



## WELCOME PAGE—Serendipity Series

Welcome to Connect Groups! We're excited to have you come together to be known and grow.

Below are some recommendations to help your Connect Group get off to a strong start.

**Timing:** Choose your start and end time. We want everyone's time to be honored! We recommend 1-2 hours or less per meeting.

**Introductions:** Start each meeting with a quick ice breaker to get the conversation going. This can be found on the top of each lesson page.

**Scripture:** There are many different ways to read the selected scripture. One person reads, the group rotates, anything is okay!

**Discussion Questions:** Allow time for balanced sharing. Use multiple choice answers to spring board discussion. Have fun seeing where the discussion goes!

**Closing Prayer:** A group that prays together, grows together. There are a variety of ways to lift each other up in prayer. Here are two suggestions:

1. Everyone share one thing you are thankful for and one thing you are in need of prayer for.
2. Each person write down a prayer need on a notecard and put them in a pile. Everyone in the group takes one card home with them to pray over until your next meeting.

**Serendipity Study**  
**“Whol-i-ness”**

*Ready to begin? Refer to the “Welcome Page” for lesson tips and explanations.*

**Lesson 1 – Sowing**  
Matthew 13:1-23

**Introductions**

**On a scale of 1-10 (1 is poor, 10 is phenomenal), how green is your thumb? How are you at making things grow?**

Or

**What project have you started but not finished yet?**

**Background**

*Jesus used this parable to explain why some people show the results of a healthy, balanced spiritual life and some do not. In this Bible study, you will have a chance to think about your spiritual growth.*

**Read Matthew 13:1-23.**

- 1. Describe the four types of soil that Jesus mentions. What happens to the seed in each kind of soil?**
- 2. What does Jesus’ explanation of the parable (v. 18-23) reveal about:**
  - a. The seed?
  - b. The farmer?
  - c. The various soils?
  - d. The fruit?
- 3. What in your life nurtures your spiritual growth?**
  - a. Christian parents/spouse
  - b. Group Bible study
  - c. Personal devotions
  - d. Christian friends
  - e. Christian music/hymns
  - f. Worship
  - g. Church activities
- 4. What are the “thorns” and “rocks” in your life which tend to choke out your spiritual growth?**
  - a. Pressure from friends/family
  - b. Concern about money
  - c. Lack of commitment or discipline
  - d. A “rocky” home life
  - e. Suffering that makes it hard to believe that God is good
  - f. Desire for material things
  - g. Stresses at work
  - h. Worry about the future
- 5. How would you describe the root system of your spiritual life right now?**
  - a. Pretty shallow
  - b. Growing
  - c. Strong and deep
  - d. Really dry
  - e. Tangled with weeds

- 6. How much of a priority do you make hearing and acting on God's Word? Maybe give your answer on a scale from 1-10 and explain.**
  
- 7. What steps could you take to improve the soil of your spiritual life?**
  - a. Plow it up and start over
  - b. Allow troubles to be fertilizer rather than just "rocky times"
  - c. Uproot the thorns of the worries and desires from the world
  - d. Have a refreshing devotional life  
Surround myself with the rich topsoil of a spiritual community
  
- 8. What specific "thorn of worry" would you like the group to pray with you about?**

**Close in Prayer**

Serendipity Series  
*“Whol-i-ness”*

**Lesson 2 – Daniel Stays “Clean”**  
Daniel 1:1-21

**Introductions**

**What is your favorite meal?**

Or

**As a teenager, what was the farthest you were ever away from home?**

**Background**

*Because they had broken their covenant with God, the people of Judah were taken into exile in Babylon. Among those deported were Daniel and three other Israelites - who –ere probably just teenagers at the time of this story.*

**Read Daniel 1:1-21.**

- 1. Why did Daniel ask the chief official for different food?**
- 2. What impresses you most about Daniel?**
- 3. If Daniel lived in your world, how would he be viewed by your peers?**
  - a. Fit right in
  - b. Eating alone
  - c. Admired
  - d. Ridiculed
- 4. What message does this story have for today?**
- 5. What do you need most in relation to the physical area of your life?**
  - a. Better diet
  - b. Regular exercise
  - c. More sleep
  - d. Give up a bad habit
  - e. Other
- 6. Which of Daniel’s attributes would help you most in your quest for healthy habits?**
  - a. Self-discipline
  - b. Conviction
  - c. Courage
  - d. Other
- 7. When your loyalty is tested (as was Daniel’s) what are you most likely to do? Why?**
- 8. In light of tonight’s lesson, how can your group pray for you specifically?**

**Close in prayer.**

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**Lesson 3 – Talents**  
Matthew 25:14-30

**Introductions**

**Are you more of a saver or a spender?**

Or

**What was your best subject or activity in school?**

**Background**

*The term “talent” was first used for a unit of weight, then for a unit of coins. The present-day use of “talent” as an ability comes from this parable. As you listen to the parable, think about what Jesus might say to you about taking responsibility for your time, money, and abilities.*

**Read Matthew 25:14-30.**

- 1. Which of the three servants in this parable can you relate to most? And why?**
  - a. The one who was given five talents
  - b. The one who was given two talents
  - c. The one who was given one talent
  
- 2. What is your opinion of the master in this story?**
  - a. Too harsh with his servant
  - b. Not hard enough on the servant
  - c. His reaction was justified
  - d. I’m glad I don’t work for him
  
- 3. Why was the master so hard on the servant who hid his talent?**
  - a. He didn’t take responsibility for what was given to him
  - b. He wasted his opportunity
  - c. He wasted his master’s goods
  
- 4. What is this parable’s message?**
  - a. God does not tolerate laziness
  - b. God has given Christians a “job” to do until Jesus returns
  - c. When we use what God has given us, He gives us more
  - d. Judgement awaits those who don’t invest their lives in God’s kingdom
  
- 5. How do you feel when you are given a lot of responsibility?**
  - a. Nervous
  - b. Proud
  - c. Overwhelmed
  - d. Confident
  
- 6. Which of the following statements describes how you feel about the way you are investing your life?**
  - a. I’m quite satisfied
  - b. I’d like to make some changes
  - c. I’m not sure what it means (or looks like) to invest my life
  - d. I’m not very responsible in this area
  - e. I feel like I’m on hold

**7. What expectations do you feel God has in relation to how you use your talents?**

- a. He won't settle for anything less than my best
- b. As long as I try, He's pleased
- c. He doesn't expect anything more of me
- d. I feel He expects more than I can give

**8. If the Master returned today, how much of your talents and potential would He say you are using for Him right now?**

- a. Don't ask
- b. 5%
- c. 50%
- d. I'm giving it all I've got

**9. How can the group support you in prayer?**

**Close in prayer.**

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**Lesson 4 – The Pits**

1 Kings 19:1-18

**Introductions**

**What was your favorite hideout as a kid?**

Or

**What do you think of when you think of “mid-life crisis”? Have you or someone you know ever had one? Explain.**

**Background**

*King Ahab, influenced by his foreign wife Jezebel, had led Israel into idolatry. Just before this scene, the power of God came upon Elijah in amazing ways: (1) In a contest with the prophets of Baal, Elijah demonstrated the Lord’s superiority over Baal – resulting in the execution of the false prophets according to the Law of Moses; (2) then after a long drought, God sent rain in response to Elijah’s prayer; and (3) then the Lord empowered Elijah to out-run Ahab’s chariot.*

**Read 1 Kings 19:1-18.**

**1. Why did Elijah run to the desert and pray to die?**

- a. Afraid
- b. Depressed
- c. Drained
- d. Self-pity
- e. Faith crisis
- f. Felt alone and unsupported

**2. What did Elijah need the most?**

- a. Physical replenishment
- b. Peace and quiet (&/or Spiritual retreat)
- c. Attitude adjustment
- d. Answers about life
- e. Fellowship with other believers
- f. A fresh vision of God

**3. What was God saying to Elijah through the gentle whisper?**

- a. “Your ministry is far from over”
- b. “Trust me”
- c. “Stop moping and get moving”
- d. “You’re not alone”

**4. When you experience a letdown, what helps you recover?**

- a. Sleep
- b. Vacation
- c. Nourishment
- d. Fellowship with others
- e. Alone time
- f. Time with God

**5. When is a time you felt like you couldn’t go any further? Why were you discouraged? What helped you?**

**6. What message is there in this story for you?**

**Prayer Requests & Close in Prayer.**

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**Lesson 5 – Criticism**  
Numbers 12:1-16

**Introductions**

**When you were a kid, how did you know when you were in big trouble?**

Or

**What person in your family deserves the “most humble” award?**

**Background**

*This story begins with Moses’ brother and sister talking against him for marrying a Cushite. Whether this refers to his wife of many years or to a recent marriage, she was not an ethnic Jew.*

**Read Numbers 12:1-16.**

- 1. What was Miriam’s and Aaron’s real problem with Moses’ wife?**
  - a. Didn’t like her
  - b. She didn’t share their beliefs
  - c. Prejudiced
  - d. It was a smoke screen for their jealousy of Moses
  
- 2. If you had been Moses, how would you have reacted when you found out your own family was bad-mouthing you?**
  
- 3. Why do you suppose God punished Miriam and not Aaron?**
  - a. She may have been the oldest
  - b. She was the instigator
  - c. She must have talked against Moses more
  - d. God chose to make an example out of her
  
- 4. What was the greatest way Moses demonstrated his humility?**
  - a. He didn’t defend himself
  - b. He didn’t strike back
  - c. He asked God to heal his sister
  - d. He was the head of a nation without it going to his head
  - e. He cared as much for others as for himself
  
- 5. What are you most likely to be jealous of in others?**
  - a. Looks
  - b. Profession/status/accomplishments
  - c. Relationships
  
- 6. What motivates you to repent?**
  - a. Guilt
  - b. God’s love
  - c. Fear of God
  - d. Fear of consequences
  - e. The pain of broken fellowship with God
  
- 7. What’s the most needed lesson and challenge of this story for you?**

**Prayer requests & close in prayer.**

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**Lesson 6 – A Man and His Donkey**  
Numbers 22:1-35

**Introductions**

**Do you prefer to communicate via: phone, text, email, landline, in person, (or maybe not at all)?**

Or

**What phrase best describes you: Quiet as a mouse, stubborn as a mule, loyal as a dog, wise as an owl, slow as a turtle, or quick as a rabbit?**

**Background**

*Settled in the plains of Moab, the children of Israel were preparing to invade the promised land. Although the Israelites had passed by Moab peacefully, Balak, the king of Moab – along with the neighboring Midianites – devised a scheme of pagan divination against Israel.*

**Read Numbers 22:1-35.**

- 1. How would you describe Balaam?**
- 2. What do you see as the most amazing thing about this story?**
- 3. Where do you identify with Balaam the most?**
- 4. Why do you suppose this story is in the Bible?**
- 5. When the direction of your life undergoes and “midcourse correction,” how do you generally respond?**
- 6. Who or what can you trust to help you follow the right path?**
- 7. What area will you ask God for more help in keeping you in line with God’s will?**

**Prayer requests & close in prayer.**



## F.A.Q

**Q: I am already participating in a Bible Study. Do I need to stop attending my current group in order to sign up for a Connect Group?**

A: No. Continuing with a current Bible Study is your choice. Connect Groups are offered in addition to our current studies, not in replacement of them.

**Q: Is participation in a Connect Group required?**

A: No. Our goal is to equip you to “come together and be known and grow.” A Connect Group is one of the many ways to get connected through St. Paul and the Summit. We encourage you to stretch yourself and invite someone “new to you” to try out a Connect Group.

**Q: When and where will Connect Groups meet?**

A: Anywhere-Anytime! Your Connect Group will decide the details. We encourage meeting 3-6 times at your own pace. Location ideas include: Someone’s home, coffee house, restaurant, park or other central location.

**Q: Who will lead our Connect Group?**

A: Each Connect Group will be equipped with Bible Study material. No “Leader” is needed. Simply bring your Connect Group study material with you when you meet. Printed study material is available at the Connect Groups display. A digital copy is available on our website. [www.sharingnewlife.com](http://www.sharingnewlife.com)

**Q: How do we coordinate childcare for when our Connect Group meets?**

A: Your Connect Group will be responsible for coordinating childcare during your meeting time. Some options are: including children in the study, have an older sibling help out, or hire a babysitter for the group. Anything is okay!

**Q: What do we do when our Connect Group has finished our study?**

A: It’s up to you! You may choose a new study or take a break. New Connect Group topics will be offered twice a year—in March & September.

**Q: I have a question about Connect Groups. Who do I contact?**

A: We are excited to help! For questions about Connect Groups, please Contact:  
Lisa Canning-Summit Ministry Assistant: [Lisa.canning@sharingnewlife.com](mailto:Lisa.canning@sharingnewlife.com)  
Jennifer Gross-Director of Adult Ministry [Jennifer.gross@sharingnewlife.com](mailto:Jennifer.gross@sharingnewlife.com)