

“The Great Mission”

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to train your group into potential disciple-makers and lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God’s Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word with His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Welcome—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. (The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time.) Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they’ve had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to review the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today’s truths.

Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week’s message and reflect on its implications for our lives. (As a training tool, leaders might want to have various members summarize the teachings in their own words each week sharing how they think the Scripture applied to the original hearers and how the principles apply to us today.)

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Message Outline

THE GREAT MISSION

Jonah 4:1-11

Lessons we learn from Jonah:

1. Our greatest sin is Idolatry.

Manifestations:

Self-centeredness. (2-3)

Self-service. (4-5)

Self-preservation. (6)

Self-_____.

Results (Psalm 115:4-8):

Blind to God's grace.

Deaf to God's questions.

Numb to God's heart.

Mute to God's voice.

2. Our greatest need is Jesus.

Selflessly pursues sinners.

Selflessly serves His enemies.

Selflessly died to save.

3. Our greatest joy is obedience.

When we delight in God we display His attributes:

Let's open our eyes to see those who need God's grace.

Let's open our ears to hear God's heart.

Let's open our mouths to speak the Gospel.

Let's use our hands/feet to make disciples of Jesus.

Message Summary

This week's message is the 4th and final message in the series, Jonah: A Whale of a Story. Throughout this series we have seen that the story is not really about Jonah, a fish, or even Nineveh but it's about the God who has a heart for the nations. Throughout the story, however, we have learned that in many ways we resemble Jonah, the pouting prophet, who was prone to disobey God.

Chapter 4 is a peculiar ending to such a fascinating story. We discover that Jonah, while obedient on the outside, was struggling with hatred toward the Ninevites on the inside. His heart actions overshadowed his outward obedience. The story ends with a probing question to the prophet that has implications for the reader today. This question not only uncovered Jonah's heart issues but ours as well. We discovered that when we delight in God and His gracious attributes that we will reflect those attributes to the world around us, accomplishing the Great Mission of God.

As you prepare to meet with your community group this week reflect on and answer the following questions. Ask God to uncover any “idols of the heart” you might be wrestling with in your life. Ask Him to reveal to you that idol that is hindering you from living out the Great Mission of God.

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Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help make application of God’s Word to your Head (What God wants me to know), to your Heart (What God wants me to desire/value), and to your Hands (What God wants me to do).

1. What did you dislike from this passage/message? What did you like? What questions do you have from the message?
2. It was said that Jonah’s greatest sin was idolatry. Since God’s grace on Nineveh was “evil” to Jonah, what does this indicate that Jonah loved more than God’s graciousness? What have you loved more than seeing God’s grace displayed to unbelievers?
3. Jonah’s idolatry made him deaf to God’s questions (v. 4). How have you experienced this reality in your life? What “self” attribute discussed in the sermon was the cause of your deafness? How does reflecting on what you have been given in Christ reorient your selfishness?
4. What does verse 6 say about God? Jonah? How has Jonah’s problem been exhibited in your own life? How does reflecting on the Gospel remedy this problem in your life?
5. What did God uncover in Jonah’s heart when He asked the final question in verse 11? It was said that this book ended with a question so that it might provoke the same question in your own heart. What has this question uncovered in your heart? How does reflecting on the Gospel remedy this problem in your life?
6. Read Philippians 2:1-11. How does this passage provoke worship in your heart? It has been said that those who believe the Gospel become like the Gospel. What does this passage warn against? How does this passage change you to become more Gospel-minded?
7. Read Matthew 12:38-41. Jesus said that “something greater than Jonah is here.” In thinking about the parallels between Jonah’s ministry to Nineveh and Jesus’ ministry, how was Jesus “greater” than Jonah?
8. No matter where you are spiritually, what would it look like to obey what you learned this week?

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Respond . . .

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from this study?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from this study, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this study?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?
- What is going to be the most difficult aspect of this study to personally apply?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength to apply these truths, for personal needs, for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel, and for our weekly prayer focus as a church...

Weekly Prayer Focus

- **Church:**
Gene & Shelley Blackmarr
 - Grieving the unexpected passing of Gene’s Dad, Kingdon “Collins” Blackmarr, Jr.
 - Celebration of life services:
 - Wednesday, November 12, 2014, 6 p.m. – Niceville Christian Church, Niceville, FL.
 - Saturday, November 15, 2014, 3 p.m. – Berea Christian Church, Hampton, GA.
 - Safe travels to Hampton, GA & back.
- **Local:**
The physical community in which your small group meets.
 - Growing relationships with neighbors.
 - Opportunities to serve this community.
 - Gospel conversation opportunities.
- **Global:**
Bill & Sandy Younger, Good Shepherd Ministries, Milot, Haiti
 - Shepherd’s Care (Hospital) construction in Savane Carree.
 - School needs in each town (Milot, Biciaire, Savane Carree).
 - Financial needs.