

# JOURNEY EVANGELISM

REACH



A six-week small group discussion  
created by the people of  
Grace Community Church



# JOURNEY EVANGELISM

## *REACHING OTHERS WITH THE LOVE OF CHRIST*

**SESSION 1:** Journey Evangelism: It's a Process

**SESSION 2:** Key Ingredients: God's Love and Our Time

**SESSION 3:** New Wineskins for the 21st Century

**SESSION 4:** Sharing the Person and the Story

**SESSION 5:** Groups on the Go

**SESSION 6:** The Starting Point

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# USING THIS GUIDE

"Journey evangelism" is a phrase created to re-define evangelism not as a single event but as a journey. Journey evangelism changes the way we look at sharing our faith. It brings together our understanding of God and His kingdom and the practical outworkings of our call to be His witnesses on this earth. Take advantage of this chance to explore a refreshing approach to evangelism.

Come each session ready to dig in with your group. Begin the first session by reviewing the group shared agreement in Appendix 5. Then move into the DVD portion followed by a time of discussion using this guide. Read each question out loud in Our Initial Discussion and talk about them as a group. Then use A Step Further for further reflection.

Our hope is that by going through this process of discovery and discussion that each of you walks away with your heart and mind thoroughly saturated with the values and distinctives of journey evangelism.\*

To help this become part of your day-to-day life, we encourage you to use the prayer journal pages included in this guide for family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, people you know who have not decided to follow Jesus Christ. Start by asking God to show you who to include and then pray for them. As the weeks pass, watch for God's movement in their lives, no matter how small, and write the stories in your journal.

Also, keep a section of the journal for insights into your own life as you learn more about journey evangelism and grow in your understanding of the privilege God gives you, as a follower of His Son Jesus, to take His story into the world and to reveal Him to the people He brings your way.

Thank you for joining God's Spirit in this lifestyle of engaging others around us.

The Grace Outreach Team

\* See **Appendix 3** for a basic overview of the values and distinctives of journey evangelism that this study covers in much more depth.

## REACHING OTHERS / VALUE OF THE G.R.A.C.E. VALUES

### *Opening Our Lives to Other Lost and Broken People*

God calls us to shine as His lights in the darkness, to live lives that radiate His endless love and reveal His enduring message of hope to the lost and broken people of the world. The hurting, the marginalized, the crushed. People searching for a God who heals deep wounds, a God who brings justice and peace, a God who restores hope. People just like us who need to know Him. God yearns to draw each and every one into close, intimate relationship with Him. As His people, God calls us to look outside our immediate surroundings to the world around us, to see beyond the crowd to the individual faces and hearts. He wants us to reach out to with His love. As we seek God's heart and grow closer to Him, His life flowing through us offers His healing touch to the wounded and ushers His in-breaking kingdom ever deeper into our world, bringing restoration and transformation to His creation.



# I

# JOURNEY EVANGELISM:

## IT'S A PROCESS

*“I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”*

— John 12:24 (NIV)

Open in prayer, then review the group covenant for this study in *Appendix 5*. When finished, watch the DVD for this session then look at *Our Initial Discussion* and *A Step Further* together.

### OUR INITIAL DISCUSSION

In the old paradigm of evangelism, a decision was the primary focus. Although the decision to follow Jesus Christ is crucial, journey evangelism views it as a single step in a lifelong process. Just like a grain of wheat, the Holy Spirit begins by sowing the seed of His truth in the hearts of people then tends it with care and nourishment, harvests it when the time comes, uses it to form His Church, then works through it to multiply that seed in the lives of others who need to know Him.

**QUESTION 1:** *When you hear the term “evangelism”, does it elicit a positive or negative reaction in you? Why or why not?*

## JOURNEY EVANGELISM: IT'S A PROCESS

**QUESTION 2:** *How does this concept of evangelism – a process rather than a specific harvest event – compare with your understanding or experience of evangelism?*

For many, joining the journey, entering the process, naturally stirs up apprehension and fear. It can be messy, and our human nature prefers the familiar over the unknown.

**QUESTION 3:** *What apprehensions or fears, if any, do you have when it comes to engaging in the process of evangelism?*

Looking back at the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—we pointed out that Jesus taught His disciples and performed miracles among the people, another component of journey evangelism. In the same way, we need to proclaim God's truth with our lives out in the world not just inside the walls of our church.

**QUESTION 4:** *In your opinion, how has the church succeeded or failed in taking the gospel outside the walls? Discuss your thoughts with your group.*

**CHALLENGE TO ACT:** A vital component of journey evangelism is God's call through His Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20 and Acts 1:8 to go, to put God's love into action, to step out of our comfort zones and into the lives of the people God brings around us.

Pray this week about practical ways over the next year that you might “go” and engage the people in your life who do not yet know Christ.

## A STEP FURTHER

### ***WHY? BECAUSE PEOPLE MATTER TO GOD***

God's mission is to restore broken relationship with His lost creation. He longs for each and every one of us to draw ever closer to His heart, a place that offers us life and wholeness, forgiveness and healing, justice and peace, love and hope.

When we enter into a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ through our decision to follow Him, God then calls us to serve as His agents, to allow Him to reveal Himself through us to the world. We are the seasoning that gives people a taste of God, and the light that illuminates Him to the people in our lives.

And we don't need to do this alone. The Church answers this call together. Through our love—for God, for one another, and for them—the world sees His reflection. We need to be out there though. When communities of Christ-followers go out from our places of worship and engage people where they are, the world truly experiences Jesus and the power of His love.

But we must take that first step. We must go. The call is urgent for God wants none to perish, no one to be separated from Him here on earth or for eternity. People matter to God.

Our love for Jesus compels us to respond in obedience by sharing His gift of life with the people in our world. For when we remember that we were once lost and truly grasp the sacrifice that Jesus made for each one of us, paying the ultimate price with His life for our sins on the cross, we can't help but go.

*“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”* — Luke 19:10 (NIV)



## 2

# KEY INGREDIENTS:

## GOD'S LOVE AND OUR TIME

*Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.* — Ephesians 5:1–2 (NIV)

Open in prayer, watch the DVD for this session, then look at *Our Initial Discussion* and *A Step Further* together.

### OUR INITIAL DISCUSSION

As Christ-followers, we often find ourselves isolated from people who do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ, focusing the majority of our time on friendships with people who do. Let's take a closer look at our lives.

**QUESTION 1:** *What do you suppose are some of the reasons Christ-followers gravitate toward relationships with other Christ-followers than with those who don't follow Him?*

## KEY INGREDIENTS: GOD'S LOVE AND OUR TIME

Read Ephesians 5:1–2 and 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. After reading both passages of Scripture, think about a current relationship you have with someone who is not a Christ-follower. Write his/her name down:

**QUESTION 2:** *How can you practically demonstrate this kind of love, essentially Jesus Christ's love, to this person?*

Read 1 Peter 2:9, a passage that describes our identity as God's people, who we are in Him. Now, take a few minutes in your group and rewrite this verse in first person using your own words.

**QUESTION 3:** *How does this Scripture change your understanding of who we are as God's people and our role in the kingdom, particularly in the lives of people without a relationship with Jesus?*

**CHALLENGE TO ACT:** Break into groups of two or three. With the person from question 2 in mind, discuss some practical steps you can take to cultivate a deeper relationship with this person. Then spend some time in prayer together, asking God to open your friend's heart to His love and truth and to prepare you to step out in ways that reveal our God in vibrant and real ways.

## A STEP FURTHER

### EVER WATCHFUL, EVER LISTENING

God's Spirit is moving. But He doesn't limit Himself to the lives of His followers, to the worlds of our churches. The Holy Spirit is working in everyone, everywhere.

Think about it ... the Holy Spirit is reaching out to our families, our neighbors, our co-workers, our friends. He's touching the lives of people we may consider mere acquaintances, maybe not even that—a son's teacher, a daughter's coach, a waitress, a repairman, a fellow shopper; the list goes on.

Our paths cross with thousands of people just like these in our lifetimes. How many do we encounter in a day? Whether it's just a handful or far more than we can count, we need to keep this question at the forefront of our minds and hearts: How in tune are we with the Holy Spirit's movement in the lives of people He brings our way?

Not that God expects us to share our faith with everyone. But are we aware of the opportunities He gives us? Are we sensitive to His leading? God longs to demonstrate His love through us, but if we're not watching or listening, our chance to be His instrument slips away.

*But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, chosen to be a holy people, God's instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you—from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted.*

—I Peter 2:9  
(The Message)

When we walk closely with His Spirit, praying, watching, and listening, we go about our days conscious of His work, open to His hand nudging us to engage, and willing to respond by following Him.

Everyone is at a different place in her or his journey, so our roles look different each time. Some are seemingly small, perhaps a smile here, a kind word there. Others involve far more—our time, our energy for safe connection and hard questions. Yet each encounter is significant in terms of God's kingdom. We must step out and trust that God uses us to help them see His love, His work in their lives.

All around us the Holy Spirit is working. Let's not miss out.

