

Embracing the Mission of God

Small Group Teaching Tool

Weekend message preached Alen Auguste
Sermon text: Genesis 11, Acts 8, Ephesians 2
Teaching tool text: Acts 2:41-47
Every Tribe, Language, People and Nation Series
Weekend of 5.16.10

* LEADER NOTE

This is a discussion guide that is based on the same topic of the Sunday night sermon at Joshua House. It has been created to be a *tool* to help you teach and facilitate discussion in your group, not a *rule* to constrict you. So feel free to adapt it to fit your personality and discussion style as you see fit. You may want to add verses or skip questions as you adapt it to fit what your needs are. Make it your own.

Grounds Rules for Discussion

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic that is being addressed this week, we have created some ground rules to help your small group engage in deep, honest, and edifying discussion. As the leader of the small group, we want to ask you to be particularly vigilant about encouraging everyone to abide by these ground rules. So, before the discussion begins, please read these ground rules out loud to your group:

1. Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
2. Respect one another's views.
3. Criticize ideas, not individuals.
4. Commit to learning, not debating.
5. Avoid blame and speculation.
6. Avoid inflammatory language.

SUNDAY NIGHT SYNOPSIS

[Leader: this section is here to remind you of the direction of the weekend message.]

Alen Auguste was the guest speaker at Joshua House this past Sunday night. His message focused on God's mission and commands to his people. He outlined what happens when we do not as well as when we do choose to fully embrace the mission of God. Alen also spent time discussing the vision of where God's mission is leading us—towards the reconciliation of all human beings with each other. God will eventually remove all the barriers between humans with the power that came from the work of Jesus Christ.

TONIGHT'S BIG IDEA

Tonight, the teaching tool will focus on community and how every follower of Jesus is responsible to move towards the vision of community depicted in Acts 2. It is important to recognize that real community—community that crosses all barriers (racial, ethnic, socio-economic, gender) comes from through empowerment by the Holy Spirit as we choose to yield control and obey Christ's leadership in our lives and in our daily choices. It is likely that you have a basic understanding of the picture of community depicted in Acts 2. However, the focus of this study will try to apply its principles in a way that challenges us towards developing multi-ethnic diversity.

GETTING STARTED (20 minutes)

- Q1.** Think about people. Most people tend to gravitate towards other people who are just like them. Why do you think people tend to spend time with people who are just like them?
- Q2.** With some exceptions, why do you think American churches generally tend to be racially divided?
- Q3.** Ideally, how do you think followers of Jesus should move towards and build diversity community? What do you think it would take to really break the cycle of the same old looking of churches and small groups and really see fruit in our efforts towards diversity?

GETTING INTO THE TEXT .

VS: Read Acts 2:41-47 (TNIV)

- Q1.** What do you think it means to devote yourself to the teachings of the disciples? What do you think people were hungry to learn?
- Q2.** The text says that people were filled with awe and that there were many miraculous and wondrous signs that took place. Have you ever had an experience in a Christian community where you saw miraculous signs and wonders? What did it feel like to be a part of it? Was it exciting? What do you think these early Christians were feeling when they saw signs and wonders happen?
- Q3.** Look at verse 44. What do you think it means for the believers to hold everything in common? What does it look like for believers to hold everything in common today?
- Q4.** Look at verse 45. It says that the believers sold their possessions and shared with anyone who had need. Most American Christians don't sell their possessions and share everything. Why do you think these early Christians were able to live so freely?
- Q5.** Later on in the section of verses, it says that they broke bread and ate together. How have you benefited from spending time with other believers in this way?
- Q6.** In verse 47, it says that this group of believers was adding more believers daily to their group. What do you think made the group so attractive?
- Q7.** If you mostly spend time with people who are like you (color, economic status, etc), what would it take to create a community that shared life together with all different kinds of people?
- Q9.** What are some practical things that you think people could personally try to do (neighbors, work, leisure) to build relationships with people who are different than them?
- Q10.** If we are going to seriously consider building a community that is diverse, why is the power and direction of the Holy Spirit vitally important?
- Q11.** What are some practical things that this small group could commit to build a diverse community within the group?