

We Are All Missionaries

A Small Group Curriculum for Sharing the Good News



ABOUT THIS STUDY



Evangelism lies at the heart of the gospel. When we truly understand and appreciate what God has done for us, we can't keep quiet about it. This small-group curriculum is intended to help your home group, Sunday school class, or Bible study really wrestle with the idea of evangelism—and by doing so, enthusiastically embrace the sharing of your faith as a non-negotiable and exciting element of Christian life.

What you can expect as a leader

This lesson plan will give you what you need to lead a vibrant discussion with your group. It includes an overview of the lesson's point, a sample intro that you can use to get the group thinking, and questions to lead the discussion.

Many of the questions include commentary to help guide you to the point of the question. This will help you keep the conversation going naturally while keeping it on task.

What your small group can expect

This curriculum doesn't include the kind of questions that have an obvious "right" answer. We want to encourage community-building discussions so that people can talk through different perspectives and experiences with evangelism.

How to use this study

This study is designed for each lesson to build upon the previous, but each lesson can also stand alone. If you find one or two lessons that you feel are particularly suited to your group, you are welcome to put them to use. Likewise, if a newcomer shows up for the first time partway through the series, they will not be terribly lost.



As the leader, you should read through the entirety of the lesson a couple of times before you start. It is important to internalize some of the notes beforehand. And even though you have the questions ahead of time, it is better for the conversation to ask them in a more “off-the-cuff” (spontaneous) fashion, rather than just reading them off the page. So feel free to get a sense of the questions and ask them in a way that makes them your own.

Each lesson begins with a passage of Scripture. You can approach this in whatever fashion works best for your group. That may mean choosing one reader for the passage or going around in a circle and having everyone read a verse or two until you come to the end.

But it is important that people get to hear the passage aloud. Not only does it give everyone a chance to experience Scripture together, but there is also something special about hearing Scripture read out loud that can make you experience it in new ways.

Each lesson has about 10 questions, but don’t feel obligated to use them all. If you can get a powerful discussion that covers the topic at hand out of one or two questions, that is perfect. If the conversation begins to veer off somewhere interesting, feel free to pursue it. The lesson is a guideline to facilitate discussion—it is not necessarily a hard-and-fast roadmap.

Enjoy!



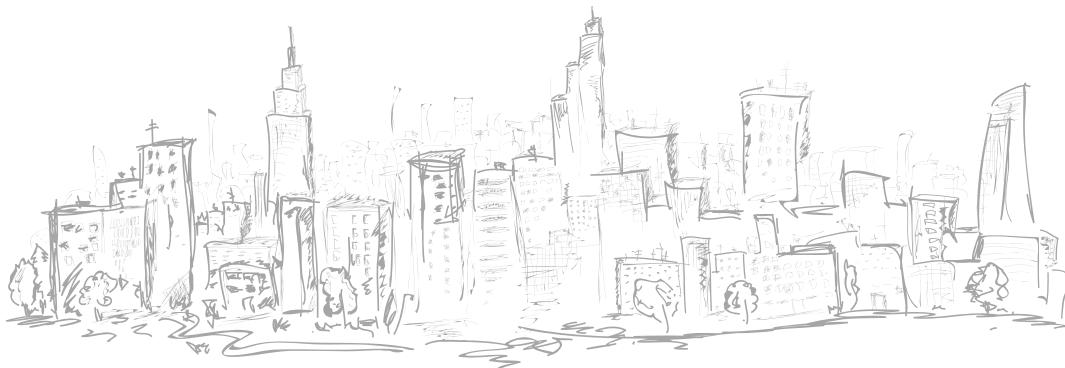


About Jesus Film Project®

Jesus Film Project is passionate about giving everyone, everywhere an opportunity to encounter Jesus. We believe that film is one of the most dynamic tools for people to see and hear the greatest story ever told—so we are driven to take Christ-centered video to the ends of the earth.

By God's grace, there have been more than 670 million indicated decisions for Christ following showings of Jesus Film Project films or media.

Access our library of free gospel-centered media at <http://jesusfilm.org/watch> or by downloading the Jesus Film Project app on your smartphone or device.



WEEK 1: EVANGELISM IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY



Passage for discussion:

“Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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.”

— Matthew 28:16–20, New International Version

Framing the conversation:

The 28th chapter of Matthew tells us about the women coming to the tomb to discover that Jesus has been resurrected, the conspiracy of the guards to keep it silent, and then Jesus’ commission to the disciples.

It would seem to the reader that one thing immediately preceded the next, but that’s not the case. Between the two Marys discovering the empty tomb and Jesus’ words to the disciples on the mountain, some time has passed.

Jesus has appeared to travelers on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35), to the disciples (Luke 24:36–49), to Thomas (John 20:24–29), and again to the disciples by the sea of Tiberius (John 21:1–25).

By the time that Jesus gives His disciples their marching papers, he’s ensured that they’ve had enough time to really process the fact that he’s returned and is among them. By the time they’re together again, they’re primed to have the next part of Jesus’ plan unveiled.





Because we've read this passage so many times, we neglect to really understand the power and importance it would have had on the disciples. Jesus was unveiling phase two of his plan, and it was to empower the church to spread the gospel.

Icebreaker question:

1. Can you think of a time when you were waiting enthusiastically for some news just so you could know what you were supposed to do next?

Note: This "icebreaker" question is designed to get the conversation rolling and to make everyone comfortable. Encourage silly responses and have fun with it.

Discussion questions after reading the passage:

2. The disciples have endured a lot to get to this point. They've walked through the darkest day in history, struggled with their own emotional response to Jesus' death, and are still reeling from His resurrection. Even after multiple exposures to a risen Jesus, Matthew still says that some are struggling with doubt. How do you think they're feeling right now?

Note: It's important to recognize that Jesus knows how hard it's going to be for the disciples to wrap their minds around what has happened. More than once, He's made a point to demonstrate that He can eat solid food (Luke 24:40–43, John 21:9–14). He's let them all touch His scars (Luke 24:38–40, John 20:24–29).

It's important to recognize how disorienting this must have been for His followers.

3. Why do you think Jesus starts by telling them that all authority has been given to Him?

Note: You want to encourage as much discussion as possible. Sometimes people aren't ready to speak up because they've been taught that there's a right answer to these kinds of questions and they're afraid to be publicly told they're wrong.

If no one mentions it, suggest that one alternative is that Jesus is using resurrection to really drive home the fact that what He's about to say isn't a suggestion or an idea. It's a directive coming from their King who has proven Himself by conquering death.

4. After Jesus says that all authority has been given to Him, He begins the next statement with the word "therefore," which ties His authority to His command to "go." Imagine you're a disciple processing what the Lord is saying. What's going through your mind?

Note: It's strange to think about a time when people had so little reference that the words "all nations" wouldn't make a lot of sense. To the disciples, all nations would have only included the nations in their immediate vicinity and a few others they had heard about.

Push for honest emotional responses that the disciples might have felt at Jesus' words. Were they overwhelmed? They were largely uneducated blue-collar workers. Would they have been frightened about not knowing where to begin?

5. It's hard to know the exact timeline, but there are at least 10 days between the moment Jesus gives this command and Pentecost. At Pentecost, Jesus sends the Spirit while Jerusalem is full of tourists and actually begins the spread of the gospel (Acts 2). This means that for at least 10 days, the disciples were under the assumption that all of this work needed to start with them. If Jesus had a plan all along, why do you think He'd let them sit and struggle with the implications of His commission for so long?





Note: There's no right answer here, but these kinds of discussions are interesting because the ways people think about God's motives reveal a lot about their understanding of Him.

It could be that they needed the empowerment that comes from dramatically seeing that Christ is at work on their behalf even in His absence. If they were left to worry how they would do what was commanded of them and then discovered God had a plan all along, it would help them build the kind of trust they had in Jesus' presence—even in His absence.

6. How does it feel to know that Jesus gave the disciples an order to spread the gospel to all nations, and then demonstrated He already had a plan to increase their effectiveness?

Note: Hopefully they can begin to see that Jesus will empower them to do the things he asks. The idea of evangelism is overwhelming for everyone, but once we vow to step out in faith we find that Jesus is already at work making a way for us.

7. Does the fact that Jesus tells them to make disciples change the way you think about evangelism?

Note: We tend to focus a lot of attention on getting people to make a decision. Disciplemaking requires some investment beyond getting them to pray a salvation prayer with us. We won't always be able to invest in the discipleship process, but we need to do what we can to ensure that they have a way to get plugged in.

8. What has changed in the last 2,000 years that helps empower us to take the gospel to all nations?

Note: The list is long here: the printing press, different forms of travel, the internet, mobile computing, etc. If you think about the *JESUS* film, here's a tool that's been translated into more than 2,000 languages and helped hundreds of millions of people discover Jesus.

9. When you think about evangelism as it relates to you, how do you feel?

10. What are some small steps you could take to make sharing the gospel a bigger part of your life?

Closing: Pray for the lost in your city and opportunities to share the gospel.

More from Jesus Film Project:

You can explore more about the Great Commission and evangelism with these resources from Jesus Film Project:

- **Blog:** [*What is the Great Commission?*](#)
- **Blog:** [*Evangelism \(A Definition\): Exploring What it Means*](#)
- **Video:** [*Great Commission and Ascension \(from the JESUS film\)*](#)



Scan this code with your phone or smart device to access these and other helpful links listed in this study.



WEEK 2: WE'RE ALL WORKING TOGETHER



Passage for discussion:

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings?

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.

By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it.

— 1 Corinthians 3:1–10, NIV

Framing the conversation:

The very idea of evangelism can be extremely overwhelming. A lot of that stems from a feeling of responsibility that comes with it. If we share the gospel with someone, we feel like we’re on the hook to push them for a decision. But that’s not necessarily how the Bible depicts evangelism.





The Spirit is already in the world, working on the hearts of humanity. The entire church labors together to share the gospel. We don't know how our interactions with someone are contributing to the Spirit's movement in their life, but we need to trust that they are.

Icebreaker question:

1. What are some of the things our culture uses to judge someone's maturity?

Note: This icebreaker question is designed to get the conversation rolling and to make everyone comfortable. Encourage silly responses and have fun with it.

Discussion questions after reading the passage:

2. Paul addresses the Corinthians' immaturity, and uses the word picture of a baby who isn't ready for solid food. In what ways is describing them as "immature" different than calling them "bad?" In what ways could it be considered the same as calling them "bad?"

Note: You'll probably get a lot of different kinds of answers to this question, but you're trying to draw out a specific point here. Maturity is a progression. It's not bad to be a baby. It's just that a baby is incapable of doing things that an adult can do.

The one way that immaturity can be considered "bad" is when Christians don't do the work of growing into maturity. If a man is 35 years old but chooses to remain a baby, this is a problem. Immaturity is natural in the life of every Christian; it becomes "bad" when it's chosen.

3. Paul uses "worldly" as an adjective for their immaturity. He then uses their bickering about who's the best Christian leader as a sign of their worldliness. How is this behavior a symptom of worldly behavior?



How do mature Christians view things differently?

Note: Look at how Paul uses maturity and worldliness here. You can think about Christian maturity as a progression away from worldliness. In the world, everything is a competition and we're trained to judge everything and everyone by who's doing it best.

4. In the natural world, we judge maturity by the actions a person is capable of: Can she feed herself? Can she speak in complete sentences? Can he dress himself? In this passage, Paul judges a mature Christian based on their perspective. Is this how you tend to view Christian maturity? Is this different than the ways you've thought about Christian maturity?

Note: This question is intended to get some dialogue going about an important topic, but eventually it's going to be important to steer the discussion in the right direction in case it doesn't happen organically.

Christians do tend to tie thinking patterns to maturity, but it's often tied to learning facts, doctrines and positions. In some ways that puts us back in the same place the Corinthians were where we're saying "I follow this denomination" and "I'm of this theological school."

You can teach children facts about history or math, but it doesn't really become maturity until those disciplines begin to incorporate what they've learned into the way they view and interact with the world around them. If the conversation doesn't move in this direction, you can ask a question like: "If you teach a sixth grader the Apostle's Creed, have you helped him mature in the Christian faith? Why?"

This is a good way to discuss the ways that information can be used to lead someone to maturity, but it isn't itself maturity. It becomes maturity when it moves us away from seeing life from a worldly perspective.

5. Paul shares with the Corinthians the mature way of thinking of Christian workers. How would you summarize his point?

Note: Each Christian worker is part of God's ecosystem. They're all working together for God's purpose. Each one has a part to play, but in the end it's God who is doing the work. When we see that everyone is working together toward the same end, it's a lot more difficult to see ministry as a competitive sport.

6. How does Paul's illustration of planting, watering and harvesting a field apply to the discussion of evangelism?

Note: When a seed is planted, it can take some time before the roots begin to grow. Most of that growth is happening below the surface—invisible to the world around it. As the sun shines on it and it drinks in water, it continues to grow. Eventually someone harvests the fruit from that plant.

In the same way, a person might plant a seed of the gospel in someone's life, but might not see the ways that it is taking root. Another person might come along and water that plant with more information or by their good Christian example, while a third person might be the one who gets to harvest the fruit by leading her to Christ.

7. How can this view of evangelism alleviate a lot of the stress associated with the idea of evangelism?

Note: It's helpful to realize that you're not always responsible for pursuing someone with the gospel until he or she believes. We're all meant to take advantage of the opportunities that are given to us, and be ready to harvest the fruit when it's ripe. But we can trust that ultimately God is at work in their life and we're not the only farmhand on the job.





8. In what ways can this view of evangelism lead to problems?

Note: If no one ultimately feels responsible for the harvest, they might pass up opportunities to pick the fruit when it's ripe. If we're immature, saying that we're all responsible means that no one is responsible.

9. How does Paul deal with this potential weakness?

Note: Paul reminds the Corinthians that God is still paying attention and intends to reward laborers according to their work. If we use this perspective of working in God's field as a way to shirk our responsibilities, God isn't fooled.

10. How does this view of evangelism really solidify the importance of our behavior as Christians?

Note: If you think about everyone as potential fruit that God is in the process of growing, then the things we do and say can help—but the inverse is also true. Our behavior, character and attitudes might work against God's goals in someone's life, and we may never know.

Closing: Pray for ways that you can help God in his work.

More from Jesus Film Project:

Explore more about the gospel and evangelism with these resources from Jesus Film Project.

- Blog: [*10 Bible Verses on Missional Living*](#)
- Blog: [*Personal Evangelism: A Comprehensive Guide*](#)
- Video Collection: [*Good News*](#)



Scan this code with your phone or smart device to access these and other helpful links listed in this study.

WEEK 3: EVANGELIZING YOUR CULTURE



Passage for discussion:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

— Acts 2:42–47, NIV

Framing the conversation:

Last week, your group talked about the role we all play in God's harvest. An important part of that is about creating healthy soil where healthy plants can grow. Plants will thrive best in soil that provides them with the right nutrients and amount of moisture for their needs.

The way Christians behave in a culture can create an ideal place for new believers to grow, or it can make it a lot more difficult.

Icebreaker question:

1. Most kids get to experience different dynamics of families when they have sleepovers. What dynamics can you remember from families that were different than your own?

Note: This icebreaker question is designed to get the conversation rolling and to make everyone comfortable. Encourage silly responses and have fun with it.





2. The early disciples devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, meals together, and prayer. In what ways does (y)our church do these things?

Note: This is a “softball” (easy) question to get the discussion going. Your group shouldn’t have a problem coming up with answers to this question.

3. Luke notes that the believers lived as if all of their belongings were shared. If anyone was in need, believers would sell their possessions to help them out. This is a picture of a unique form of community that was a response to their culture. As Paul reminds the Corinthians, many of the first converts weren’t influential, wealthy, or highly educated (1 Cor. 1:18–31) and they lived in a culture that was creating a lot of outside pressure to stop Christianity from spreading. This need to rely on each other helped form a strong bond in the early church. In most Western cultures, many of the elements that helped create this kind of intense community are absent. This means that we’re responsible for seeking out and creating this kind of community. What are some ways we can do that?

Note: There really isn’t a right answer here. The point of the questions is to help provide some context for the way first-century Christians approached ownership, and to make your group think through the ways affluence and individualism can negatively impact community.

4. In the middle of this discussion on community in the first-century church, Luke reminds us that “Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.” In the middle of this community, God was at work. This sense of God’s immediacy and presence was another element that helped solidify this community. Do you get the sense that God is at work in your Christian community?



What are some ways that we could become more reliant and aware of his presence among us?

Note: It's easy to get together and go through the motions and forget that we're gathered because we genuinely believe that God is at work among us. Hopefully this question can help remind the group that Christian community is important, but at its center is a living God who is at work.

5. Think about this for a minute. First-century Christians were surrounded by Jews who didn't believe that Jesus was the Messiah and others that, like us, would be extremely skeptical of a new religion popping up. Yet Luke tells us that they enjoyed the favor of all people. From everything this passage tells us, why would that be the case?

Note: There are a lot of ways this conversation could go, but take them back to the passage from John. There is something about a loving community that people long for, and when they see Christians who love being together and who are thankful, glad and sincere, it awakens a longing in them. Our love for each other should be one of our strongest arguments for the validity of the gospel.

6. If Luke were writing a history of Christianity in the 21st century, do you think he could say that we're "enjoying the favor of all people?" Why or why not?

7. Luke ends this brief look at this early Christian community by saying that "the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." What connection, if any, do you think he intended to make between the favor the early Christians received from outsiders and the fact that God added to their number daily?

8. Have you ever felt like the behavior of other Christians was an



obstacle in sharing the gospel with others?

Note: These three questions are intended to approach the same point from different angles. The way that we act and treat each other can have a direct impact on the validity that others give the gospel.

It's interesting to note that the initial believers didn't "soft pedal" their beliefs to make them more palatable. They were meeting regularly, praying in public, and giving thanks to God. But there was something in the way they acted that gave them credibility.

9. Instead of focusing on what's wrong with Christians in our culture, let's look at ourselves. We interact with people all the time. What are some changes we could make so that we do not hinder those who know us from coming to know the gospel?

Closing: Pray for the church to rediscover the important place that loving each other has on the spread of the gospel.

More from Jesus Film Project:

Explore more about the topic of evangelism with these resources from Jesus Film Project:

- Blog: [*3 Reminders at the Heart of Cross-Cultural Evangelism*](#)
- Blog: [*Types of Evangelism*](#)
- Video: [*How Can I Tell Others?*](#)



Scan this code with your phone or smart device to access these and other helpful links listed in this study.

WEEK 4: SENSITIVITY IN SHARING THE GOSPEL



Passage for discussion:

When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah,” he said. Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.

But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason’s house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: “These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.” When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.”

— Acts 17:1–9, NIV

As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.





But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. The believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

— Acts 17:10–15, NIV

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?” Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the Resurrection. Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.” (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring’”

— Acts 17:16–24, NIV

Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

— 1 Corinthians 9:19–23, NIV

Framing the conversation:

We all know that Paul did a lot of missionary work. In this chapter of Acts, we get a glimpse into how his method reflected his understanding





of the culture he was in. We also see his desire to speak to them in a way they would understand.

Acts 17 demonstrates the truth of Paul's words that he molds his message to those he's talking with in order to communicate the gospel to them clearly.

Icebreaker question:

1. Think about a few different people in your life who aren't Christians. What's different about them, and how would you have to present the gospel differently to each of them?

2. What does Paul's strategy in Thessalonica and Berea have in common? Why are they similar?

Note: In both cases Paul is speaking to in Jewish synagogues. He's intimately familiar with how synagogues function and how open they are to dialogue and debate. They're probably somewhat familiar with him as Saul, and open to hearing him out.

3. How is his experience in the two cities different?

Note: The Thessalonians responded by causing a riot and then blamed it on the Christian believers. In Berea, they took what Paul said and measured it against the Scriptures. But even the Thessalonians showed up there to stir up trouble, forcing Paul to flee to Athens.

4. How was his strategy different in Athens than it was in Thessalonica and Berea?

Note: He did start by going to the local synagogue. But then he went to the marketplace and began to preach there. Athens was a hub of philosophic discussion and it was common for people to come to the marketplace and set up shop and share their philosophies and ideas.

The Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were taken by Paul's message and they brought him to the Areopagus: an open-air meeting place for leaders in Athens. Paul wasn't in trouble, but the Greeks in Athens were always open to hearing new ideas, religions and philosophies.

5. What strikes you as unique in Paul's address to the council?

Note: There are a number of interesting things that might come up here. If they don't, you can sprinkle them into the conversation:

He begins by appealing to their devotion and desire to know the unknowable in a complementary way.

He has to start at the very beginning because, unlike with Jews, he can't assume that they're on the same page. So he begins by sharing with them that there is a monotheistic God who created everything, and he did it so that we'd have a relationship with Him.

He appeals to a poem from the pagan philosopher Epimenides: "In him we live, move and have our being."

He communicates that since God is our father, he can't be adequately represented by an idol.

6. In verse 16 we're told that Paul was "greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols." Yet when he addresses the council, he commends them for being very religious and talks about all of the city's idols.





Why would he do this? Is he being a hypocrite?

Note: The basic answer is that Paul is troubled that the idolatry represents people who want to know God, but don't. However, instead of condemning them, he recognizes that if they're sincere enough to put a statue up for gods they might not have learned about yet, they're open to hearing about Jesus.

7. What could we learn about sharing the gospel in other cultures (and even in sharing the gospel on our own) from Paul's example?

Note: In case people are struggling, here are some things you can suggest to encourage conversation.

It's important to see beyond the obvious and recognize the needs that idolatry and philosophies are trying to fill. Sometimes we get so caught up in trying to debate bad ideas that we neglect to see what felt needs those ideas are attempting to alleviate.

It's OK to build a rapport on things that they're familiar with. Sitting down and opening the Bible makes sense if they have some basic familiarity with it or the relationship has progressed to that point. But sometimes it's helpful to transition from something they understand and are familiar with into a discussion that they can understand, like Paul did by quoting the poem.

Do something—even if it doesn't seem huge. Paul didn't attempt to barge into the Areopagus; he started where it was appropriate. The marketplace was full of people sharing their ideas. Paul went there and began sharing, and God orchestrated the interest that put Paul in a position where he could speak with leaders in Athens.

8. What do Paul's comments to the Corinthian church about becoming "all things to all people" communicate to us about sharing the gospel?



Note: Paul is talking about sensitivity and adaptability here. If he's with law-abiding Jews, he's going to do his best to follow purification rituals and eat kosher. If he's with people with a limited education, he isn't going to show off and talk over their heads and potentially alienate them. Cultures and people we reach out to shouldn't be expected to conform to us. We should do everything we can to be sensitive to them so that we don't disqualify ourselves when we begin to share the good news with them.

When Jesus sent out the disciples in Luke 10, he went out of his way to instruct them to "eat what is offered to you" (Luke 10:8). This is the same principle. You're going to find yourself in areas where hospitality is very important, and if you make a huge issue out of dietary restrictions or point out that you don't like something, you could undermine your ability to minister to them.

9. What are some evangelism methods you've heard of that seem particularly sensitive to others? How about ones that seem to be less than sensitive?

Closing: Pray for those your church or group might be ministering to—or even ones you're evangelizing to personally—ask for guidance for ways you can be more sensitive to them.

LOOKING FOR MORE EVANGELISM RESOURCES?

If your group is looking for an opportunity to reach out to others in your community, Jesus Film Project has some fantastic [resources](#) to support and equip you.

Start with the [Jesus Film Project app](#). It is a full digital library of more than 200 full-length movies, miniseries and short films to help people



all over the world to get to know Jesus better. There are more than 2,000 languages represented and it can be a great way to begin a dialogue about Jesus with someone you know. You can also direct them to the app where they can discover Jesus on their own time.

You can also watch [films](#) on any web-connected browser on our website.



Scan this code with your phone or smart device to access these and other helpful links listed in this study.

