

Get Ready: Preparation Guide

Getting ready to lead an International Essentials session is simple. Each one-page outline can be used as both the leader's guide and as the students' worksheet. It includes directions and guided discussion questions. Print one sheet for each person in your group. Work through the discussion from left hand column to right.

Before you begin: *Pray*

Only God can empower you to have a successful session.

Pray that God will help each person in your group to:

1. Attend the session.
2. Understand what is discussed.
3. Apply the main lesson in a specific way.
4. Share what they learn with someone else.

Four Phases of the Group Discussion Flow

CONNECT with Each Other

Connection: Begin by finding out how everyone is doing, checking on how their application went from last week, and praying together. International students value connection time, so take time to build cross-cultural friendships through love and trust (both for you with them, and for them with each other).

Discussion:

Our Lives – Use these questions to draw out personal experiences, to create an authentic atmosphere, and to help group members see the relevance of this lesson to their lives. Encourage them to share experiences from their time in this country and from their home cultures.

Deeper Perspectives – Use these questions to move them from their personal feelings and experiences into foundational values and beliefs.

Transition: This statement or question eases the discussion into the Bible section, creating curiosity about what God's Word says about the issues they've begun to talk about.

Notes:

Use Examples - Be ready to use examples from your life as the group discussion proceeds.

Use Discernment - Use the connection time to assess everyone's spiritual condition. If there are a number of non-Christians present, your session may contain more basic explanations and you may need to be sensitive about prayer times, etc.

HEAR God's Word

Background: There will usually be a paragraph which you can read aloud that will give some good context to the Bible passage.

Passage: Have one or more of the group members read the Bible passage(s) aloud.

Discussion: The Bible discussion questions are designed to be open-ended and thought-provoking. They are also usually ordered to guide the group through the passage and from the theoretical to the practical. However, feel free to come up with your own questions, based on the spiritual interest and maturity of your group. Since your group consists of internationals, you may need to ask questions which clarify or ensure proper understanding.

Each Unit (group of five lessons) includes a Teacher's Guide, and that guide may include some alternative Bible discussion questions that you can use if you feel the need.

UNDERSTAND it

This "understand it" section has two parts: Summary and Clarification.

Summary: This part helps the group members to summarize the most important truths and principles in the lesson. Encourage the group to write down summary statements in the space provided. Give examples if they need help to think of good summary statements.

Clarification: This part offers a chance to ask questions if anything remains confusing and to vocalize what has made the deepest impression. Be patient. Encourage them to share, giving examples if they have a hard time getting started talking about these issues.

New Terms: In this section encourage everyone to list any terms or vocabulary they discovered along with a brief definition.

APPLY it to Life

This section also has two parts: Act and Tell. Both give them the chance to think and plan about how to apply what they've learned in the lesson

Act: Give everyone time to think and write, then discuss and pray about what God may be telling them to do in the following week. We want to encourage the group to act upon what they have discussed and learned. Space is given to write these applications down. Occasionally, homework may be included to help them process the lesson's content or to prepare for the following week's lesson.

Tell: One great way to imprint the lesson in their hearts and minds in the following week is to challenge them to share what they have learned with someone who is not in the group (believer or preferably, a non-believer). Lead them and give them time to consider who that person might be and to pray together for him/her. Space is given for them to write that person's name down so that they will remember him/her later in the week.

After several weeks, see if some members of your group might like to lead their own groups. Look for people who are particularly faithful to attend and are excited about the discussion, application and sharing. (People they have been telling week-to-week may be willing to join their new groups.) Talk to them about how important it is for group leaders to be growing in their walk with the Lord. Inconsistency in their walk can undermine a person's credibility with group members. It is a privilege to teach people about God, but it is also an important responsibility.

If they are willing to accept that responsibility, give them copies of the Session Preparation Overview and the Sample Group Discussion Flow. Walk through these with them and answer questions. You might want to help them prepare a lesson. If possible, have them teach a part (or all) of one of your group sessions. Give suggestions afterwards to help them be ready to start a new group. Now you are getting seriously involved in spiritual multiplication. Before long, there may be several groups meeting because of how God used you in starting your original group. You will begin to identify with the Apostle John when he said in 1 John 1:4, "We want you to enjoy this, too. Your joy will double our joy!"

International Essentials Leader's Guide

UNIT
4

Lesson A: Love People

Bible Passages: John 13:1-5, 12-17, 34-35

Unit Note: The previous Units of the Essentials focused on strengthening the young group members' personal walks with God. This unit starts them on the road of ministry to others. God's heartbeat for our ministry is to reconcile the world to Himself. Lessons B, C, & D of this Unit all work toward that end: Win, Build and Send.

However, the first lesson is about Love. This lesson is essential to cover first because in order to be effective winners, builders and senders we first need to love those to whom we minister. Finally, the ultimate purpose of all ministry is to glorify God, which is the topic of Lesson E.

Unit Objective: Be effective winners, builders and senders, motivated by Christ's love and aiming for God's glory above all.

Session Objective: Grow in loving people better through Christ's great example.

Learn and begin to apply at least several of the following principles:

- Love requires service and humble sacrifice; Jesus has demonstrated both of those to us, in going to the cross for our sakes.
- Jesus asks us to love others with the same kind of love He has for us.

Communicate that certain people may seem hard to love, but the Bible tells us, "We love because He first loved us."
1 John 4:19

Lesson B: Win

Bible Passages: Matthew 4:17-22; Luke 19:10; Matthew 24:14

Session Objective: Be committed to actively win people to Christ and have basic plans for when and with whom to start.

Look for the students to come away with a couple of the following principles:

- Jesus was compassionately concerned about the people around Him who were in a state of great darkness. People around us are also in a state of great darkness, and need us to show them the compassion of Christ.
- Ultimately, the most important thing we can do for nonbelievers is to help them come into God's kingdom. Thus being one of Jesus' "fishers of men" is one of the greatest callings we can imagine.
- Winning others is sometimes very difficult because most people don't realize the depth of their spiritual (i.e. like fish, they normally won't just jump into the boat). Thus, being effective witnesses usually requires lots of love and perseverance.

In the Apply section, help students identify non-believing friends and family members who need prayer and help in understanding the gospel.

Lesson C: Build

Bible Passages: 1 Thessalonians 2:5-12

Session Objective: Be committed to build others in Christ and learn the basics of how to do it.

In the Hear section, take a few minutes to look together at the background of the Thessalonian church from Acts 17:1-10.

Look for the students to come away with a couple of the following principles:

- Our attitudes in helping other young believers to grow should be similar to loving parents, both gently encouraging and boldly challenging them to grow.
- We need to watch out for selfish motivations within us when we build others in their faith.
- Building others effectively requires both hard work and godly modeling.
- The goal in building others in their faith should be that they would live lives worthy of the God who has called them.
- Multiplication is more effective for reaching the world than addition.

In the Apply section, if any group members are already leading younger believers in Bible studies, discuss how they can implement these principles.

Lesson D: Send

Bible Passages: Luke 10:1-2; 1 Kings 8:60; Matthew 24:14; Acts 1:8

Session Objective: Understand the urgent need and strategy for sending believers out to the world with the gospel.

This lesson will stretch the group's vision, yet it's also meant to present a clear plan in how to send; it shows God's strategy to reach the world.

Look for the students to come away with a couple of the following principles:

- Pray often: Ask God – the Lord of the harvest – to raise up laborers. Ultimately, God is the one who sends.
- Young believers may not yet be mature enough to be sent or to send others, but help them to take small steps to send others. (For example, they can pray, give, and learn about places that need the gospel.)

The group might ask, "Is the Christian gospel really appropriate for all cultures around the world?" There are good answers to that question, here are things you might say:
1) God is the Creator of all humanity (Acts 17:24-28).

2) All people are sinners and need redemption (Acts 17:29-31; Romans 3:9-19).

3) Jesus was from Israel (He was not a Westerner) and the Bible is not a Western book.

Lesson E: Glorify

Bible Passage: Revelation 4:8-11; Revelation 5:11-14; Isaiah 43:1-7

Session Objective: Begin practically living for the purpose of glorifying God.

Look for the students to come away with a couple of the following principles:

- Every human life is designed to be lived for God's glory, because He made us all. That purpose should be the ultimate goal of every area of our lives (school, marriage, career, leisure, money, etc.)
- Understand that God deserves honor and credit for all the successes of our lives.
- Understand that God deserves eternal glory from us because He loved, forgave, chose and adopted us as His own children, even though we deserved His rejection and punishment.
- We are to love, win, build, and send others with the goal of bringing glory to Him.

In the Apply section, help the group members honestly confront areas in their lives where they are motivated by other goals besides glorifying God. Help them creatively think of practical ways to begin shifting their goals more to His glory.

Also in the Apply section, note that there are two suggested homework passages that may help spur students to more God-glorifying motives.

Love People

Realizing that loving people is the foundation for ministry

CONNECT with Each Other

HEAR God's Word

UNDERSTAND it

APPLY it to Life

Begin with Prayer

How are you doing?

How are your classes/research doing?

Let's pray together for wisdom from God for today's session.

Discussion Questions

Our Lives

• Think of someone who really has loved you. How has that person's love inspired positive change in your life?

Deeper Perspectives

• "Love from another person is probably the deepest need as well as the strongest instrument of change in our lives." Do you agree or disagree with that statement? Why?

Transition

God loves us so deeply we are to demonstrate love toward other people.

Bible Passage: John 13:1-5, 12-17, 34-35

Background: Jesus had great love for His disciples and this love motivated Him to do great acts of service for them. Those acts of love caused great change in those early believers' lives.

Let's read the Bible passages together.

Bible Discussion Questions

• How would you describe the kind of love Jesus had for His disciples?

• Jesus had already spent about three years in close companionship with His disciples, and at this time He knew He was about to be killed. Given that background, how would you have felt if He had washed your feet? How might that have impacted your life?

• Our world often misunderstands the term "love." What are some common definitions of love? How do these definitions for love differ from the kind of love Jesus describes? Why do you think that our world often lacks the kind of love Jesus showed?

• How would our world change if people loved and served others like Jesus did in this story?

• In verses 15-17, Jesus clearly said that He was an example for us to follow. What are some ways we can 'wash someone else's feet?' Why would you want to?

• In John 13:34-35 Jesus summarizes the importance of love. What is the impact of this love? What are some practical ways to show love to the people in your life?

Summary

How would you summarize what we learned today about love as the foundation for ministering to others? Write down some important points:

Clarification

• Was there anything confusing that you still have questions about?

• What made the deepest impression on you?

New Terms

• List new vocabulary words that you would like to remember...

Act

• In the coming week, what practical steps can you take to cultivate more of Jesus' kind of love in treatment of others?

• Write down your specific actions to take below. Then share what you wrote. After that, let's pray for one another.

Tell

Who might be interested in hearing what we are learning? Write down the name of that person to tell.

Let's pray for each other that we would apply God's Word to our life and tell our friends. Who will pray for us?

Win

Spread the good news of eternal life through Christ

CONNECT with Each Other

HEAR God's Word

UNDERSTAND it

APPLY it to Life

Begin with Prayer

How did your Application go last week from our lesson on loving people?

Let's pray together for wisdom from God for today's session.

Discussion Questions

Our Lives

- Each of us was at one time lost without Christ. In God's mercy, He drew us to Himself. This is a process that all followers of Christ experience. What was happening in your life during that process of realizing your need for Christ?

Deeper Perspectives

- Among your friends and relatives, who can you pinpoint that is in the same desperate place you once were—without Christ? What portion of the people in your home culture do not know Christ?
- What is God's attitude toward them?
- From your own experiences, what would you say is the most common method God uses to draw people to Himself?

Lesson Theme

God primarily uses people to show others how to know Him.

Transition

Let's see what the Bible has to say about it.

Bible Passages: Matthew 4:17-22, Luke 19:10, Matthew 24:14

In the first passage from Matthew's gospel, Jesus challenges His followers to join Him in His mission (the primary purpose for which He came).

Bible Discussion Questions

Matthew 4:17

- What was Jesus doing?
- What was Jesus' message?
- What do you think motivated Jesus?
- What did Jesus want to accomplish through His efforts?

Matthew 4:18-22

- What were Peter and James doing when they were approached by Jesus?
- Jesus began by saying, "Follow Me." Why is this important?

- What did Jesus mean when He said, "I will make you fishers of men"?
- How is telling others the good news about Jesus similar to fishing?
- Is there anything that strikes you about the response from Peter, Andrew, James and John to Jesus' challenge?
- How can we be 'fishers of men'?

Luke 19:10

- What was Jesus' purpose in coming to earth?

Matthew 24:14

- What is the scope of our audience for this message?

Summary

- How would you summarize what we learned today about winning people to Christ? Write down important points:

Clarification

- Was there anything within today's lesson today that is still unclear?
- What made the deepest impression on you?

New Terms

- List new vocabulary words that you would like to remember...

Act

- In the coming week, how can you follow Jesus more in becoming a fisher of men? Just like the fishermen left their nets, is there anything you might have to leave behind?
- Write down your specific actions to take below. Then share what action you plan to take. After that, let's pray for one another.

Tell

Is there someone who might be interested in hearing what we are learning? Write down the name of that person to tell.

Let's pray for each other that we would apply God's Word to our lives and tell our friends.

Build

Help people grow to be true followers of Jesus

CONNECT with Each Other

HEAR God's Word

UNDERSTAND it

APPLY it to Life

Begin with Prayer

How are you doing?

How did Application go last week from our lesson on winning others to the Lord?

Let's pray together for wisdom from God for today's session.

Discussion Questions

Our Lives

- Do you feel like you have been growing (becoming more mature, more godly, more Christ-like) over the past few months? In what ways?

Deeper Perspectives

- How important do you think having a few others alongside you has been to your spiritual growth?
- How has it helped you with your development as a Christian?
- What do you think the condition of your faith and walk with Christ would be if you hadn't been taking part in this group?

Lesson Theme

We should build up young believers in their faith and their walks with Christ.

Bible Passage: 1 Thessalonians 2:5-12

Background: Paul helped start the first Christian church in the town of Thessalonika (in today's Greece) during his second missionary journey. You can read about his time there in Acts 17:1-10. After leaving the town, he wrote two letters (1 & 2 Thessalonians) to the young believers there to encourage them.

Please read the Bible passage together.

Bible Discussion Questions

- From 1 Thessalonians 2:5-6, what are some attitudes that could prevent us from being effective in building others in the faith?
- From verses 9-10, why do you think godly behavior and strong character are so important for us to maintain as we build others in their faith and walk with Christ?
- From verse 12, what does Paul say is the ultimate goal we would like to see in the lives of others? Why is this so important?
- In verses 7-8 and verses 11-12, the Scripture uses the illustration of a mother, then a father to bring out qualities that make us effective in building others. What qualities are listed?
- Why would comparing ourselves to mothers or fathers be helpful to us as we build into the lives of others?

Summary

- How would you summarize what we learned today about keys to building young believers up in their faith and their walks with Christ? Write down important points:

Clarification

- Was there anything confusing that you still have questions about?

- What made the deepest impression on you?

New Terms

- List new vocabulary words that you would like to remember...

Act

- In the coming week, identify some young believers that you can begin to build in their faith. How will you start?

- Write down your specific actions to take below. Then share what action you plan to take. After that, let's pray for one another.

Tell

- Who might be interested in hearing what we are learning? Write down the name of that person to tell.

Let's pray for each other that we would apply God's Word to our life and tell our friends. Who will pray for us?

Send

Help followers of Jesus go to those who need Him



CONNECT with Each Other

HEAR God's Word

UNDERSTAND it

APPLY it to Life

Begin with Prayer

How are you doing?

How did your Application go last week from our lesson on building others in the Lord?

Let's pray together for wisdom from God for today's session.

Discussion Questions

Our Lives

• What would you estimate as the percentage of people in this country who have heard the message of Christ and have come to faith in Him like you did? What would you estimate for your home country?

Deeper Perspectives

- If you, as an individual, wanted to change the world, how would you go about doing it?
- If you, as an individual, wanted to spread a great message to the most people, how would you go about doing it?

Lesson Theme

What do you think Jesus' strategy was to change the world, to change the hearts and minds of vast numbers of people, to spread his great message to the most people?

Bible Passages: Luke 10:1-2, 1 Kings 8:60, Matthew 24:14, Acts 1:8

Background: In the early chapters of Luke's gospel, Jesus' broad influence on Israel is shown through His preaching of the good news of God's kingdom and His leading of His disciples. In Luke 10, however, Jesus unveils a strategic plan to reach even larger numbers of people.

Bible Discussion Questions

- What are some key principles in Luke 10:1-2 that Jesus implemented in order to reach and ultimately transform the world?
- What does His metaphor of "harvest" and "laborers" mean and why do you think He used it?
- Read 1 Kings 8:60, Matthew 24:14, and Acts 1:8. Where are we to go to proclaim God's kingdom?

• Luke 10:1 says that Jesus sent His disciples out, and in Luke 10:2, Jesus says that the 'Lord of the harvest' will send laborers out. What do you think this suggests that we should do today?

• How should people be sent? Brainstorm some of the practical needs of those who are sent.

• In addition to winning and building, why is sending so important?

• What are some practical ways that we can imitate the principles that Jesus used as we seek to proclaim God's kingdom throughout the world?

Summary

How would you summarize what we learned today regarding 'sending' principles for reaching the world for Christ? Write down important points:

Clarification

• Was there anything confusing that you still have questions about?

• What made the deepest impression on you?

• Was there anything about the lesson today that was hard to understand?

New Terms

• List new vocabulary words that you would like to remember...

Act

• In the coming week, what is at least one step that you can take to help send others to reach the world for Christ?

• Write down your specific action(s) below, and then share what you plan to do. After that, let's pray for one another.

Tell

• Who might be interested in hearing about what we are learning? Write down the name of that person to tell.

Let's pray for each other that we would apply God's Word to our lives and tell our friends. Who will pray for us?

Glorify

Doing all things to bring glory to God

CONNECT with Each Other

HEAR God's Word

UNDERSTAND it

APPLY it to Life

Begin with Prayer

How are you doing?

How did your Application go last week from our lesson on sending others to serve the Lord?

Let's pray together for wisdom from God for today's session.

Discussion Questions

Our Lives

- Who usually gets the glory for the good things that happen in your life? Does that seem appropriate to you? Why or why not?

Deeper Perspectives

- In this nation, does God often get the glory that He deserves? Who often gets the glory instead? Why?
- Name the types of people who often get glory in your home culture. What conclusion does this suggest about your culture?
- What is the ultimate purpose that drives you to do the things that you do?

Lesson Theme

God defines the ultimate purpose for our lives and show us the best focus for all our pursuits.

Bible Passages:
Revelation 4:8-11; 5:11-14;
Isaiah 43:1-7

Background of Revelation: The Book of Revelation contains prophetic visions about the future, some of describe the new heaven and the new earth. Note that men and angels will continually give praise and glory to God.

Please read the two Revelation passages one at a time.

Definition: glo-ri-fy / 'glôə,fi Verb 1. Reveal or make clearer the glory of (God) by one's actions. 2. Give praise to (God).

Bible Discussion Questions

- In the two Revelation passages, find as many reasons as possible for why God is worthy of eternal praise and glory.
- Why is God more worthy than any person of getting praise and glory for the good things in our lives?

Background of Isaiah: Isaiah was a prophet who God used to speak to His people. In this passage, God is talking to the people of Israel.

Read the Isaiah passage and then continue discussing the questions.

- For what ultimate purpose did God make us, love us and choose us as His own children? Explain what you think that purpose means for your life.

- In the first four lessons of this unit we've talked about how to build God's kingdom. Our ultimate goal in all of this is to bring God glory. Why should this be our main goal?

Summary

How would you summarize this lesson on the importance of giving glory to God in all things? Write down important points:

Clarification

- Was there anything confusing that you still have questions about?
- What made the deepest impression on you?

New Terms

- List new vocabulary words that you would like to remember...

Act

- In the coming week, how can you live your life more for God's glory (in your values, priorities, words and activities)?

- Write down your specific actions below and then share what you plan to do. After that, let's pray for one another.

Homework: This coming week, read Romans 11:33-36 and John 17:1-5. Consider the meaning and application of these passages for your personal life and for your relationship with God.

Tell

- Who might be interested in hearing what we are learning? Write down the name of that person to tell.

Let's pray for each other that we would apply God's Word to our life and tell our friends. Who will pray for us?