

WITNESSING TO JESUS

God's mission and our evangelism

Community Group Bible study series

Leaders version - 2016

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NOTES

FEEDBACK

We'd really appreciate feedback on the series, how helpful you found it and any suggestions for improvement. If you are able please send any feedback via email to: office@trinityinnersouth.org.au

BOOKLET

1. Were the studies helpful?
2. Would you use them again if they were produced in future?

OVERALL

1. Did the series help you grow in your understanding of and enthusiasm for evangelism?
2. How would you like to see them made better?
3. Did you grow in your biblical understanding of evangelism?

Any other comments would be welcome.

OVERVIEW

Here at Trinity Inner South (TIS) we want to be a church that works together with every person playing their part in community that is actively seeking to share the great news of Jesus, the gospel, with those who haven't met Jesus yet. If we're doing this and Christians of all ages are growing to maturity in the faith, we believe God's great vision for His church is being realised.

These studies are designed to do both, to help Christians grow in a solid biblical understanding of evangelism, which is one aspect of maturity, and help us reach out with the gospel. The aim is to simply look to the Bible for the answers to some of the basic, yet big questions about evangelism.

I'd like to express my thanks to Mark Curran for putting these studies together and to Tim Patrick, who produced an excellent set of studies and lectures on the topic at Bible College SA which Mark leans heavily on. My prayer is that this study series will be a great help and encouragement to our community groups, and that it will help us to build a sharp, evangelistic culture within these groups – and within TIS as a whole.

Your brother in Christ,



Matt Lehmann
Senior Pastor



COMMUNITY GROUPS

COMMUNITY GROUPS AT TRINITY INNER SOUTH

Regular Bible study in small groups is a great way to grow as a Christian. At Trinity Inner South (TIS) we call our groups Community Groups because we see them as more than a Bible study. We see three things as being really important to our groups:

1. GROWING AS DISCIPLES OF JESUS

This is a central goal of all we do at TIS and God's appointed way of doing so is through ministry of the word and through prayer.

2. GROWING IN LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER

God has called us to be in community with one another and there are many "one another" tasks in the Bible, which simply can't be achieved at a big Sunday gathering and are better done in smaller groups.

3. SERVING THE GOSPEL TOGETHER

We'd love all our groups to be growing in their commitment to the gospel and how that works out practically at a local church level.

JOINING A COMMUNITY GROUP

If you are able to join one of our community groups and haven't done so yet, please consider it in the next few weeks. The easiest way to get into a group is to go to our website at www.trinityinnersouth.org.au/#/connect and launch the form at the bottom of the "Community Groups" page. Karl Forsyth our Community Group co-ordinator will get in touch with you.

10. What opportunities do you have for relational evangelism? Is it something you feel suited to?

READ JOHN 20:30-31 (WRITTEN EVANGELISM)

11. John wrote a book to persuade people of the truth of the gospel. Are there ways in which we can use our written words evangelistically?

12. What are some achievable changes you could make in order for evangelism to be a higher priority?

Pray

4. What does he do well?

5. How have you seen public, spoken evangelism done well? Or done badly?

6. What opportunities do you have for public, spoken evangelism? Is it something you feel suited to?

READ ACTS 8:26-40 (PRIVATE EVANGELISM)

7. How does Philip go about engaging privately with this person about the gospel?

8. What does he do well?

9. What are some experiences you have had with relational evangelism (whether encouraging or discouraging) that stand out to you?

EVANGELISM – WHAT, WHY, WHO AND HOW?

These studies were put together for all our groups to use at some time in 2016. We'd love each of our groups to pick a time in the year to devote five weeks to this very important topic. Here is an overview of the series:

STUDY	TOPIC
Study 1	Why witness to Jesus?
Study 2	What is the message?
Study 3	What is evangelism?
Study 4	Who witnesses to Jesus?
Study 5	How do we witness to Jesus?

We hope you really enjoy the series and there's a feedback form at the end of the booklet which we'd really like your group to complete.

STUDY 1 – WHY WITNESS TO JESUS?

Blue text like this denotes leader's notes – these will not appear in the general booklets.

AIM: To understand that God is worthy of being praised by all people (which in itself is enough of a reason to want all people to know him), and that every person is a sinner who needs God's free offer of forgiveness and salvation in Jesus to escape the coming judgment.

Before Study 1: A great way to start these studies would be for everyone in the group (as appropriate) to share about one or two friends or family members of theirs who they are praying to come to faith. This will not only be a good start in having a loving and accountable evangelistic culture in the group, but it also means that these studies will be a lot more 'real' for your group members, as you will be going into them thinking about people you are planning to evangelise to.

OVERVIEW: The first question we should ask before doing anything is 'Why am I doing this?' When we think about evangelism, it's a good start to know exactly why it is we are telling people about Jesus. And to do this, we need to understand who God is, who we are, and the urgency of our situation.

1. Why should we bother witnessing to Jesus at all?

READ PSALM 89:1-18

2. How is God described in this Psalm? What qualities stand out to you personally?

STUDY 5 – HOW DO WE WITNESS TO JESUS?

AIM: To have a biblical understanding of what evangelism looks like, both in a private and public setting, and to be applying this practically to our own lives.

OVERVIEW: We have talked a lot in the last four weeks about some of the principles behind evangelism. But how do we actually go out and do it?

1. What are the things that challenge you personally about sharing your faith, in whatever circumstances?
2. Are there particular verses or passages in the Bible that shape you in the way you do or think about evangelism?

Romans 1:16-17 (not being ashamed of the gospel)

1 Corinthians 9:22 (all things to all men)

Colossians 4:2-6 (make the most of every opportunity)

1 Peter 3:15 (always prepared to give an answer)

We will consider evangelism in three different spheres – public spoken evangelism, private spoken evangelism and written evangelism – and see how each of them is addressed and illustrated in the Bible.

READ ACTS 17:16-34 (PUBLIC EVANGELISM)

3. How does Paul go about engaging publicly with people about the gospel?

5. What are the harvest fields you see around you today? Are there particular harvest fields you feel God has put on your heart to work in? (This could include communities you're a part of, or even just individuals you know).

READ EPHESIANS 4:11-13

6. Do you know anyone who you would consider to be a 'natural evangelist'?

7. What is the role of the evangelists in this passage?

READ ACTS 1:6-8

8. It's not uncommon for Christians to refer to evangelism as 'witnessing', and to themselves as 'witnesses'. How does thinking about yourself as a witness shape the way you think about evangelism?

Pray

3. How are people called to relate to God?

[\(See also Deuteronomy 6 – following God's commands and teaching your children\)](#)

READ EPHESIANS 2:1-10

4. How does this passage describe the nature of humans?

5. What is a converted Christian's standing with God, and how is this achieved?

READ 2 PETER 3

6. How does this passage describe the situation of believers and unbelievers?

7. Do you find you naturally have a sense of urgency in your relationships with people who aren't Christian?

8. What steps or habits could we put in place to prevent complacency in our relationships with non-Christians?

Pray

STUDY 4 – WHO WITNESSES TO JESUS?

AIM: To understand that while evangelism is something all Christians are to do, we have different skill-sets and harvest fields, and we can take comfort knowing that Jesus is with us always.

OVERVIEW: Let's have a look at exactly what the Bible has to say about our job description as evangelists.

1. Should all Christians be involved in evangelism or are some specially set aside for it?

READ MATTHEW 28:16-20

2. Jesus effectively gives the disciples four commands in v19-20 - Go, Make disciples, Baptise them, Teach them everything I have commanded you. What is the significance of each of these commands?

3. What comfort can we take from the end of verse 20?

READ MATTHEW 9:35-38 & LUKE 10:1-4

4. What is the problem Jesus sees here, and what is his solution?

4. Can you have repentance or belief without the other?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

5. What is our role as Christians?

6. How do you feel about having that responsibility?

7. What is God's role in people hearing the gospel and believing? Think through Bible verses or passages that explain different parts of the work God does in enabling someone to hear and respond to the gospel?

[Sent Jesus \(John 3:16\)](#)

[Chose us to be holy and blameless \(Ephesians 1:3-4\)](#)

[Made us want to seek him \(Acts 17:26-27\)](#)

[Revealed himself in creation \(Romans 1:19-20\)](#)

[Written his law in people's hearts \(Hebrews 8:10-11, Romans 2:14-16\)](#)

[Put us where he wanted us \(Acts 8:26-40, Paul in prison\)](#)

8. What is the role of prayer in evangelism?

Pray

STUDY 2 – WHAT IS THE MESSAGE?

[AIM: To understand and articulate the gospel message that is at the heart of evangelism.](#)

OVERVIEW: The gospel is at the very heart of evangelism. The good news about Jesus is the motivator for evangelism, as we saw last week (and as you probably knew already!). And we can't do evangelism without telling this good news. So it's important to be clear on what 'the gospel' is.

1. How would you summarise what the gospel message is? Are there particular Bible passages that you find helpful in articulating what the gospel is?

[Examples: John 3:16, Ephesians 2:4-5, Romans 5:6-11, Colossians 1:21-23, Romans 3:23-24, 1 Corinthians 15:3-5](#)

NOTE: There is no ultimate right way of summarising the gospel message. But a helpful way of understanding it is to think of it in terms of four stages: Creation, Fall, Redemption and Consummation.

READ GENESIS 1:26 – 2:25 (CREATION)

2. What blessings has God given humans in this unfallen creation?

3. What responsibilities have humans been given?

READ GENESIS 3 (FALL)

4. What is the motivation for Adam and Eve disobeying God?

5. How does their disobedience impact their relationship with God?

6. How does it impact their relationship with each other?

7. How does it impact their 'relationship' with creation?

8. How do we see each of these damaged relationships at work today?

READ LUKE 15:11-32 (REDEMPTION)

9. How does this parable symbolise our broken and restored relationship with God?

READ REVELATION 21:1-4 (CONSUMMATION)

10. How does an understanding of what is to come shape the way that we live today?

Pray

STUDY 3 – WHAT IS EVANGELISM?

AIM: To understand that evangelism is teaching the gospel with the aim to persuade people about the truth. Also to understand that while we have a role to play, it is God who does most of the work in a person hearing the gospel and responding to it.

OVERVIEW: Now that we have explored our understanding of what the gospel message is, we will look at how we are to use the gospel in evangelism. We will also consider both our role and God's role in evangelism.

1. What is evangelism? What are some examples of evangelism? What are some examples of things we might confuse with evangelism, but which actually aren't.

Evangelism is teaching the gospel with the aim to persuade (Mack Stiles, Evangelism).

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:10-11

2. This passage shows us how an understanding of the coming judgment should motivate us to 'persuade others'. What does it look like for us to persuade others in our evangelism?

READ MARK 1:14-15

3. What does it mean for someone to repent and believe the good news?