

SMALL GROUP STUDIES LEADERS NOTES

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY MOBILISATION BIBLE STUDIES



tearfund

Following Jesus where the need is greatest

The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

This series of bible studies are designed to be used in your small group, however they also contain additional 'Going Deeper' background notes at the end for a deeper understanding and for use as a sermon guide. The studies have been created from Tearfund's work around the world using the Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM) process.

CCM is Tearfund helping the local church work with its community, sharing a vision to address local needs using their own resources. Around the world it is an approach that has brought remarkable transformation to local churches and their communities

OVERVIEW

This Bible study is designed to motivate the Church to build relationships with the local community through a growth in understanding of her place within that community and of the importance of partnership with others. Such a partnership is designed to mobilise resources for the blessing, healing and empowering of those in the community who are injured and overlooked, whether materially, spiritually, socially, economically or politically.

INTRODUCTION

Invite group members to use the online 'blind spot' exercise at <https://visionaryeyecare.wordpress.com/2008/08/04/eye-test-find-your-blind-spot-in-each-eye/>

You could print off a copy of one of these exercises for each member and get them to use them at the beginning of the meeting.

Get people to describe the experience of discovering our blind spots.

STORY

This is Patrick, beside his house there is a wonderful citrus orchard. He's lived on this land for most of his life, but his orchard is just a few years old. Before he got involved with his local Church he was an alcoholic and describes spending all his time and money in local bars.



Things changed for him when he began to get involved with his local Church's vision to see things change in their community through a process called Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM). As they began to study the Bible together he realised he could use his land to grow crops, 'I had not realised I was standing on gold'.

Since then Patrick has put his land to use, planting a citrus orchard, establishing a beekeeping business, and installing a biosand filter to provide clean water. He is producing various strains of lemon trees and has 10,000 seedlings to grow and sell on.

With Patrick's growth he has been able to help other groups in his community. A group of women, all affected by HIV, had been side-lined in the community because of their illness - they had been living isolated from others and without hope. Their own view of themselves was transformed during the Bible studies as they discovered that they were made in the image of God and of just as much value as anyone else.

Patrick encouraged them to form a group, SHINE, so that they could support one another. He gave them a plot of land for them to develop and they set up a thriving poultry project as well as a Savings Group which helps them at crisis times and loans them money for new ventures.

When asked what motivated him to help those living with HIV and Aids, Patrick explains that the Story of the Good Samaritan made him reflect on his own life and how he treated others less fortunate than himself: "I didn't want to be like the man who walked by on the other side of the road, doing nothing to help those in need."

DISCUSS

Read Luke 10:25-37

- Q Look at all the different people/groups of people involved in this passage. How would you describe the behavior of each one?
- Q What do you think motivates them to behave in the way they do?
- Q When you think about the traveler, which are the people in our community whose situation most resembles his? Why?
- Q The religious people in this story (lawyer, priest, Levite) don't appear in a very good light. Can you think of ways in which we as a church are rather too much like them in the way we act? Do we have 'blind spots' when it comes to considering those who live in our community?
- Q The Samaritan is presented as a model of what it means to demonstrate God's love for those in need. In what practical ways might God want us to learn from and imitate his example?

As well as reflecting on the obvious character strengths he displays, it will be helpful to comment on the way he is prepared to partner with the innkeeper who is able to offer resources the Samaritan does not possess.

- Q The Samaritan was happy to partner with the innkeeper in the meeting of the traveler's needs. Which people/groups in our own community are those with whom we might partner/approach as we seek to identify and meet the needs of those who are most broken?

ACTION

Break into twos or threes:

- Q What steps are we going to take as a result of this study?
- Q Who else are we going to invite to partner with us as we take these steps?

PRAY

Pray for one another - for the ability to hear the Lord and courage to act on what he says.

GOING DEEPER

This story, with its different characters, gives lots of scope to be used as a mirror in which we might see features of our own community, and ourselves as God's people, reflected.

Most obviously, the traveler represents all those who, for whatever reason, find themselves crushed or threatened by particular situations and powerless to help themselves. In our community this might cause us to think e.g. of those who are unemployed, trapped in addiction, indebted to loan sharks, being exploited sexually or in other ways, mentally ill etc. Without the intervention of others they have no hope of things improving for them.

The robbers represent those forces in our society which threaten, impoverish and keep people from achieving their God-ordained potential.

The religious people (lawyer, priest, Levite) rather too uncomfortably resemble the church. The lawyer asks the question of Jesus in order to *limit* what God might expect of him in terms of serving others - what is the least he can get away with is the sub-text of his question. He is something of an 'holier than thou' person who assumed that spiritual depth consisted of knowing a great deal about God and His ways, as opposed to loving the least and the lost.

The priest and the Levite may well have passed by on the other side for a number of reasons. It would have been costly and time-consuming to get involved with the injured man (where might this lead me?); it might have been risky - the robbers might still be around - so best not to get involved with things which don't concern us; there were more important things to attend to (both were probably on the way to Jerusalem to worship, and nothing should get in the way of our worshipping God!); touching a wounded person would render them ritually unclean and thus bar them from the Temple for a period of time (sometimes we fear that to get involved with a particular kind of person might make us morally unclean). They represent the church which is so involved with *spiritual* things that we neglect the *practical* (which is actually our true worship!).

The Samaritan models for us what it truly means to obey God by showing compassion to the least and the lost, by putting ourselves out even for those who are quite unlike us. He takes time to attend to the wounded man and was willing to use his resources to meet his needs.

This study aims to help the church see that its calling is to build a relationship with the community, discern its needs, and deploy its resources towards the meeting of those needs.

The innkeeper represents those in the wider community who may not share the same compassion but who for whatever reason are willing to provide resources towards a common aim. This may, in our context, call to mind local business people, statutory and other voluntary agencies, community groups etc. These are those with whom we are called to seek active partnership.

We're Christians passionate about ending poverty. We go to the places of greatest need, responding to disasters and helping communities to see their own potential to overcome poverty. We won't stop until poverty stops.

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tearfund.org

100 Church Road, Teddington TW11 8QE

T 020 8977 9144 E info@tearfund.org

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