put God's truth into action. God wants our loving obedience. We know God's will for us: to love God and love our neighbour as ourselves. We need to start obeying God's will in our lives by loving others through an Act of Love.

Our communities and our lives will not change until we put into action what we have been learning. Let's do an activity to help us begin to take action!

Planning Steps - 30 min

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (5-7 PEOPLE)

Facilitator: *If you are teaching at a local church, it is possible to do this as a whole group. Lead the group through each of the 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. Make sure you take a few minutes of silence to listen to God.

Step 2: Selecting 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 the 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.

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:** 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:** 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?

Conclusion - 10-15 min

We have finished Module 1.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Take time to discuss in small groups some of the main ideas that you remember from this training.

- What is something that you hope to do differently in the next week?

As we finish, let us remember the story of the two sons in Matthew 21:28-31. In this story one son said he would obey his father and then didn't. The second son said he wouldn't obey but did. Jesus praised the one who was obedient. It's not enough just to come and study. We need to put it into action. Our communities and our lives will not change until we put into action what we have been learning. You can start by loving others through an Act of Love or more than one.

Facilitator: *Pray for the group that God would help them to put into action what they have been learning.*