

Make Disciples– Youth Lessons

Lesson #6 – Meeting Jesus in My Community

Life Need – Purpose statement

In this lesson, we will begin to understand the importance of the Church, the community of God. It is in the Church that we meet Jesus most of all because He is present in each of us.

Biblical references – Scriptural background

Ephesians 4:4-6

Teacher Preparation – Information to know

For the best effectiveness of this lesson, it should be taught in an intimate setting of one to eight students. In this kind of setting, the students are then looked at as human beings – not just a “class” to move on after getting the correct answers. They each have a value all their own. This even brings them together to become an enabling community – to help each other develop spiritually with his or her own special gifts and resources.

Familiarize yourself with Lesson 6 in *Following Jesus* - Standard C: *What Does It Mean To Be A Part Of The People Of God?* This will give you background resource to use in teaching this lesson.

Don't forget that the learner perceives truth in various ways through these lessons. As a teacher/instructor/mentor, I must be prepared to accept the fact that my students and discipleship partners may not always understand the truth as I do. If my student is a Christian who is resisting the Holy Spirit in his or her life, there will be problems in accepting the truth I am trying to get across. Also, students who have just accepted Jesus Christ into their lives will still be feeding on the milk, not the meat, of the Word of Truth. We must consider, too, the possibility that my explanation may be less than clear to my students and discipleship partners. Knowing where the individual learners are spiritually is invaluable information for me as a teacher who desires to see spiritual growth. I can then take the Truth to their perspective more accurately.

To draw a learner to examine God's point of view is an exciting part of teaching, instructing and discipling. It is then that we have a chance to see God at work in their lives. When we see God's truth and values becoming a part of the learner's inner character, we can rejoice with God Himself over a student conforming to the image of His Son Jesus Christ.

As you prepare to use the **EvangeCube***, make yourself very familiar with this tool. Never just read word for word, unless you are narrating the story. Make sure that all the students can see okay the EvangeCube and can hear clearly.

While you teach these lessons, make eye contact with your students to show them your excitement about the story of Jesus. This will also help you notice if they are grasping the truth's you are sharing. Feel free to interact with students during the lesson at any time.

Teaching Life – Basic Lifestyle Understanding

After prayer, begin this lesson by using the EvangeCube. Point out the importance of meeting together as Christians after we have spent time in God's Word and prayer.

As Christians, we are the people of God. God loves us and has chosen us for His own. He wants us to meet together so that our focus is on loving one another as He first loved us. We have all the unity we need in the Lord when that happens. We are one and we need to live out the unity we already possess through Jesus Christ.

**The EvangeCube® is a seven-panel cube that tells the story of the Gospel of Christ in pictures. Go to www.jfhp.org for more information and to purchase them.*

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It takes personal faith in Jesus to experience the unity of the body of Christ – the Church. Our new birth in Jesus is the only way to get into the family of God. Once we've established a new relationships with Jesus Christ, we develop a new relationship with countless other people. As we learn to depend on Jesus, the Head of this body, we learn to rely on our brothers and sisters in the faith. That's called interdependence. Instead of separation from others, we now learn to depend on others. Interdependence grows and we find out we really do need each other. When we say "I love you" to Jesus, we also have to say it to each other as fellow believers.

Teaching Truth – Basic Biblical Truth

When the Church is what it really ought to be, it is a fellowship of persons who share, care and serve. That's ministry. And that's the mission of the Church. All believers are called to this sharing, caring serving ministry. Let's look at each of these qualities closer.

The Church as a sharing Fellowship.

Galatians 6:2 talks about sharing each other's troubles and problems. It is our responsibility to share. You can tell how near the New Testament standard our church is by how much the brothers and sisters share. Notice also the pattern in Acts 4:32-35. Ask these questions:

Based on Acts 4, would you say your Church is living up to the New Testament standard? Why or why not?
How can you help your Church live nearer to this Biblical goal?

The Church as a caring Fellowship.

John 13:34-35 talks about the new commandment from Jesus of loving each other just as much as He loves us. The world in which the early Church was born was torn apart by prejudice, bitterness and hostility. The early Christians' lifestyle was in dramatic contrast with the worldly hatred all around them. Believers often heard someone say of them, "See how they love one another!" Perhaps the best word to describe the love characteristic today is CARING. Caring is the evidence that the Church is real and based on Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is our Example for caring. He loves selflessly – not for what He can get, but for what He can give. He loves sacrificially because for Him there is not limit, no boundary. He loves understandingly, even though He knows our weaknesses and failures. He still loves and understands. He also loves forgivingly – ready to extend the grace and mercy and pardon of God the Father.

The Church as a serving Fellowship.

Our world demands success of us. So, we all try climbing this ladder of success we have constructed in order to reach "the top." Jesus said that the top for Christians is really at the bottom, though. There is it closer to people real needs. If you want to be great – to be a leader – to have true success – you must be a servant.

Read John 13:1-17. This describes a community that is quite different from the world. Jesus commands that we, His disciples, do as He has done. It means that, forgetting position or rank, we do all that we can to minister to the needs of others in our Fellowship.

Teaching Application – Basic Life Application

When the Church or Fellowship is what it really ought to be, it is a Fellowship of persons who share, care and serve. How are you serving?

Have each student rate themselves between the following extremes:

Selfish	Selfless
Self-centered	Sacrificial
Assuming	Understanding
Grudging	Forgiving

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In closing, reread John 13:1-17. In obedience to Jesus' encouragement to serve others, have each student discuss how they could "wash" each other's feet – in other words how could they share, care and serve each other more effectively.

Close in prayer that includes thanking God for each other and for strength to be obedient to God to help those in the Fellowship He has left behind.