



KINGDOM FOR COMMUNITIES

A SIX-WEEK COURSE ON PUBLIC DISCIPLESHIP AND SEEKING THE COMMON GOOD

A thin version of the gospel that doesn't demand very much from us in our daily lives leaves many people asking: "Is this all there is?"

To experience the fullness of life in Jesus, we must connect Sunday to Monday and live our whole lives in the power of God's creative and redeeming love.

That means working together with God and our neighbors in our homes, workplaces and neighborhoods to seek the common good and flourishing of our communities.

It's a challenging way to live, but it's fruitful and joyous in God's power!

This lesson plan is ideal if people in your group...

- Are hungry for a higher purpose in daily life
- Want a bigger vision of the gospel of Jesus
- Want to connect their faith to what's going on in their communities

Topics we will discuss include...

1. The Church and the Community
2. Our Calling
3. In the Image of a Creative God
4. Taking Discipleship Public
5. Being the Church as Public Disciples
6. Being Public Disciples as the Church



WEEK 1: THE CHURCH AND THE COMMUNITY

Gather & Open with Prayer

Opening Discussion (5 minutes)

Faith is something very personal, but that doesn't mean your faith is only important to you. If you are following Jesus, that will change your behavior, and that change will affect other people. What are some of the ways other people are affected by the change that happens in us when we follow Jesus?

If a lot of people in a local community start following Jesus, how will that affect the community at large? What changes would a visitor from outside the community notice over time?

Introduce Video:

In this video, pastor and seminary professor Charlie Self explains that when the gospel changes us, our communities are exposed to God's joy, peace and righteousness through that transformation in our lives.

Watch Video:

Charlie Self, *Faithful Churches Create Flourishing Communities*, Oikonomia Network (15 minutes)
tiu.edu/community1a

Discussion (20 minutes)

Group leader selects questions to focus on.

The car mechanic described in the talk explained that his work served thousands of people. Think about your own daily work, in your home and on the job, and elsewhere in your community. Who does your daily work serve? How does it serve them?

As we accept the good news and follow Jesus, we experience the joy of God in our hearts. How does that bring a sense of meaning and purpose to our daily work as we serve in our communities?

What conflicts and feelings of anger or separation do you see among the people you encounter in a typical day?

As we accept the good news and follow Jesus, we experience the peace of God in our hearts. How does that help us cultivate forgiveness and reconciliation among those around us?

What do you see happening in your community that is wrong? In an ordinary week, how do you see people mistreating or taking advantage of each other?

As we accept the good news and follow Jesus, we experience the righteousness of God in our hearts. How does that help us stand up for justice and defend people when they need it?

Watch Video: Jay Moon, *The Connected Complexity of Culture Change* (9 minutes) tiu.edu/community1b

Discussion (10 minutes)

Think about your local community. What are some examples of the "ideology/beliefs" of its culture? How about its "social/relationships" sector and its "economics/technology?"

Jay Moon shared some examples of how a change in one sector produces changes in the other sectors. Think about the car mechanic and the car dealership in the first video we watched today. How do you see a change in one sector making a change in other sectors?

What are some ways Christians could make a change in "social/relationships" or in "economics/technology" that would help show people the good news of Jesus?

Integration Point:

This week, look for examples of how living faithfully helps bring the joy, peace and righteousness of the gospel into the lives of those around us.

Close with Prayer