

Go fish

Jr High Edition

Go Fish – Week One

This small group series is going to focus heavily on evangelism: witnessing to others, sharing your faith, and showing the love of Christ to people that don't know Him yet. We all have friends and family members that do not know Christ and that do not live Christian lifestyles, and we need to reach out and be examples of Christ to them.

Go around the group and answer these questions.

- Have you been baptized?
- If you are a Christian, what motivated you to become a Christian?
- What was foremost in your mind when you made the decision to follow Jesus?

If you haven't been baptized or aren't a Christian, we don't want you to feel pressured or upset. We are THRILLED that you are coming to small group and want you to continue your walk at your own pace.

- What caused you to come to Parkview?
- Have you ever considered being baptized?
- What would need to happen/change for you to believe in God and Jesus?

There are a lot of different motivating factors for being baptized. Maybe you felt the need for salvation? Or maybe you were seeking a sense of peace? Perhaps you were motivated by the idea that God could help you get your life in order.

Did you become a Christian so you could tell other people about Jesus? Probably not. In fact, becoming a salesman for Christianity probably was the last thing on your mind.

And, yet, of all the changes Jesus promised His followers, making them “fishers of men” was at the top of the list. Regardless of your initial motives for receiving Christ, that’s what He wants for you as well.

- Christ made “fishers of men” a top priority. Where is it on your list of priorities?

When we examine the Gospels, one thing is clear about Jesus’ disciples: Followers become fishers. It’s what Jesus predicted when He called the first believers. And it’s exactly what happened to them as the rest of the New Testament unfolded.

The problem for most of us is that telling people about Jesus doesn’t exactly come naturally. In fact, it can be awkward, unappreciated, and uncomfortable. But, it’s not really optional either. God’s design is to use the people He has reached to reach other people. And that can only happen if we answer the call to go fish.

Play a game of Go Fish.

What is the purpose of Go Fish?

Are there any strategies for playing Go Fish?

How are Go Fish and telling people about Jesus similar? How are they different?

When Jesus called His first followers, He had very clear intentions: “I will make you fishers of men.” He didn’t mention refining their characters, making them better people, or even saving them from their sins—although He did all those things eventually. But of all the things He could have emphasized, Jesus announced that His primary agenda for those who follow Him is to introduce others to their loving heavenly Father. It was true in Jesus time and it’s still true today.

- Why is it so hard to tell people about Jesus? Give examples.
- What are the excuses we give for not being fishers of men?

Read Matthew 4:18-22

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him.

Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

- Why do you think these men wanted to follow Jesus?
- According to Jesus, what was His agenda for His followers?
- What obstacles keep you from being a fisher of men?
- Talk about the person or people that influenced you spiritually.
- Who do you think God has placed in your life to tell about Jesus?
- Explain what it means to become a Christian.

Why Fish?

In our culture, the idea of a Christian sharing his faith with a non-Christian makes a lot of people uncomfortable. Many non-Christians dread the thought of being attacked or 'guilt tripped' by Christians. And many Christians fear being rejected, ridiculed, or embarrassed for trying to force their beliefs on someone else. Both parties find it much easier just to keep to themselves on matters of faith and avoid conflict together. But the Bible is clear that followers are to become fishers. And fishing means being strategic with our opportunities to tell others about Jesus.

- Have you ever seen or experienced something so exciting that you couldn't stop talking about it? High School prom or homecoming, the Superbowl, a wicked awesome car accident, or a fantastic movie? Describe it.
- What's the difference between sharing something you believe and sharing something you've seen and heard?

On top of your words, how you live your life can be a big witness. If you profess your beliefs with your mouth, but do not uphold them with your actions, you can actually cause more harm than good. In the same vein, your words can make an even bigger impact if you have always lived a life that backs them up. You must practice what you preach, and you must preach what you practice.

Before Jesus returned to heaven He left His followers with marching orders.

Matthew 28:19-20

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

What does Jesus command His followers to do?

Brainstorm in your groups for the next five minutes about different ways that you can talk to people about God.

What can your small group do?

What is holding you back?

What is the biggest roadblock that you don't think you can overcome?

What can you do, your small group do, or student ministries do, to help you overcome that roadblock?

Check out the Evangelism 101 section at the end of this booklet for suggestions and ideas on how to invite friends.

Fish! – Week Two

The next small group series is going to go back to the basics of Christianity. It is going to be very introductory, use language and terms that people who are unfamiliar with Christianity can easily follow.

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As well as being a great time to invite someone new, it will be a great series on the foundational things that we believe.

Fishing Buddies

So far, we've talked about the reasons to fish, the need for fisherman, and the courage to fish. But no matter how much you understand the need to fish, and no matter how motivated you are to do it, there's still something intimidating about getting up the courage to tell someone about Jesus. We picture ourselves alone with a lost friend, awkwardly turning the conversation to the subject of spirituality. We dread facing a theological question we can't answer. And deep inside, we know that making them uncomfortable might make them resist God even more. After all, that's part of what they don't like about Christianity in the first place.

Read Luke 10:1-16

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore,

to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road. "

- Why do you think Jesus splits them two by two?
- What does it mean that they were sent out like lambs among wolves?
- Why does Jesus tell them not to take anything?

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.' But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near.' I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town. "

- What are they supposed to do when they enter the town and people houses?
- What are we supposed to do when people don't listen to us?

"Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths.

He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

- Can you let Jesus send you out two by two at your school?
- What can you learn from this passage to tell people about Jesus?
- Has it changed your view at all about telling people about Jesus?

Read Luke 10:17-24

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.’

He replied, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

- How did the 72 return after they followed Jesus command to reach out to people?
- Why were they filled with joy?

At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.”

- Who does Jesus praise because they people shared their faith?
- Who should you praise when you share your faith?

“All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”

- Do you tend to think of evangelism as a solo expedition or a partnership? Why?
- What are some of the biggest differences between evangelizing alone and partnering with other believers to fish for men?
- Would you be comfortable inviting a friend to church? Why or Why not?
- Which friends or people would you feel uncomfortable inviting to church?
- How would you follow up with a friend after he or she attended church with you?

- Is there an event in the next month to which you could invite a friend? (Jr. High Believe, Mid-Winter Retreat, Christmas Series, Relevant, Energy, etc...)
How would you extend this invitation? Practice inviting this person to church with your group right now.

Muddy Water

One of the biggest challenges of sharing Jesus with a non-believer is navigating through the complexities of Christian theology. In fact, maybe you've stayed away from fishing because you weren't confident of your ability to explain all the elements of the doctrine of salvation. Even if you understand that man is born into sin and why bad things happen to good people and how God predestined certain events, that doesn't mean you can explain it all to somebody who's never heard it.

The fact is, oftentimes, Christians make Christianity way too complicated. There are people in this world who have rejected what they think is Christianity; but in reality, they have merely rejected a complicated, twisted view of Christianity. Meanwhile, they're still waiting to experience an authentic version of the love of Jesus.

- Why do you think Christians make Christianity so complicated?
- How do you think the average person would describe the requirements for getting into heaven?
- Name two people in your group of friends who don't know that God loves them and forgives them.
- If you had to guess, what are some of the complications that have prevented some of your friends or family to understand God's message that He loves them?

John 3:16-17: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

- How can you communicate this to your friends that don't know Jesus or are going through tough times?
- Describe some of the ways you are aware of God's love for you; what it means to you that He gave His son Jesus for you; how you know that you are trusting in Jesus for eternal life.

Who are you going to invite to energy? How can we, as a small group, make sure that happens? What can we do to make sure your friend comes and has a good time?

Evangelism 101

We all have friends that aren't Christian and often times we let fear get the better of us, and we never invite them to church. Here at Parkview, we want to help you as best as we can to empower you to bring some friends.

Pray. Pray God puts a specific friend on your heart.
Pray God gives you strength and courage to talk to your friend, and the words to say.
Pray God provides opportunities to invite this friend.

Before you invite someone:

- Try to invite a good friend. You can invite random people you don't know, but it works better if you have a relationship with the person.
- Let the person know you a Christian prior to asking them.
- Know that no is a possible answer. Don't force them.

After you pray, have prayed again, and then prayed some more, and you are ready to invite, here are some suggestions on how to get started:

(It is a good idea to have another Christian friend with you!)

- **On the Spot**
 - "What are you doing tonight?"
Maybe call them an hour beforehand. If you ask a week in advance, they have a week to come up with excuses on why they can't come. If you call and they say they aren't busy, you can tell them you'll pick them up and they are coming to youth group with you.
- **During the Week**
 - "Do you have anything going on Tuesday/Wednesday night?"
 - "Do you go to church anywhere?"
 - "Would you like to come with me this week to..."
 - "Let me tell you about my small group."
 - "This is what we do."
- **Outreach Events**
 - If they are busy or can't come to small group, there is also Saturday Evenings and various outreach events.

- “Hey, I’m going to this wicked awesome retreat with my church in January. It’s called the mid-winter retreat. There’s going to be sledding, a lot of games. It’s going to be awesome. You want to come?”
- “Hey, I’m going on this wicked awesome retreat with my church in February. It’s called Jr. High Believe. There’s going to be loud music, concerts, staying up all night eating pizza. It’s going to be awesome. You want to come?”

Tips:

- It’s best to invite someone in person, but if you can’t, you can text them or invite them through Facebook or Instant Message.
- If they agree to come, try to introduce them to some of your church friends before hand. This way, they know each other a little, and they will feel like they might know a couple of people when they come.

The Night Of:

- First, try to remember what your first time at Relevant/Energy was like. It can be pretty scary and intimidating coming to a place where you don’t know anyone.
- We want Parkview to be a place that is welcoming and accepting. There might be a lot of people at Relevant/Energy who have never been here before, so be friendly and introduce yourself to anyone you don’t recognize.
- Just be normal. It’s easy to get super excited or worried about bring a new person, but relax and just be a friend.

Afterwards:

- Be sure to ‘debrief’ a little. Find out if they enjoyed themselves, invite them again, tell them they are always welcome to come back.
- Try to get someone from your small group to contact them and let your friend know that we were happy they came.

What You Need to Know to Become a Christian

GOD LOVES US MORE THAN ANYTHING...

Genesis 1:26-27 – He made us in His Image.

Genesis 3:8 – God walked in the garden everyday.

(Quality time with the Big Guy! God wants to have a relationship with us; that's the whole point of the Bible).

...BUT WE MESSED IT UP.

Genesis 3:4-6 – We sinned. To sin means to disobey God or to cause somebody else to slip up.

THERE'S A PRICE TO PAY FOR OUR MISTAKES...

Romans 6:23 – Dying is the price we pay for disobeying God but God gives us eternal life through Jesus.

...AND GOD SENT HIS SON TO PAY THE PRICE FOR US.

Philippians 2:8 – Jesus died on the cross to pay for our mistakes

II Corinthians 5:21 – Jesus took all our bad stuff away.

Hebrews 9:22 – Jesus blood pays for our forgiveness

NOW WE CAN LIVE FOREVER WITH GOD...

Romans 6:23b – God's gift to us is eternal life through Jesus.

...IF WE ACCEPT THE GIFT THAT GOD GAVE TO US.

Ephesians 2:8-9 – God gives us life forever because He wants to, not because we earned it. But we can respond to it.