

*The King will reply. Truly I tell
you, whatever you did for one of the least of these,
you did for me.*

When did we See you

GROUP STUDY GUIDE

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Theme Overview

The theme of “When Did We See You?” is such an important one for the church and us, as people of faith, to consider.

From the opening proclamation of “Emmanuel, God with us,” to the closing declaration of Jesus saying, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age,” a major theme of Matthew’s gospel is “God with us.” The question then becomes, “how is God with us?”

God is with us among the “least of these.” God is with us when we see and care for others. God is with us, empowering us to see others and ourselves, as we are also the “least of these” at times.

Part of the good news of this parable is that God’s care for the “least of these” means that God cares for each of us in our experiences of vulnerability.

When have you been hungry or thirsty; felt like a stranger or been excluded? When have you felt naked and exposed; sick or imprisoned? In each of these circumstances, God sees you.

Jesus pointedly asks those around him (and us), “how will you welcome others?” and “how will you be seen by others?” because God sees who we really are.

The Matthew 25 Initiative of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) calls its churches to act boldly and compassionately to serve people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned or poor. The priorities of this initiative include eradicating systemic poverty, dismantling structural racism, and building congregational vitality, all by seeing Jesus in everything we do.

What a gift to lead young people in this exploration!

Session 1: See & Be Seen // Psalm 139

Session 2: Know & Be Known // Luke 24:13-35

Session 3: Bless & Be Blessed // John 10:7-18 and Psalm 23

And they will say, "Lord, when did we see you?" Matthew 25:44



How to Use This Guide

Each session is organized in the following way:

Session Goals

Highlights the objectives and what you will complete and explore for each session.

Supply List & Prep Work

Provides a list of supplies and what you will need to prepare for each session. Use this to make sure you have everything set up according to the session guide prior to your group arriving.

Theological Points of Reference

Offers insight into how the scripture for each session relates to the subtheme and the session objectives.

Lesson Quick View

Offers an at-a-glance look of the entire session.

Session Guide

You will notice that each session is divided into four sections:

1. Good to SEE You - time spent gathering and forming community
2. Let's SEE- scripture exploration
3. I SEE What You Did There - activities in response to scripture
4. SEE Ya! - closing activity and prayer

Please note that each session includes:

Prayer – Each session includes time focused on prayer. Please allow space for prayers and silence. Offer anyone who wishes to pray out loud the time and respect to do so.

Use of Bibles – The use of Bibles during group time is not optional! It is the main source of inspiration for each session. Please set a good example by bringing your Bible (even in electronic form) with you to each session. Please encourage youth to bring their Bibles too.

Use of Recorded Music – Bring a smart device and portable speakers to use when music is suggested.

Additionally, your job is to create a safe and welcoming space for your group. Please consider the following:

Know Your Space – Check it out prior to your first session. Knowing the space and doing some initial set up will help you to be comfortable and create a welcoming environment for your participants. Make sure to set up your space with different bodies and mobilities in mind. For some activities you will be instructed to hang things up. Think about where and how you might do this in your space. Go ahead and get the supplies you need for this, such as tape or thumbtacks.

Seating – Is the placement of your seating welcoming and inclusive? You can have chairs, sofas, or “fixed” seating. Seating arranged in a circle is a great option because all participants can see one another and be heard. Whatever type of seating you have, try to create an environment that is comfortable and includes everyone.

Use of Newsprint – Are you placing newsprint on a level so all can easily write? Is it too high or too low? Check markers to make sure they do not bleed through to the wall.

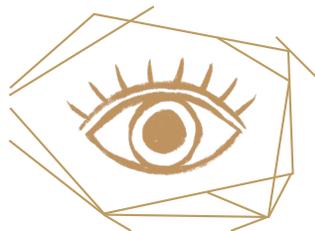
Participant Needs – We are excited to give you this guide to help you and your group explore the ways in which we can see all of God’s children! While we have provided activities that will resonate with a wide variety of groups, we realize that not all activities will work for all groups. You know your group best, so we invite and encourage you to adapt and adjust any of these activities to best meet your participants’ needs. Some of the ways in which you might meet the needs of your group could include:

- Providing small containers of clay or play dough, finger fidget toys, or even just fun pens and paper. This can help students to focus, relieve a little tension in group settings, and also be a helpful act of hospitality.
- Writing out questions you will be discussing. You can print several copies or write them on a white board or newsprint.
- Turning on the closed captioning for any recordings or videos.
- Praying using call and response in which participants repeat after you rather than reading prayers together as a group.
- Playing the scripture using an audio Bible instead of inviting participants to read the passage.
- Becoming familiar with any equipment and tools that might increase accessibility for your participants and providing these resources for them. For example, a hearing loop.
- Providing an interpreter and/or translated resources as needed. For example, find out if someone in your church, presbytery, or community is an American Sign Language interpreter and if they would be willing to join you.



See
and
Be Seen

Session 1



Session One

SEE AND BE SEEN

Session Goals

1. To come in as strangers but leave as friends.
2. To consider the ways in which we see others and the people we refuse to really see.
3. To explore Psalm 139 thoughtfully and creatively.
4. To create our life-size person cut out(s).

Supply List & Prep Work

- Pens / pencils
- Name tags (Printable Glasses Template p.28 for each participant. Instructions on next page.)
- Scissors
- Hole punch
- Yarn
- 6 bunches of colored strips – paper or fabric
 - Each strip should be 1 inch wide
 - Each bunch should contain 1 strip of blue, pink, purple, green, red, orange, and yellow.
 - If you choose the fabric option, you will need these additional supplies:
 - Sturdy piece of cardboard
 - Ruler
 - Glue or hot glue gun
- Group Study Guide Companion (Template available on the PYT website to download and print for each participant.)
- Scratch paper (For those who wish to use it during “Let’s SEE.”)
- Markers / colored pens / colored pencils
- Life-size person cut out(s) (Template available on p. 29 to print.)
 - You can enlarge the template to “life-size” and print at a copy center.
 - You can also trace someone on a piece of butcher paper and cut it out.
- A way to play “Everyday Life” by Coldplay
- Newsprint – Prepare the newsprint to use during “SEE Ya!” like this:
Search me O God and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.
Search me O God and know my heart; test me
Search me O God and know my heart
Search me O God
Search me
Search

Theological Points of Reference

We find that Jesus is present in this world when we recognize Christ's presence in the "least of these."

When we listen from the perspective of the goats, we confront who among us we do not see, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

Psalm 139 not only reminds us that we are seen and fully known, but also calls us to confession. If we make the Psalmist's words our own, we open ourselves to be searched, tested, and led out of wickedness into the way everlasting.

Lesson Quick View

1. **Good to SEE You** - Community Building (nametags & activities)
2. **Let's SEE** - Scripture exploration, Small Group Discussion
3. **I SEE What You Did There** - Explore Psalm 139 through the lens of Matthew 25, and clothe the life-size person cut out(s)
4. **SEE Ya!** - Prayer of Confession and Assurance; See and Be Seen challenge offering

GOOD TO SEE YOU

Name Tags

Supplies: name tags (printed & cut out), scissors, hole punch, markers, pens/pencils, yarn

Welcome your group to your time together. To help learn a little bit more about each other, you will spend time community building. Invite your group members to make a name tag. In keeping with the theme, the name tags are in the shape of a pair of glasses in order to help us "see" one another. You may want to make your own nametag ahead of time to use as an example.

As you enter your space, give each group member a pre-printed, pre-cut name tag. Ask each person to write the following things in the specified location:

- In the left lens, their name and pronouns.
- In the right lens, one word that describes their personality.
- In the frame above the right lens, something they have always wanted to do.
- In the frame below the right lens, their favorite way to spend their free time.
- In the frame above the left lens, what they value most in a friendship.
- In the frame below the left lens, someone they would like to meet.

Once they are done, attach a piece of yarn so they are able to wear it around their neck.

Am I Seeing This Correctly?

Invite your group to think about how many pairs of glasses and sunglasses they own and hold up the number of fingers equal to it. (For example, if they own 2, they will hold up two fingers. If they own 0, they will make an "o" with their hand.) Once they all have their number,

instruct them to pair up with someone else who is holding up the same number. If you have some without a matching number, encourage them to find the person whose number is the closest to theirs. If you have an odd number, you can pair up with that person or have a trio.

Once everyone is paired up, explain that each person in the pair will have three minutes to introduce themselves. The catch is that they cannot speak or write/draw. They will have to use movement and actions in order to share about themselves.

After the three minutes is up, say “switch” so that the other partner will introduce themselves. Encourage the group members to communicate whatever they feel is important about themselves. If you have a group that already knows one another, encourage them to share some new facts, such as something from their younger years.

After both partners have had a chance to share, they will introduce their partner to the group. The first person will share what they “saw.” When they are done, their partner will have a chance to explain what they were ACTUALLY trying to share. Continue sharing until all the pairs have introduced each other. Give your group a cheer for their wonderful acting skills!

I See You!

Invite your group to grab a chair and make a circle. Once they are in a circle, ask each member of the group to look around and pick someone to be their leader but DO NOT let anyone know who they picked. Share with them that once the game begins if their leader moves or changes position in any way, they must do exactly what they do. For example, if the leader is sitting with their arms and legs crossed, then they will sit with their arms and legs crossed.

Check in with the group and make sure that everyone has their leader identified. Once this is confirmed, ask everyone to close their eyes. While their eyes are closed, count backward from five. When your countdown is done, say “open your eyes.” At this point, each person in the group should adjust to mirror what their leader is doing.

Watch the group as they move. Eventually everyone will be doing the same pose (or at least the same two or three poses) since they are all copying one another. Let your group experience and notice this on their own instead of telling them. If you would like, you can do a round two inviting them to choose a different leader the second time.

Debrief this activity with your group by sharing that people are always watching us and we never know who might be looking up to us as their leader. Keeping that in mind, it is important that we choose to treat others with care and kindness. When we do this and are looked up to as a leader, those actions can be catching. They could start a “chain” or “mirroring” reaction that truly shares the love of Christ with others.

Examine me, O God. Look at my heart! Psalm 139:23



LET'S SEE

You study my traveling and my resting! Psalm 139:3

Divide into smaller groups using birth months. Tell participants to call out their birth month and find others born in the same month as them. Adjust these birth month groups as needed so that you end up with 6–8 people in each small group.

In their smaller groups, ask each person to share one person in their life who they feel really sees them using Mutual Invitation. Take a minute to explain that Mutual Invitation is a process that helps us to really listen to the person who is speaking instead of focusing on what we are going to say when it is our turn. When one person is finished speaking, they invite someone else in the group to take their turn.

Example: Person #1 starts by sharing who they feel really sees them. After they are done sharing, they would say, “I invite person #2 (using their name) to go next.” Then, person #2 would share. This process continues until everyone in the group has had their turn.

Use Mutual Invitation in each of the sessions as you see fit. If your group is familiar with one another, it may feel more comfortable. If your group includes multiple youth groups, you may want to allow for voluntary responses during discussions. Mutual Invitation can also be a way for the group to become more familiar with each other and learn names.

Once you have explained the process, ask each smaller group if there is someone who would be willing to start their discussion. Encourage them to share about the person in their life who they feel really sees them. Once the groups have finished, thank them for sharing.

In preparation for the scripture reading, pass out a printed Group Study Guide Companion or printed copy of Psalm 139 to each participant. Explain that as you read Psalm 139, they will be encouraged to absorb the scripture in whatever way works best for them. This could be following along in their own Bibles, closing their eyes to listen and meditate, doodling and drawing, sculpting with clay or play dough, or writing down words and phrases. If they will need any supplies, such as pens or pencils, go ahead and get this to them now. Assure them that every listener is different and that they should listen in whatever way is most meaningful to them.

If you would like to add more options or pages than what is in the provided Group Study Guide Companion, a small notebook or composition book with the same prompts is an additional option.

Before you read, take a few minutes to share the following mindfulness exercise called Box Breathing. Anyone can use this technique as a way to feel calm in a stressful situation or to recenter themselves. You will use Box Breathing to help your group clear their hearts and minds and to observe a few moments of silence.

Box Breathing

Box Breathing, also called square breathing, is a deep breathing technique that helps to slow down breathing. It works by focusing your mind as you count, decreasing the stress in your body. It helps to clear and calm the mind in order to improve focus.

When you are box breathing, you can choose to sit, stand, or lie down on your back. If you sit in a chair, make sure your back is supported and your feet are on the floor.

Breathe as you normally would for one minute, paying attention to the rise and fall of your chest and stomach. If you do not notice this, take a deeper breath. If you are seated or lying down, you will feel your back pressed against the surface when you take a deep breath. Do this deep breathing a few times to get the hang of it.

After a few deep breaths, invite your group to join you in the following breathing pattern. Talk them through the following steps:

1. Breathe in counting to four slowly. Feel the air in your lungs. Breathe in the peace of Christ.
2. Hold your breath for four counts. Try to avoid inhaling or exhaling. Hold the peace of Christ.
3. Slowly exhale through your mouth for four counts. Exhale the peace of Christ.
4. Hold your breath for four counts. Avoid inhaling or exhaling. Hold the peace of Christ.

Repeat this process as many times as you can for 30 seconds of deep breathing. This will help your group focus and be ready to receive God's Word.

When you are done with the Box Breathing exercise, invite the group to offer a silent prayer, asking God to reveal something new to them through this reading.

Add the Box Breathing exercise prior to the scripture reading in each of the sessions or any other time you feel your participants need to recenter themselves.

Read Psalm 139 aloud while each person listens in whatever way works best for them.

Allow a few moments for anyone who wishes to share a word or phrase that jumped out at them as you read. (They should not provide commentary at this point; simply the word or phrase that stuck in their mind.)

Give each group 1 bunch of colored strips of paper or fabric.

If you choose to do this activity with fabric, see additional instructions for weaving in the sidebar on page 12.

Offer these instructions:

- Each group should pick out the three most important ideas that they think are reflected in Psalm 139. Write those ideas on the blue, pink, and purple strips of paper. Any group that wishes to may share their ideas with the larger group.
- Next, ask them to use these three ideas to form one sentence that captures the meaning of Psalm 139. Write that sentence on the green strip of paper. Any group that wishes to may share their ideas with the larger group.
- Ask groups to work together to identify how they see Matthew 25:31-46 in the sentence on their green strip of paper.
- Ask the question, “If we place ourselves in the position of the goats, the ones who failed to see and act for the ‘least of these’ in Matthew 25, how does Psalm 139 speak to us?”
- Finally, use the red, orange, and yellow strips of paper to identify three ways this Psalm leads us to respond to God and see others; particularly those who may be the “least of these.”

Encourage groups to share their red, orange, and yellow strip ideas with the whole group. Thank them for their thoughtfulness.

I SEE WHAT YOU DID THERE

Remind participants that Matthew 25:31-46 is a foundational theme for each session. In Matthew 25, Jesus talks about people noticing and acknowledging others – particularly those who are vulnerable. He equates that acknowledgement with recognizing *him*.

Ask the group to stand wherever they are and to take 3 steps in any direction until they are facing someone. Ask both partners to respond to the question: “Who are people you noticed today?” (If they traveled, ask them to acknowledge who they noticed as they traveled; ate in the cafeteria; gathered at the conference center or church...)

Invite participants to now take 5 steps in any direction until they are facing someone new. Tell them, “Now think about those who may have been “invisible” to you. They were right there! But maybe you just didn’t acknowledge them. Maybe it was someone taking out the trash, driving your van, wiping down counters...people who are there but are not paid attention to – who did you fail to see today?”

Invite participants to take 7 steps in any direction until they are facing someone new. In these new pairs, tell participants, “Now let’s switch gears a little – what are ways that you were noticed today? How did that affect you?”

To limit movement for this activity, participants can be in an inside circle and an outside circle facing one another. One circle moves, while the other circle remains stationary. The circle that moves will be instructed to move a certain number of spaces around the circle. Then participants will discuss the questions with the person in front of them.

Invite participants to return to their seat and ask, “How does it feel when you are not noticed or acknowledged?”

Read Matthew 25:31-46 popcorn style – invite a volunteer to begin reading, allow them to read a few verses and then call “pop” indicating that they should stop reading and someone else should pick up where they left off. It is okay if different versions of scripture are being used.

After reading, use the following questions to guide a group discussion:

- What kind of intention does “seeing” others require?
- When you look at Psalm 139 through the lens of Matthew 25, what does it communicate to us about being seen and seeing others?

If you chose to use fabric strips, now is a good time for your group to weave them together. Follow these instructions then display it in your group space:

- 1. Start by making your cardboard loom. Using a ruler, mark every half inch along the top and bottom of your cardboard. This is where you will cut notches.**
- 2. Use scissors to cut slits along the top and bottom of your cardboard where you made your pencil marks.**
- 3. Take your ball of yarn and wedge the end of the yarn through the first slit. Leave a 3-4 inch tail of yarn on the back.**
- 4. Wrap the other end of the yarn through the bottom slit, then back up again through the next top slit. Continue until you’ve strung your entire loom. Snip off the yarn.**
- 5. Gather the strips of fabric your group wrote on.**
- 6. Weave the scraps of fabric through the yarn on the cardboard loom. Alternate going over and under.**
- 7. Once you’re finished with your weaving, glue the ends of each fabric strip to the back of the loom to hold them in place. (A hot glue gun works well, but you could also use regular liquid glue.)**
- 8. Glue some yarn, ribbon, or string to the top of the cardboard for hanging.**

For pictures visit www.buggyandbuddy.com/weaving-cardboard-loom-fabric-strips

Who Is Unseen?

Invite participants to take a minute to reflect on the answers they heard in their pairs about who we notice and who remains invisible. As they think about these people, they may realize that the answers can be interchangeable. Over the next three lessons, we will take some time to identify the ways in which people or attributes are unseen or invisible.

At the end of each session, we will spend time “clothing” a life-size cut out to help us visualize who God is talking about in the Matthew 25 passage and what we can do. The descriptions are there in the scripture, but when we think about the people who are in our own context, it can be a helpful starting place for how we can do better to care for the “least of these.” It can make this passage far more relatable.

Lay out the cut out and encourage the group to gather around it.

If you have a group of 8 or more, you might use multiple cut outs creating multiple groups.

As you look at the cut out, ask the group to reflect on the following questions/prompts:

- Who are the people we refuse to really see and why?
- What is it like for those that are not seen or considered “invisible?” What feelings do you think they have?

Once you have discussed, begin to clothe your person. First, draw a face and clothe your cut out. Turn this cut out into a person. (A variety of artistic abilities is encouraged!) Next, think about the answers you gave to the above questions and write them on your cut out. This can just be words or illustrations.

After your group has had time to share some words and illustrations, tell them you are going to shift their thinking to how they can begin to care for those whom we do not see. Encourage them to start thinking about the idea that we will find Jesus in this world when we recognize Christ’s presence in the “least of these.” Over the next two sessions, we will explore how we can live into this statement.

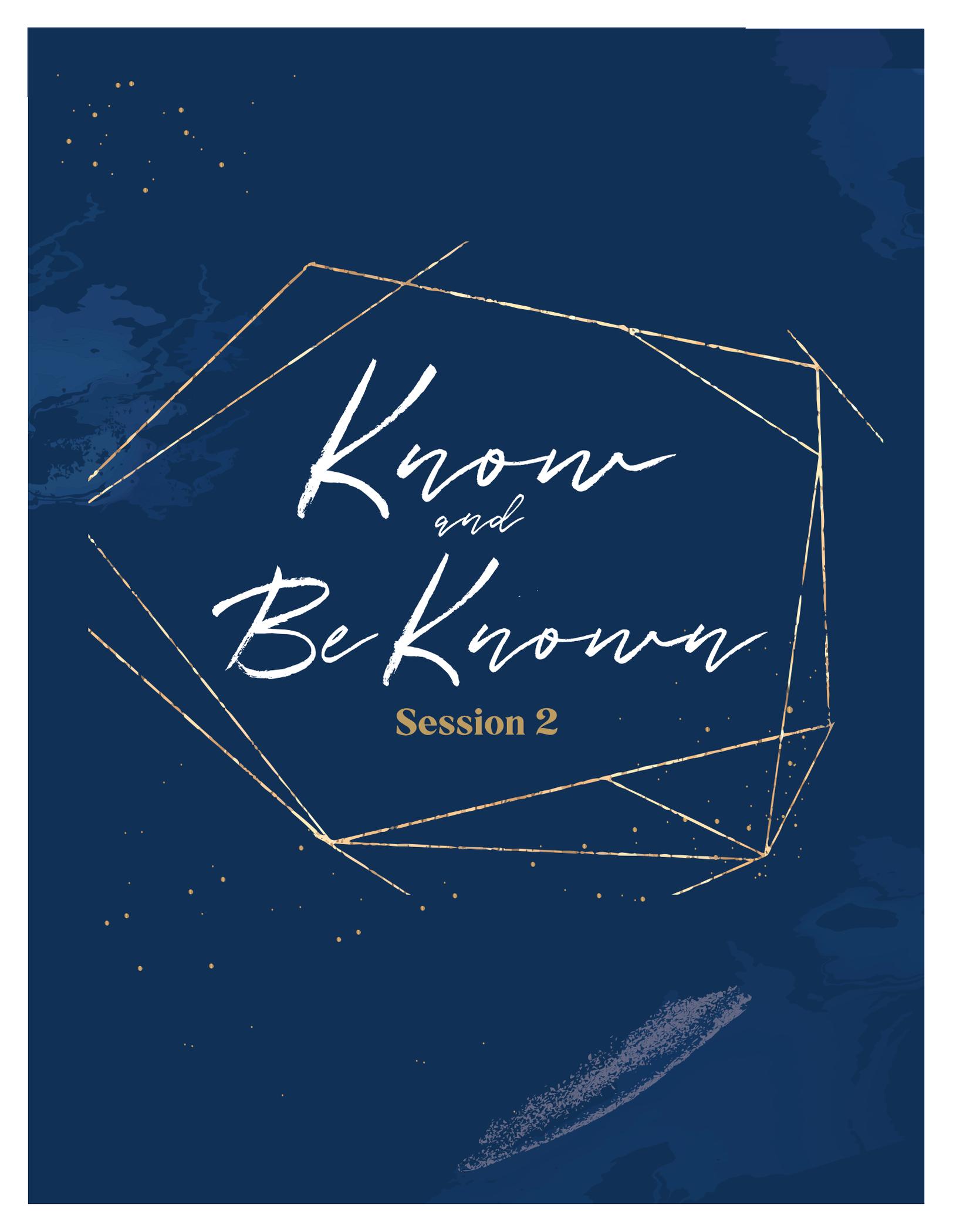
Hang up your cut out(s) in your space so you will have them to reference and use for sessions 2 and 3.

SEE YA!

Invite participants to be seated comfortably. Offer these words as you lead them into a time of contemplation and prayer: Psalm 139 not only reminds us that we are each searched, seen, and known by our Creator, but it also calls us to confess and repent. When the Psalmist asks, “Search me and know my heart, test my thoughts...” he is laying himself bare, inviting God to reveal the shifts he needs to make in his thoughts and actions.

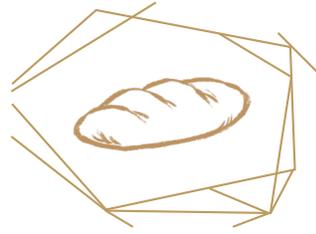
Draw their attention to the newsprint you have prepared in advance with Psalm 139:23. Ask them to spend time reading each line and offering each line as a prayer. With each line, encourage them to acknowledge where God may be inviting them to see and acknowledge others. Play “Everyday Life” by Coldplay as they reflect.

To close, gather in a circle and ask participants to look at the person to their right and make sure they know their name. You should start by turning to the person to your right, placing your hand on their arm or shoulder, and saying, “Name, sees and knows you and invites you to really see those around you. Leave here ready to see.” Invite that person to turn to their right and speak the same charge and so on until the charge has made it around the circle and back to you. Once the person to your left speaks the charge to you, simply end with “Amen.” and dismiss your group.

The background is a deep, textured blue. A golden, hand-drawn geometric frame, resembling a cube or a complex polygon, is centered on the page. Small golden dots are scattered throughout the blue background, particularly around the frame. The text is written in a white, elegant cursive script.

Know
and
Be Known

Session 2



Session Two

KNOW AND BE KNOWN

Session Goals

1. To continue to grow in love of Christ and neighbor.
2. To consider the ways we are known completely by God and called to encounter the honest and authentic identity in others.
3. To explore Luke 24:13-35 thoughtfully and creatively.
4. To illustrate how we feel unknown using the person cut out(s).

Supply List & Prep Work

- 6 Magic Eye pictures (You can find and print these online.)
- Scrap paper (1/4 sheet-sized)
- Pens / pencils / markers
- List of 10-12 famous people that the group can act out
- Determine how participants will move and listen to Luke 24:13-35.
 - If you choose to record yourself reading, be sure to do that in advance.
- Group Study Guide Companion (From Session 1)
- Phone(s) to record #POV videos (optional)
 - If you are unfamiliar with #POV videos, look some up online!
 - You may want to have an example or two to share.
- Supplies for creating a communion tablecloth such as
 - White tablecloth or flat twin sheet
 - Fabric paint & brushes
 - OR Fabric markers / crayons
 - Clothes iron to set art media
- Ingredients & equipment for baking bread
 - See bread recipes on pages 19 & 20 or choose your own.
- Life-size person cut out(s) (From Session 1)

Theological Points of Reference

How do we project false images of who we are and buy into the inauthentic presentation of others? What are the ways in which we need to both know and be known by Jesus in our brokenness and his? Jesus was made known to the Emmaus travelers through the breaking of the bread. We are made known in our willingness to be vulnerable as well.

Lesson Quick View

1. Good to SEE You – Gathering activities
2. Let's SEE – Scripture exploration, Small Group Discussion
3. I SEE What You Did There – Explore Luke 24:13-35 through the lens of Matthew 25
4. SEE Ya! – How we feel unknown cut out(s)

GOOD TO SEE YOU

What Do You See?

Supplies: Magic Eye pictures numbered 1-6 in the corner, pens/markers, scraps of paper (1/4 sheet sized), list of names of famous people

In your space, hang up the Magic Eye pictures. Give each participant a piece of paper and have them number it from 1-6. They will also need a writing utensil. Invite them to move around the room looking at the magic eye pictures trying to figure out what it is. Once they see the image, write down their answer on their paper next to the corresponding number. Encourage them to start out working individually. After several minutes, if you see they are getting frustrated, allow them to work in pairs or as a group.

Once your group has discovered the images, ask them:

- How easy or hard was it to find the image?
- Did you find them all?
- Did you need help?
- Did you give up?

Share with the group that finding these images is not all that different from how we function every day. Sometimes we do not notice what is right in front of us. Sometimes it takes us a while to see things or for them to come into focus. Sometimes we do not recognize Christ's presence in our midst. We can be so busy processing multiple things that we cannot or do not see things.

To make this activity more tactile, you can also take 6 brown lunch bags and place an item or two in each of the bags. Participants can feel the item inside of the bag without looking then try to "see" and identify the item.

Who Are You, Really?

You will divide your group into two teams for this activity. To do this, ask participants to stand by their favorite magic eye picture. Choose three of the pictures to group together to make one team and put the other three together to make the other team. Adjust accordingly to make your teams even.

Share with the group that you have made a list of 10-12 famous people and they are going to have to try and identify the people using reverse charades. You could use people like Harry

Styles, The Rock, Big Bird, 11 from Stranger Things, or other famous people that will resonate with your group. One person will be the guesser while the rest of the group will act out the famous person.

To get started, each team will select their first guesser. Instruct the guessers to leave the room or to go to a corner with their backs turned to you. You will then show the teams a piece of paper with the name of a famous person on it. Once the teams know who they will be acting out, invite the guessers to rejoin the group.

In order to keep the guessers from seeing more than their own team, have the guessers stand back to back with their teams in front of them. This will prevent them from getting help from the other teams. Since the teams will be playing simultaneously, once the famous person has been guessed the round will be over and new guessers can be selected.

If you would like it to be less competitive, you can have the teams go one at a time while the other team watches and cheers them on. To adapt this activity, you can say or write out famous movie lines and ask the participants to identify who (actor or character) said the line.

When you have gone through your list of famous people, bring the group's attention back together. Ask them:

- Was it hard or easy to guess the famous person?
- Did you need to look at more than one person to guess who it was?
- Was there one action that made it “click” for you? One action that told you right away who it was?

Share with them that this was a fun way to think about how sometimes the people we need to see are right in front of us, yet we struggle to see or identify them. Now, you will explore the scripture passage. This passage happens on Easter day as Jesus is traveling with two of his disciples who do not even know who he is. It takes the simple act of breaking bread together before they realize they are in Jesus' presence.

LET'S SEE

Teacher Prep and Consideration

The scripture text for this session is Luke 24:13-35 which tells us the story of the travelers on the road to Emmaus. Luke tells us that they walked 7 miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus. The presentation of scripture here lends itself well to getting out and moving! Consider where you will be presenting this lesson. Could participants get out and move for 7 minutes? 7 blocks? 7 laps around the parking lot or church grounds? Depending on ability or preference, participants could also trace a finger labyrinth 7 times or for 7 minutes as their way of moving. While they move, they can listen to scripture in a variety of ways.

Examples:

- Visit www.biblegateway.com, type in Luke 24:13-35, and choose a preferred version.
- Use YouVersion's Bible App, search Luke 24:13-35, and choose a preferred version.
- Listen to the recording provided on the PYT website.
- Record yourself reading Luke 24:13-35! Send it to them as a voice recording.

Lesson Instructions

Offer that this session's scripture is meant to be listened to while moving around! It should be experienced as the main characters did, traveling from one place to another. Give instructions about where and how they should listen to the scripture. Explain that if the scripture ends and they are still moving, they can listen again! Tell them to listen carefully, imagining the story as they move.

Once they have returned, invite them to take their Group Study Guide Companion and turn to the page with the following questions about the scripture:

- What stood out? What did you capture as you listened?
- What questions did the story leave you with?
- It is important to remember that these events happened the same day as the resurrection. Does that change your perspective at all? How?

When everyone has had some time to reflect, ask the group members to share some of their responses.

Ask participants to divide into groups of 3-4. Assign each group one of the following (it's okay for them to repeat):

- Cleopas and his friend
- The "stranger" on the road
- The eleven
- The women from earlier in the day who had not been believed (Luke 24:10-11)

Each group should create a #POV video retelling the story of Luke 24:13-35 from the point of view of their assigned person(s). If you are unfamiliar with #POV videos, look some up online! Encourage them to consider how Cleopas and his friend, the stranger on the road, the eleven, or even the women who discovered the empty tomb, would retell this story.

Thank them for their creative work.

I SEE WHAT YOU DID THERE

Remind participants that Matthew 25:31-46 is a foundational theme for each session. In Matthew 25, Jesus talks about people noticing and acknowledging others – particularly those who are vulnerable. He equates that acknowledgement with recognizing *him*.

Read Matthew 25:31-46 popcorn style. Invite a volunteer to begin reading. Allow them to read a few verses and then call “pop,” indicating it is time for them to stop and for someone else to pick up where they left off. It is okay if different versions of scripture are being used.

Use the following questions to guide discussion:

- God really sees and knows us. When have you felt invisible to others; unknown or misunderstood?
- What do you want people to know about you?
- When you look at this portion of Luke 24 through the lens of Matthew 25, what does it communicate to us about being known?

The communion table is a great example of what it means to know Christ and to be known by him. In the breaking of bread and the sharing of the cup, we know the sacrificial love broken and poured out for us. We are welcomed, all of us – just as we are, and are known by Christ as we approach the table and share in its meal. Lead the group to prepare for communion. Could it be shared later in a corporate worship service? Could it be a part of your gathering now?

Another option is to gather your group for a formal, family style sit down dinner and conclude the meal with communion. If you are at a campsite, you might have communion around the campfire.

You will need three groups of young people:

- Group 1 will bake the bread.
- Group 2 will write liturgy for communion (an invitation to the table, a prayer and a piece of responsive liturgy).
- Group 3 will create a tablecloth that will be placed on the communion table.

Remind groups that at the table we are known by Christ even as he is made known to us.

Unleavened Bread Recipe

Yields approximately 12 servings

Ingredients:

2 cups all-purpose flour $\frac{2}{3}$ cup vegetable oil $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt $\frac{2}{3}$ cup water

Equipment:

Mixing bowl Mixing spoon Baking sheet Oven

Directions:

- 1. Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.**
- 2. Mix flour, oil, and salt together in a bowl. Add water and mix using a pastry cutter until dough is soft. Form dough into 6 balls and press into disks onto the prepared baking sheet using your hands.**
- 3. Bake in oven until bread is cooked, 8 to 10 minutes.**

Gluten-Free Communion Bread Recipe

Yields approximately 12 servings

Ingredients:

5 cups gluten-free bread flour*

*If your bread flour doesn't contain xanthan gum, add 1 teaspoon to the recipe)

2 cups hot water

2 tablespoons olive oil

3 tablespoons honey

1 tablespoon salt

Equipment:

Stand mixer with dough hook

Baking sheet

Parchment paper

Oven

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400F (225C).
2. Mix water, olive oil, honey, and salt in a stand mixer with a dough hook until well-combined.
3. Add in the bread flour a little at a time while mixing until the dough pulls cleanly away from the sides of the mixer.
4. Continue mixing the dough for 5 to 7 minutes.
5. Divide the dough into seven small balls. Place each ball on a sheet of parchment paper and roll out until 1/4 inch thick.
6. Pierce the top of each loaf with a fork. (This is important as this will prevent the dough from rising.)
7. Bake in the oven until bread is cooked, 15 to 20 minutes.



Jesus said: "You foolish people! Your dull minds keep you from believing - Luke 24:25"

SEE YA!

As your groups finish creating their communion elements (or finish observing communion), invite them to grab their person cut out(s) and come back together. Have them look over the things they wrote in Session 1 about the people that we refuse to really see. Take 60 seconds to recall the conversation focusing on the “why” that the groups discussed. Now, you are going to shift focus a bit.

Before we can dive into the ways in which we recognize and care for others, we must take some time to recognize who we are and to know ourselves. Using the reverse side of your cut out(s), your group will spend some time identifying who they are. Invite them to come back together in the same groups as in Session 1. Have them add a face and some clothing to the reverse side of the cut out(s). The goal is to create a collective person. A simple way to do this is to add one feature or article of clothing from every person in the group. When they are done, have them share some of their responses from the “I SEE What You Did There” section.

- When did you feel invisible, unknown, or misunderstood?
- What do you want people to know about you?

Using the responses to these questions, write words or draw illustrations on their collective person.

Have the group(s) sit with their cut out(s) for a minute or two and look over all the things that have been written/illustrated. If you have more than one group, trade cut outs and look at what the other groups have shared in response to the above questions. Keep trading cut outs until you have looked at all of the responses that have been shared.

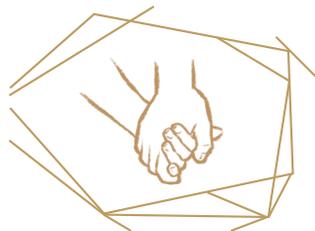
Share with your group that they are not alone. They may have noticed that others wrote the same type of things. In all these feelings that we have, we can be ASSURED that God sees us and knows us. We are God’s children and because of this we are KNOWN and LOVED and nothing that we do can separate us from that love.

Close your session with a prayer. Invite your group to keep their eyes open and look at their cut out(s). Open the prayer thanking God for your time together. Invite the group to share some of the ways they feel invisible, unknown, or misunderstood. They can share what they wrote or someone else’s words. When everyone has had a chance to share, give thanks to God for claiming every member of your group. Invite the group to share what they want people to know about them. Again, they can share what they wrote or someone else’s words. When you feel the sharing is complete, close the prayer.



*Bless
and
Be Blessed*

Session 3



Session Three

B L E S S A N D B E B L E S S E D

Session Goals

1. To continue to grow in love of Christ and neighbor.
2. To consider the blessing in being shepherded by Jesus.
3. To explore John 10:7-18 and Psalm 23 thoughtfully and creatively.
4. To identify how we serve the “least of these” using the cut out(s).

Supply List & Prep Work

- Voice recordings (for Know My Voice activity)
- Paper
- Pens / pencils
- Group Study Guide Companion (From Sessions 1 and 2)
- Psalm 23 coloring sheets from Illustrated Ministry available on the PYT website
- Colored pencils / fine line markers
- Music Playlist available on the PYT Website
- Life-size person cut out(s) (From Sessions 1 and 2)

Theological Points of Reference

Jesus is the good shepherd. We are his sheep who hear his voice and who seek to follow his lead to be a blessing to "the least of these".

Lesson Quick View

1. **Good to SEE You** - Gathering activities
2. **Let's SEE** - Scripture exploration, Small Group Discussion
3. **I SEE What You Did There** - Explore John 10:7-18 & Psalm 23 through the lens of Matthew 25
4. **SEE Ya!** - How we serve the “least of these” cut out(s)

GOOD TO SEE YOU

Here, Sheepy, Sheepy, Sheepy...

Invite your group to pair up by finding someone whose eyes are a different color than theirs. If you have an odd number, an adult will need to play. Once everyone is paired up, instruct each

pair to choose an animal and a sound to go with it. When a pair has decided, they should raise their hands to indicate that they are done. Ask each pair to share their animal and the sound they have created for that animal. There cannot be two of the same animal in your group. If there is a repeat, ask one pair to choose something different.

When you have reviewed all of the animals & sounds, instruct the pairs to split up. One member of the pair will go to one side of the space and the other pair will go to the other side of the space. While their eyes are closed, leaders should mix up participants so that the pairs are not directly across from one another. This will prevent participants from remembering where their partner is standing. (As an option, one side can remain stationary while the other side works their way toward their partner.) After everyone has been mixed up, they should start making their animal sound as loud as they can. The objective will be for each person to find their partner by listening for their animal sound. You will keep going until everyone has found their partner.

When you are done, ask the group to share:

- What made this easy or hard?
- How often do we have people/things “yelling” at us that distract us from hearing what we need to hear?
- What do you do when you really need to hear something?

(Safety note: If you have extra adults, have them spaced around the room to help prevent collisions. Instruct group members to keep their hands out in front of them to act as “bumpers.”)

Know My Voice

Supplies: Voice recordings, paper, writing utensils

In this activity you will play voice recordings and the group members will try to identify who is speaking. Develop a list of 10–12 people that will resonate with your group. To prepare for this activity, Google voice recordings for each person. Either bookmark those web pages or make a list of links. Have them all pulled up and ready to go before the session begins. You might even include recordings of local celebrities such as the pastor or pastors of the church(es) in your group. You can use your phone, computer or Zoom to record these. It is okay, maybe even good, to include some recordings that will stump participants. The goal is not for your group to guess all of them.

Invite the group members to number their paper based on the number of recordings you will share. Explain that you will play a recording and they will listen carefully. They will guess who is speaking by writing down the person’s name next to the corresponding number. Share that this is an individual activity and you do not want them to help each other just yet.

I came so that they could have life. John 10:10



After you have worked through the list of recordings, go over the correct answers. Ask the group the following questions:

- Did you find this hard?
- Why do you think some voices were easier to identify than others?
- How do you choose what voices you were going to listen to and those that you are not?

Give a little shout out for those that know their voices! :)

LET'S SEE

Guide participants to form groups of 5-7. Have groups read Jesus' words in John 10:7-18. Use the following questions to guide discussion in their small groups:

- Jesus says that his sheep know his voice. What other voices do we listen to or follow?
- In your opinion, what is the most important thing that Jesus says here? Why?
- Why is the truth in John 10 an important message to us today?

Encourage participants to get comfortable with their Group Study Guide Companion and pens/pencils. Tell them that you will read a passage of scripture and they should doodle or capture any words or phrases that grab them as you read. Read Psalm 23 once then pause for a few beats of silence before reading it one more time. Ask:

- What did you capture as this Psalm was read?
- What words or phrases did you find meaningful?
- What images stood out to you?
- Is there anything particularly significant to you in these words?

Provide the coloring sheets from Illustrated Ministry along with some music and encourage participants to choose the phrase that was most meaningful to them. Provide space for them to color as they move into the "I SEE What You Did There" section below.

You can use the provided playlist or your own selections.

I SEE WHAT YOU DID THERE

Remind participants that Matthew 25:31-46 is a foundational theme for each session. In Matthew 25, Jesus talks about sheep and goats. The sheep are compared to those who saw and cared for the "least of these." The goats are those who failed to see and notice.

Read Matthew 25:31-46 again and focus for a moment on the term "sheep." In our current culture, there are places that tell us being a "sheep" is an insult and suggests that we are not able to make our own choices. How do John 10, Psalm 23, and Matthew 25 frame the idea of

being a sheep led by a shepherd? How and why is “following” a good thing in our context? What is the blessing in being a sheep?

SEE YA!

Bring your whole group back together with your person cut out(s). To start this last session, have your group look at side two of the cut out(s). They should focus on what they wrote that they want people to know about them. Ask them if they would like to add anything else at this time. Encourage them to think about what God would want people to know about them. They should add any new thoughts or answers now. (You can also encourage them to add their skills and gifts to this side if they have not already done so.)

When they have finished adding to side two, flip the cut out(s) back to side one. If you have more than one cut out, give your group a few minutes to look at all of them and take in some of the words and images. Remind them that their first task was to identify the people that we refuse to really see and what is it like for those who are not seen and are considered “invisible.” Now, they are going to start working on ways they CAN really see people – all people.

Ask your group to think about how they feed into making others feel invisible in intentional or unintentional ways. Explain that this is a time for honest reflection, but not for judgment or guilt. Invite them to jot down a few thoughts in their Group Study Guide Companion. Once they have written some ideas, invite them to focus on one of the things that was written or illustrated on the cut out in Session 1. Maybe this is something that they feel they really need to work on. Next to it, ask them to write down the ways in which they are going to work on seeing this person. It might be choosing to really listen to them, engaging them in conversation, or physically doing something to assist them.

We are intentionally choosing not to “cross out” the ways in which we make others feel invisible. If we were to cross these out, we might be suggesting that it is simple for us to wipe away injustices and that these changes are easy for us to make. The ways in which we make others feel invisible does not happen overnight and it will take some hard, intentional work for us to do what God is calling us to do. Share this with your group as you work on ways that we can serve all of God’s children with love and grace.

After the groups are done adding the ways in which they are going to work on seeing others, ask each person to choose one right now. They should think about what their gifts are and how they are best equipped to care for others. Tell them to jot this one down in their Group Study Guide Companions and make a commitment to intentionally work on it. They should carry this one around with them beyond this session and write about it often. They can find a partner in their group or another friend or family member who can help keep them accountable.

“my cup is so full it spills over” Psalm 23:5

Closing

Thank your group for their hard work over all three sessions. These are not easy conversations. It can be hard for us to admit that we do not always see other people, especially those who really need to be seen. You will close your session with prayer. Invite the group to make a circle and explain that you will all contribute to the prayer. Open the prayer by thanking God for your time together. With the prompt, “thank you, God, for opening our eyes so that we are able to see...” go around the circle giving each group member a chance to share. For the second go around, offer the prompt, “God be with me as I try to...” giving each group member a chance to share. Once you feel as though all have shared, close the prayer.

And they will say: "Lord, when did we see you?" Matthew 25:44



Resources

