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WHAT'S IN YOUR TEACHING GUIDE

This Teaching Guide has three purposes:

- to give the teacher tools for focusing on the content of the session in the Study Guide.
- to give the teacher additional Bible background information.
- to give the teacher variety and choice in preparation.

The Teaching Guide includes two major components: Teacher Helps and Teacher Options.

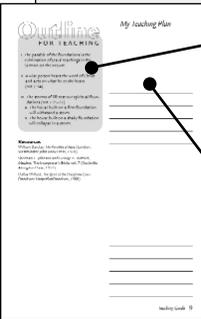
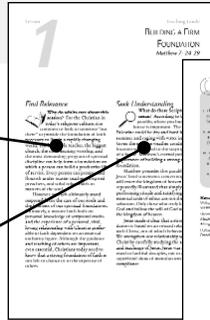
Teacher Helps

Find Relevance

helps you zero in on why each session is important for the adults you teach.

Seek Understanding

presents helpful Bible Background informations and insights that will help you better understand the Scripture.



Teaching Outline

provides you with an outline of the main themes in the Study Guide.

My Teaching Plan is a convenient place for you to make notes for teaching the session.

Teacher Options

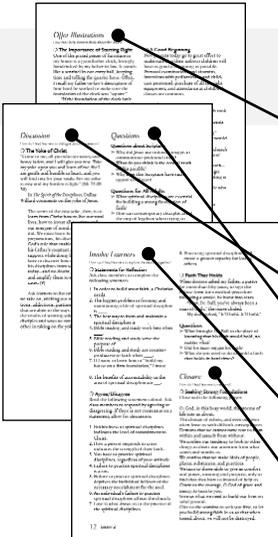
Offer Illustrations presents material that will help you paint a picture of the session. This section often presents items from church history, current events, or interesting anecdotes that help introduce the session.

Discussion provides teaching activities that will help learners discuss the Scripture text.

Questions presents multiple collections of questions for various kinds of adults.

Involve Learners helps learners become actively involved with the Scripture text for a particular session.

Closure gives you a means for wrapping up the session.



You Can Choose!

There is more material in each session than you can use, so choose the options from each section to tailor the session to the needs of your group.

Prepare Before the Session

Read the session for today in the Study Guide. Then read the options in this Teaching Guide, placing checkmarks beside the activities you plan to include. After you have decided which options to use, gather the appropriate materials.

GOD'S PLAN

*Isaiah 49:1-6; Mark 7:24-30;
Romans 10:12-15*

Find Relevance



Why do adults care about this session? Missions work has undergone many changes in the past 200 years. Beginning in 1812, when the first missionaries left the United States to join the British missionary William Carey in India, and continuing through the mid-1900s, the missions programs for most evangelical churches were defined by going beyond the church to reach people with the message of Christ. Americans then spoke of community missions—helping those outside our church in our own community—state missions, home missions, and foreign missions. In each area, people with a sense of calling were assigned as missionaries. The majority of these missionaries served a lifetime. In churches, members were called upon to support missions work through prayers and financial contributions.

In most churches today, the number of missions education organizations has declined. While the commissioning of missionaries still takes place, many people now serve a short-term assignment. Many church groups or individuals take mission trips, in which the emphasis seems more on the spiritual growth of the missionaries than on reaching people for Christ. We need to look anew at God's plan for the world. We need to consider again that those who know Christ have the responsibility for carrying that good news wherever they go.

Seek Understanding



What do these Scriptures mean? Today's adults need a refresher course in missions—God's plan for the world. It has always been God's plan that humans be God's children. Sin causes a separation between God and humans, and the early books of the Old Testament trace God nurturing a people—the Hebrews, or Israelites, or Jews—specially blessed in order to bless others. By the time of the prophet Isaiah, these chosen people had followed God, then turned to other gods, and returned back to God. God punished, forgave, loved, and always encouraged them to carry out the plan. Then, God came to earth as a human in the person of Jesus Christ, who first worked with the Jews, then showed how to carry the message to others. After Jesus' death, the Jews who had accepted Christ were still slow to carry the gospel to those who were not Jews. To adult Christians today, the message is the same—Jesus Christ is for every person in the world. It is still the responsibility of Christians to carry the message.

Offer Illustrations

How can I help learners think about the issues?

○ Carry the Light

A frail, elderly woman who had served many years as a missionary in Africa spent a week in a missions camp for girls. Every night during a vespers service she talked with the girls about her work in the bush country. She told of the many times when she worked in the dark because the generator that produced light was broken. She described the very dark nights, for there were no streetlights in the village where she lived. She recalled trying to go to a church one night, riding in the back of a pickup truck, but the driver had no idea where the church was located. She prayed that they would find the church before sundown so that the driver could see the way. They didn't. But as darkness began to fall, a tiny light appeared in the distance. They drove toward that light. As it turned out, a man from the church was swinging a lantern to show the way.

The elderly missionary used this illustration to help the girls understand her calling—to “light up the dark places in the world” with the good news of Jesus. As the missionary started back to her cabin that night, one little girl came to her, took her hand, and said, “I’ve come to walk you through the dark places tonight.”

QUESTIONS

- How would you describe the darkness of a person who does not know Jesus?
- What can you do to dispel this darkness?

○ “Do You Know the Word ‘Christian?’”

Although I do not encourage anyone to place themselves in a dangerous situation, I want to share one of my personal experiences. One late night I left my place of work near the St. Johns River in Jacksonville, Florida. As I approached my car, a man from another country stepped out of the darkness and asked, “Can you

help me? I can't find my ship.” Dismissing my thoughts of the many warnings against helping strangers at night, I invited the man into my car and drove him toward the docks. As I approached the gate, the guard stepped out, and I explained that I was helping the man find his ship. The guard opened the gate, and I drove in, wondering how I could witness to the sailor. The sailor opened the door and said, in halting English, “Why did you help me? So many people I saw today, and nobody helped me. Why did you?” I responded, “Do you know the word ‘Christian?’” The young man began to smile, pounded his chest, and said, “Yes. I am a Christian. I am a Christian.” He explained that in a missions school in Pakistan he had heard about Jesus, and believed. We two Christians rejoiced together, the sailor got out of the car and walked to his ship, and I drove away. As I approached the gate, the guard stepped out and asked, “Lady, why did you do that? These men get lost all the time. Why did you, by yourself, help this one? Don't you know it's dangerous?” For the second time I said, “Do you know the word ‘Christian?’” The guard replied, “Well, I've heard it, but I don't know what it means.” I explained as best I could and the man responded, “I need to hear more about that.” As I left, I asked him where he lived, and went home to phone a pastor in the area, asking him to follow up with the guard.

QUESTIONS

- Where does missions begin?
- How do you explain to someone how to become a Christian?

Discussion

How do I lead learners to dialogue about the session?

○ A World Without Borders



Using the world map or the globe, point out the known world during biblical days—the birthplace of missions. From the Resource Kit, show the page for this session, “10/40 Window,” which represents the part

of today’s world almost totally unevangelized. Then use this illustration: History records that one of the earliest missionaries from Great Britain to China witnessed to a young university professor, who accepted Christ. In the days that followed, the young man talked with the missionary about his grandfather and his father. He told the missionary that both men always knew that there had to be “somebody out there” like God, but nobody ever told them. They died without learning. “Why did you wait so long to come?” the young man asked the missionary. There are still many places today where people might ask this same question.

Questions

Questions about Scripture

- What is God’s plan, from the beginning, for the people of the world?
- How does God intend to accomplish this plan?
- What has hindered God’s plan?

Questions for All Adults

- How would you rate the effectiveness with which we carry out God’s missions plan today?
- What is your church doing today to carry the message of Christ to the world?
- Do you know any missionaries personally? If so, describe their ministries.

Questions for Mature Adults

- Are you now or have you ever been a member of a missions organization? If so, describe the ways in which you have participated in spreading the gospel.
- What changes do you find in missions as carried out today from several decades ago?

Questions for Younger Adults

- Would you consider missions as a full-time commitment? Explain.
- Do you know well a person who is not a Christian? How do you talk to that person about Christ?
- How are you being educated about missions?

Questions for Adults with Children

- How are you involving your children in missions education?
- Do your children know what it means to be a Christian?
- How do you talk with your children about God’s plan for missions so that they understand that God loves all people?

Involve Learners

How can I lead learners to explore the session together?

○ Allegiance to Jesus Christ

Write the following lines on the board in your classroom. Explain to your group that in the first half of the twentieth century an organization called Girls' Auxiliary, for girls ages 9 through 15, used these lines as watchwords.

*Knowing that countless people grope in darkness
And giving attention to His commands,
I assert my allegiance to Jesus Christ, to His
church, and its activities,
Attempting with God's help
To abide in Him through prayer
To advance in wisdom by Bible study
To acknowledge my stewardship of time, money,
and personality.*

Questions

- What is the responsibility of Christians today for “lighting up the dark places”—places in which the message of Christ has not been heard?
- What can we do with our time, money, personality, and our talents and gifts to further the cause of Christ?
- Do you think it is as important today as 100 years ago to spread the message of Christ in other countries?
- In what ways might America be considered “unreached”?
- How do we continue to share the message of Christ while respecting the beliefs of other people?

○ I Am, I Can, I Will

Write these words at the top of a sheet of paper and photocopy enough for each group member to have one: I am...I can...I will. Distribute the papers and pencils and then ask the following questions, allowing time for each person to write their responses on the paper. Ask for volunteers to share their responses.

Questions

- Who are you?
- What can you do?
- What will you do?

Closure

How do I lead learners to respond?

○ Presence in Everyday Living

If you have not chosen the Involve Learners “I Am, I Can, I Will” option, consider using it as part of your closing. Lead your learners to write answers to the three questions. Then lead in reflecting: *Who am I?* What are my strong points? What talents do I have? How has God gifted me? *What can I do?* What skills do I have that enable me to work effectively? Is it cooking? Is it cleaning? Is it managing? Adminstrating? Using the Internet? *What will I do with who I am and what I can do?*

Allow several moments for thought and meditation. Then lead a closing prayer of commitment to the task of carrying the light into the world.

2

BEGINNING WHERE I AM

Matthew 9:35-10:15

Find Relevance



Why do adults care about this session? For many Christian adults the term “missions” is either outdated or thought to apply to something that happens in a faraway place. In Jesus’ last words to his disciples, he told them to go to all people everywhere. In the first chapter of Acts, however, the emphasis is on beginning where they were—in Jerusalem. Jesus set the example for his followers in ministry. Beginning where they were, this group of followers went with Jesus into their world. This method remains the best way to do missions today. Walking around the community where we live and through the halls of our workplaces brings us face to face with people who need the good news of Jesus. Yes, we are to pray for them, but Jesus takes us a step further. Finish praying, and then minister.

Seek Understanding



What do these Scriptures mean? The New Testament, God’s word for us today, has many lessons to teach us. Though written many years ago, it contains applicable instructions for how we should live our lives. Jesus carefully selected a group of people who would follow, learn, and apply these lessons. In this session’s Scripture, their journey begins. Jesus took them on a field trip to introduce them to the world with which they thought they were familiar. In compassion, Jesus pointed to the people in need. They were so helpless that he compared them to sheep without a shepherd. He called the disciples to pray, then to act. “Do something about the needs that you see,” Jesus said to them and to us. This concept really changes the word “missionary” for us. It no longer applies to people commissioned by an agency to go to a different place and do “mission work.” It implies that wherever we are, as we “go about” and “see the multitudes,” we will find our place of service. Often overlooked, the place of service is right in front of us.

Offer Illustrations

How can I help learners think about the issues?

○ Why Didn't You Tell Me?

A missions educator told this personal experience:

One night after leaving work late, I went hurriedly to the parking lot where I usually park when I am in town. The young attendant had very few cars left, and it was obvious that he was eager to leave. As he handed me my car keys, he seemed very agitated. I asked him if there was anything I could do to help him. He responded by saying that he wished with all his heart that I could help. "But," he said, "it's my wife. She is very, very ill, and I don't think she's going to make it. I wish you could do something." I took his hand and told him that I would pray for him and his wife. When I asked him if he was a Christian, he responded that he knew nothing about that. I asked if I could tell him, and he agreed to listen. After we talked, and he seriously considered accepting Christ, he said something that shook me. He said, "You know, I watch you folks leave here and go all over the world to tell people about Jesus. Many times I have wondered why you didn't tell me. I am glad you stopped tonight to tell me. It will make all the difference, I know." As I drove home, I asked God to forgive me and to open my eyes to the people around me.

Questions

- Are we responsible for the people we don't know, but whom we meet in our everyday world?
- How would you tell someone how to become a Christian?

○ Will You Wear My Clothes?

In Cincinnati, Ohio, there is a Christian shelter house for families. It was begun by a social worker who discovered that, while there were places to send troubled youth, homes for women, and shelters for men, there was no place to send families in trouble. With the help of numerous churches, she opened a home for families. A female doctor, very active in her own church, went to the home weekly to lead Bible study, and she became very interested in a young mother and her children. Every week she invited this mother to go to church with her. Every week, the young woman declined the invitation. Finally, she agreed to go. The doctor, dressed in an attractive suit and in her comfortable car, stopped at the home to pick the woman. She was neat, dressed in clean but faded jeans and a colorful sweatshirt—the best that she had. As they drove into the church parking lot where the worshipers were gathering, the young woman clung to the door handle. "I can't do it," she said. "I can't go in with all those fancy dressed people." The doctor said, "Oh, yes, you can!" She coaxed her out of the car, took her to the women's parlor, took off her own nice suit, and told the young woman to put it on. The doctor, fortunately about the same size as she, put on the jeans and sweatshirt, and the two walked into the sanctuary.

Question

- Are there people in your neighborhood who have big financial, emotional, or family problems? Can you help?

Discussion

How do I lead learners to dialogue about the session?

○ Where Does My World Begin?

Display the world map (or globe) from the last session. Beside it, place a map of your city. Remember that God's plan is for all people, and accepting personal responsibility for missions means beginning where we are. Years ago, when Vietnam was open to Christian missionaries from the United States, a young couple left Virginia to join others in Saigon. They talked together about how they were finally going "into all the world." They had left home and were going to live and work in Vietnam. When they landed in Saigon many people welcomed them—Vietnamese Christians and missionary friends from the United States. As they drove toward the church from which they would work, they looked at each other and said, "We are home, in a new home. We cannot go into all the world." They were very successful in their work until the Vietnamese government closed the country to missionaries. But while they were there, they walked through the streets, saw the people in need, and cared enough to

Questions

Questions about Scripture

- What method did Jesus use to prepare his disciples to continue his mission?
- What was the first assignment Jesus gave to his disciples? What was the second?
- What principles of missions does Jesus teach in this passage?

Questions for All Adults

- What basic quality is needed by anyone who wants to do missions?
- Where does missions begin for the Christian adult today?
- Some people are called to distant places. In what ways can those of us who stay where we are support those who go away?

Questions for Mature Adults

- Who do you know in your neighborhood with a need that you might be able to meet?
- Which ministries in your community need volunteers? Which of these ministries interests you? Would you be willing to volunteer?
- How might you further your missions education?

Questions for Younger Adults

- When have you participated in a mission trip, Vacation Bible School, or other missions project? Describe your experience.
- What are your church's regular ministries in your community?
- What scheduling changes would be involved for you to volunteer weekly or monthly in an activity designed to help people?

Questions for Adults with Children

- Can you tell your children this story of the field trip Jesus took with the disciples, anticipating their response?
- What lesson about living a responsible life is taught by this story?
- How can this lesson be applied by you and your children in the coming week?

Involve Learners

How can I lead learners to explore the session together?

○ Can I Be Moved with Compassion?



In the Resource Kit is the hymn “Do You Really Care?” Make enough copies to distribute one to each group member. Composed in the 1960s, this hymn was very popular with youth

groups. Lead the group to sing it together or, if necessary, to read the words together.

After singing or reading, ask each individual to ponder the words, then silently answer the questions the song poses.

Questions

- Do you really care?
- Do you know how to share with people everywhere?
- Will you take the dare?
- Will you spread the good news everywhere?
- Will you bear the cross of Christ?

○ I’m Tired of Caring!

Using the following role-playing suggestion, enlist two class members, one to role-play the person in need and the other to role-play the person who could help.

After the acting, have the group discuss how this lesson’s Scripture applies to this situation.

Role-play: One person is desperately in need, the other person rather aloof. The person in need comes to the other person with multiple requests, including: “My car won’t start.” “My check hasn’t come this month, and I don’t have enough food for my children.” The other person responds with such excuses as “I don’t have time today.” “I have to be at the church in fifteen minutes.” “What would my

neighbors think if they saw me with you?” After a few minutes, the aloof person’s attitude changes, and they take the needy person’s hand and say, “Jesus was moved with compassion. I do care. I have prayed, but you need more than prayer. I will help you.”

Questions

- How do you discern need?
- What are your excuses for not helping people in need?
- What are your reasons for helping others?
- How do you know when you are doing enough?

Closure

How do I lead learners to respond?

○ Ponder in Silence

Ask the adults to stand and form a circle. Lead them to answer these questions silently: Who needs my help? Is there something I can do this week to help? What is on my schedule that I might drop in order to respond to a need? Now ask the members to join hands, and lead them to pray for each other—first to pray for the person to the right, then the person to the left. Close with this sentence, “Lord, teach us to care.”

PERSONAL, POWERFUL, UNHINDERED

John 14:4-16; Acts 28:30-31

Find Relevance



Why do adults care about this session? In light of the events of September 11, 2001,

Americans are more aware of the large areas of the world where people are not Christians. A vast majority of the world did not know God when Jesus sent the disciples out to complete the work of missions, going into all the world, reaching all people. In all these years since Jesus' time on earth, Jesus' mission is still not complete. Christians must continue to take the missions task seriously. It is a hard task, but certainly no harder than it was in the days of the early church. Because of Paul's intense missions efforts as recounted in the book of Acts, even his imprisonment does not hinder the gospel. It cannot be stopped. We can, and have, slowed it because of lack of response. The call comes today as it did in the first century: "Go into all the world. Preach the gospel to all people."

Seeking Understanding



What do these Scriptures mean? Jesus spent three years with a select group of people, teaching, training, and challenging them. Although many people followed Jesus, they still misunderstood his mission, mentioned often in the teachings they received in the synagogues. The passage in John reveals the intimacy between Jesus and the chosen Twelve. Jesus desperately wanted them to understand his reason for coming to earth and that his mission would soon be completed.

Jesus' work became their work, and he promised them that they would be able to carry out the work with the power of the Holy Spirit. He stressed the importance of prayer and asking for what is needed. The passage from Acts is a summary account of the work of the earliest followers in their attempts to spread the gospel. Having faced much opposition, even from the Jews, who were first given the gospel, the movement of Christianity continues unhindered.

Offer Illustration

How can I help learners think about the issues?

○ What Is That in Your Hand?

The story of Moses, chosen by God to lead the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt, is a classic example of how those who do what the Lord expects of them are empowered to accomplish God's task. Moses was tending sheep when God spoke, and he made many excuses. The tool of his trade was the shepherd's rod, with which the shepherd guides, comforts, and corrects the sheep. In answer to the excuses, God commanded Moses to throw down his staff, and the staff became a serpent. "Pick it up," said God, and when Moses did as God commanded, the serpent became a staff again. Moses had no special powers. It was God who supplied the power throughout the long years of wanderings in the wilderness.

Questions

- Have you seen someone who had a responsibility that seemed impossible, but who was able to get it done? When has that happened to you?
- What do you hold in your hand that can help to accomplish God's task in the world??

○ I Can't—You Can.

My husband and I took legal custody of a fourteen-year-old Nigerian girl who came to the Shriner's Burn Institute. The young girl suffered burns over fifty-four percent of her body. We learned that she was a Christian and that she had been delivered in a missions hospital in Ogbomosho by a medical missionary who, incidentally, was from my husband's hometown. Adebola is now an adult who went to medical school and plans to return to her country and build her own hospital. We have shared many personal and inspiring moments together. One was about the plaque on the desk of the missionary doctor. It read:

"O, God, I can't!

You never said I could.

You can!

You always said you would."

This prayer of supplication and application summarizes the Scripture in this session. On our own, we cannot. With God's promised power, God will accomplish the mission through us. Ask your group to identify a task that needs to be accomplished in your church or community. Discuss the possibilities of your class accomplishing such a task together through the power of God.

Question

- Are you presently or have you ever been faced with a task that you knew was impossible for you? What did/can you do about it?

Discussion

How do I lead learners to dialogue about the session?

○ What Difference Does It Make?

In a large Southern city, a young man in his mid-twenties was found dead in his apartment in early January. The last time anyone remembered seeing him was just after Thanksgiving. There were two eviction notices on the front door. The TV was still on. Shocked and dismayed, people at the nearby university where he was a graduate student and folks in the area churches asked, “How did we let this happen? Why didn’t someone miss him?” A movement began. A minister formed a care group, calling a team together to make a difference in their community. They trained themselves. They accepted the challenge. They promised themselves that this kind of tragedy would never again happen in their community.

To some extent, the people who organized themselves together followed this session’s Scripture. Jesus called the team together. He reminded them of their task. He told them how to get it done. He promised the support and power of God.

Questions

Questions about Scripture

- The speakers for the disciples were Thomas and Philip. What were their questions, and how did Jesus answer them?
- When we do not understand what we think God might be saying to us, is it okay to question, to look for answers? Explain.
- What are some hindrances to the gospel today? How can they be overcome?

Questions for All Adults

- In developing ministry plans in the church, who should take the lead? Who should do the work?
- What are some things that your church needs to do for which no one will take responsibility?
- What role does prayer play in the ministries of your church?

Questions for Mature Adults

- What hinders you from doing what you know needs to be done?
- By your actions or your words, are you creating a hindrance for someone or some task?
- How would you explain God’s empowerment to a young person?

Questions for Younger Adults

- What are some “greater works” than Jesus did that are still being done today in missions?
- What are the evident sources of help for these “greater works”?
- What are some hindrances in your own life as you seek to do your part in missions?

Questions for Adults with Children

- Can your children understand that God is personal and that God hears their prayers?
- What can you do to help your children understand the power that God gives for doing what is right?
- What are some specific missions activities that can be provided for your children?

Involve Learners

How can I lead learners to explore the session together?

○ Missions Is Personal

The lesson Jesus taught the disciples remains the same basic lesson for Christians today. It takes only four essential actions to do the “greater works” that Jesus did within the limits placed on him by his humanity. Ask your group to read John 14 and identify four actions necessary to accomplish God’s mission. As the group identifies each action, write it on the board.

Have faith

Pray

Love Christ

Obey

Explain that these actions are individual actions. We do not become missions folks simply by following someone else’s example. We can receive the power to do missions for ourselves.

○ O God, I Can’t...You Can!



From the Resource Kit, post the map of Paul’s journeys. Remember that Paul was not present with the disciples and that he was anti-Christian until his salvation/commissioning experience.

Looking at where he traveled and remembering that he ended up imprisoned in Rome, identify some of the obstacles he faced. Many times Paul must have prayed, “I can’t!” However, God’s response was always, “You can, you will, I will help you.” Discuss the similarities as God’s missions plan continues today.

Closure

How do I lead learners to respond?

○ Missions Today

Before the session, compile a list of ministry opportunities already identified by your church. The missions committee or a church staff person can help with this listing. At the end of your study, present the list to your group. Ask them to add any activities they have thought of as they have studied together. Then lead in prayer for the people reached by these ministries and for the ones who give their time and energies to help, thanking God for the available power of the Holy Spirit in doing this work today. Then ask for a moment of silent prayer, asking each person to commit to being available to help as God leads.

WORKING
TOGETHER*1 Corinthians 3:1-11; 1 Peter 4:7b-11**Find Relevance*

Why do adults care about this session? During recent years, we in the United States have become more aware of other world religions. The previous three sessions of this study emphasize that God's plan is that every person has the opportunity to accept Christ as Savior. Since we know that so many people in today's world have never heard about Christ, Christians should consider what their church, and they individually, can and should be doing to accomplish God's missions plan. Is there more to missions than some people going to another place to be "missionaries"? Learners should leave this study with a new understanding of and commitment to their place in God's missions plan. They should be ready to answer the central question, "How does missions happen?"

Seek Understanding

What do these Scriptures mean? Two disciples are the teachers in this lesson's Scripture. In the first days after Jesus' death and resurrection, Peter stayed with the other disciples in Jerusalem. Through the powerful preaching of the disciples, many people became Christians. Arguments between Jews who became Christians, Jews who did not become Christians, and Gentiles who wanted to become Christians consumed much time and energy. Peter accepted that Christ—God's missions plan—is for all people, and in his letter he tried to help new Christians, who were away from home and what is familiar, to understand how to do their work.

The other teacher is Paul, who did not know Jesus. A strict, scholarly leader of the Jews, fighting against these new believers, Paul had a dramatic conversion experience and spent the rest of his life carrying the gospel into all the world. Much of his ministry was given to writing letters to encourage, to instruct, and to correct the new Christians.

Offer Illustration

How can I help learners think about the issues?

○ **Together We Can; Divided We Don't**
On a corner in a busy section of town is a large, empty lot. Carefully landscaped and seemingly cared for, there is no activity on this plot of ground. A marker in the center indicates the intention to construct a church building. The marker is dated four decades ago. Seeking the story behind this plot of land, a newcomer to town began to ask questions and was sent to an elderly man who lived near the lot. The man told a long and sad story about a group of people who were going to build a church on that lovely lot. "I still take care of it," he told the visitor. "It was a good place to build a church. We needed one right there." Then he told of disagreements among the members. One deacon insisted that the plans he had drawn up should be used. Others did not believe they had enough money to build. Another said, "My grandfather built the old church building, and I'm not going to move." The church was never built. That area of town, where there are many needs, still does not have a ministry nearby.

Question

➤ "I don't care who gets the credit. Just let me do it," a church member said. How does that attitude further the mission of God?

○ **You Must Hold the Ropes**
As Christians in England organized a missionary society in the late 1700s, they were particularly concerned for the people of India. They determined that three things were needed—prayer, a plan for the work, and financial gifts. A young surgeon who had traveled to India with the East India Company came back with the report that the people of India had not heard the message of Christ. William Carey, a shoe cobbler and a preacher, said he would go to preach in India. "But," he said, "if I go down into the hole, you must hold the ropes." He did go, and he stayed. He translated the Scripture into the languages of the people. He worked alongside the people and told them about Jesus and Jesus' love for them. All along, he reminded the people back home that indeed he depended on their holding the ropes. (Parks, 25)

Questions

- How does my church finance missions?
- How can I effectively pray for the work of missions?

Discussion

How do I lead learners to dialogue about the session?

○ Study, Pray, Give

Annie Armstrong was the first leader of a Baptist women's missions organization, founded in 1888. When that organization celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1938, Armstrong was near death, but she sent a message to the women gathered at the celebration. The seasoned missionary said that after the study of God's word comes the study of the fields, then people pray, then they give. This theme of "study the Bible, study the fields, pray, give" is a good summary of what Peter and Paul were trying to teach the young churches.

Questions

Questions about Scripture

- What was Paul's primary concern for the church members at Corinth?
- Who should get credit for missions accomplished?
- What did Peter say about the behavior of Christians and how they should relate to other Christians?

Questions for All Adults

- Why is it important for church members to work together and to get along with each other?
- Who leads your church in missions endeavors?
- According to Peter, what is the ultimate objective of our work?

Questions for Mature Adults

- Is there an active prayer ministry in your church? If not, would you be willing to begin one?
- What are some examples of things you can do to offer hospitality to others?

Questions for Younger Adults

- What can you do to improve the community within your church so that missions can be more effectively accomplished?
- How are you using your spiritual gifts to accomplish God's mission?
- Consider your investment in study, prayer, and giving to missions. Are you giving your best? If not, will you attempt to do more?

Questions for Adults with Children

- Do your children have an understanding of missions? What is available in your church to help with their missions education?
- What missions activity might you do with your child—visit a missions center, visit an elderly shut-in, take food to someone who needs it?
- How soon do your children need to know about giving for missions? What are some specific ways that you could help them start saving money for the next missions offering in your church?

Involve Learners

How can I lead learners to explore the session together?

○ What Will It Cost Me?



Many children sing the chorus, “This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.” We sang it with more gusto than music, for sure, especially the line, “Devil’s gonna try to blow it out.” We didn’t

talk very much about the cost of letting our light shine. A contemporary musician, Kyle Matthews, sings that familiar childhood song, but then segues into, “Is the flame worth the candle”—a song of his own that reminds us that if the candle lights up the room, it soon will be burned down. There is no light without the candle, and the candle burns itself down, producing the light. The words to this song are provided on the Resource Kit page for this session. Read it, or have someone prepared to read it.

With this information as background, look once again at the church in Corinth and the churches to which Peter wrote.

Question

- What were some of the costs these first Christians had to pay in order to spread the light?
- What costs do Christians pay today?

○ How Do We Do Missions?

Someone has said that there are three ways to do missions:

Let go
Help go
Go

Write these phrases on the board and discuss with your group the implications of each one. As part of your discussion, you might incorporate the following thoughts.

LET GO can be the willingness to let our children follow God’s call wherever it leads. Personally, it might mean letting go of certain desires or dreams in order to do missions.

HELP GO gives us the opportunity to offer support—emotional and spiritual support, financial and prayer support.

GO is the ultimate consideration. The going might simply be to go next door to the person who doesn’t know Christ. It might mean going to another place.

Closure

How do I lead learners to respond?

○ We Are Laborers Together

Read or quote 1 Corinthians 3:9 from the session—“We are laborers together.” Ask the learners to stand and form a circle and repeat these four words. Then direct them to pray silently:

Confess to God any adverse feelings you have toward others in the group, asking God’s forgiveness and new direction.

Thank God for the special gifts given to you to help you do missions.

Thank God for the others in the circle.

Tell God what you are willing to do as a laborer together with God and with the others in the circle.

Close the circle by singing together the first verse of the hymn “Blest Be the Tie.”



Is the Flame worth the Candle?

Is the flame worth the candle
When the world around is dark?
And will I lose my life if I choose
to light it by your spark?

Is the flame worth the candle
When a child is lost at night?
And how much would you pay
to turn night into day
and flood her world with light?

*Teach us Lord, to cease believing
Love can have no cost
Help us leave what we can't keep
To gain what can't be lost*

Is the flame worth the candle?
There can be no other way
than to give my life for the cause of Christ
and embrace the price he paid.

Is the flame worth the candle?
My excuses are undone
And yet I fear
to put my life so near
the One who made the sun.

Kyle Matthews, "Is the Flame Worth the
Candle?" (BMG Songs, Inc. / Above the Rim
Music, 1994, rev. 1998).