

## SESSION

# I

# OUR MANDATE

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**Focus Scriptures:** Matthew 28:16-20

**Session Goal:** To help group members understand the biblical mandate to share their faith with others.

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## OPENING OUR MINDS

### *Option 1*

Write the word “evangelism” on a dry erase board. Have the group say what comes to mind when they hear the word, whether positive or negative. Then discuss the impressions the adults have about this word.

- **What do you think gave you this impression of evangelism?**
- **How has this perspective helped or hindered your efforts at sharing your faith with others?**
- **Do you feel every Christian is called to share their faith? Why or why not?**
- **Is sharing our faith just about the words we say? If not, why?**

## *Option 2*

Sharing our faith is important to who we are as Christians, as we are to spread the good news of Christ to others. Invite group members to consider how the good news might be shared in the following settings:

- *Morning worship service*
- *A small group Bible study*
- *At work*
- *Among friends*
- *With neighbors*
- *In social settings*
- *At the grocery store*

## OPENING THE WORD

### *Understanding Matthew 28:16-20*

Jesus has risen. The eleven were gathered in Galilee as Jesus had instructed (Matthew 26:32; 28:10). On a mountain, Jesus met with them. Jesus speaks to them saying “all authority” is given to Him. As One having sovereign rule over everything, Jesus gives the disciples a command: make more disciples. They were to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and to teach others to obey what Jesus has taught. This “Great Commission” was not something that the disciples would accomplish through sheer human effort. Jesus would be with them always through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

This calling was not exclusively given to the eleven. This command was to be obeyed by every generation of those who call themselves Christ-followers. Today, under Jesus’ authority and with the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives we are to obey this command to tell others the good news of God and make disciples for His kingdom.

### *Option 1*

Read Matthew 28:16-20. Share with the group that Jesus had risen. The eleven disciples had gathered in Galilee. Jesus met them on the mountain. Today’s passage gives us the important conversation Jesus had with His disciples. Then ask,

- **Why was it important for Jesus to remind them of His authority?**
- **What is the command Jesus gives them?**
- **How would you define “disciple”?**
- **Where are they to “go” and what are they to “do”? For us today, where are we to “go” and what are we to “do”?**

- **What does Jesus promise in verse 20? In what ways is He with us today?**
- **How does this promise help us in sharing our faith with others?**

### *Option 2*

Begin by asking your group what they think being a disciple means. Then, share this definition: *A disciple is a person who follows the teaching and example of another person. Those who follow Jesus Christ are His disciples. They are sometimes called followers of Christ. They are also called Christians.*<sup>1</sup>

Read Matthew 28:16-20. Then ask,

- **What is the command that Jesus gives His disciples?**
- **How would you interpret Jesus' words "go" and "make"?**
- **What do you think is involved in "teaching" others to obey everything Jesus commanded?**
- **In what ways does Jesus' promise to be with us always give us hope? How does it help us when it comes to sharing our faith with others?**
- **Why do you think this command has been titled "the Great Commission"?**

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1. J. Wesley Eby, ed. *A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine in Everyday English*. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2004), p. 78.

## OPENING OUR HEARTS

### *Option 1*

Close by printing out the following responsive reading and reciting it as a group.

#### *The Mission of the Church<sup>2</sup>*

Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

**"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."**

The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth.

**From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth.**

God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach for him, and find him.

**Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in?

**And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?**

And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

**And how can they preach unless they are sent?**

As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

**Sing to the Lord, all the earth.**

Proclaim his salvation day after day.

**Declare his glory among the nations,**

His marvelous deed among all peoples.

(Unison) **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.**

(Matthew 28:18; Mark 16:15; Acts 17:24a; 26a; 27a; Romans 10:13-15; Psalm 96:1b, 2b-3; John 3:16)

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2. *Sing to the Lord* hymnal (Kansas City: Lillenas Publishing Company, 1993), 703.

## Option 2

Jesus has given us the mandate/command to go into our world and share the good news with others. Read Romans 10:9-13: *If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

This is the good news of God that we are to share with others through the things we say and do. Then, ask the group to silently reflect on the following questions:

- *Is there someone in my life that I could "go" to this week and share my faith with?*
- *One way I could share my faith this week is by...*
- *When it comes to sharing my faith, I need God's help to...*

## Connect

### WEEK 1

#### *Our Mandate*

THIS WEEK: Does the Bible give us a mandate, a directive, or a command to share with others the message of God's love and saving works? In a word, YES! This week we will examine what the Bible says about sharing our faith with others.

THINK ABOUT THIS: Read Matthew 28:16-20 before this week's session. Take time to reflect on the words of Jesus.

PRAYER CONCERNS: