



Session 5: Loving Neighbors and Strangers Like Jesus Does

Core Theme: Love neighbor – Jesus had a heart full of compassion for everyone he met, and that flowed out in healing, feeding, listening, humbly serving all, and seeking justice for the most vulnerable. We learn from him how to love neighbors and strangers alike through our words and deeds.

Core Scripture: Mark 6:34-36, 41-42

Suggested Session 5 Schedule

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer (3 minutes)

2. Meal (30 minutes, including Check-in described in #3 below)

Enjoy a meal together, following earlier guidance. About 15 minutes in, welcome people to shift gears and gather round for the check-in described below. Continue to notice who builds relationships quickly and who might need a nudge to connect. Continue to notice if anyone seems disengaged, acutely quiet, or alone during the meal, and check in with them.

3. Check-in (15-20 minutes – if sharing meal, occurs during mealtime)

Following a brief review and reaffirmation of the covenant, offer one of the following questions for check-in:

- Since our last session, where have you seen Jesus in the context of community?
- How did the scripture from the last session show up in your life?
- Since our last session, what have you learned or tried out around the practice of prayer?
- How do you feel as you arrive here?
- What do you need to acknowledge before you can fully be present today?
- *Create your own check-in question.*

Heed earlier guidance around check-in, including using the talking piece, listening respectfully, and honoring each person's time to speak. If you notice check-ins running long, offer a time limit and begin by modeling a check-in within that time frame. You may also gently remind people to return to the covenant to honor the time and others' opportunities to speak.

4. Content Engagement (45 minutes)

Once everyone has checked in, it's time to move into the next part of your small group meeting: content engagement. For the fifth session, we seek to know more about life

with Jesus.

Show: Session 5: Part A Video

Note: To save time, participants can watch this video on their own before your gathering.

Discuss the following questions as a group, inspired by the Session 5: Part A Video. Remember: You need not cover all the questions in this relatively short time. If it would be helpful, break into pairs or trios for about 5 minutes to facilitate giving everyone a chance to speak. Then, come back to the larger group and share for the remaining 10 minutes. Use these questions or others, as appropriate:

Wondering Questions

- When have you joined in loving and truly caring for others, especially people you don't really know?
- "Do what Jesus did: allow our hearts to break in compassion for others, pause and allow the way to emerge before us." Reflecting on this directive, how can your community support each other in answering the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves?
- What in this video resonated with or challenged you?

Show: Session 5: Part B Video

Watch the video as a group, then discuss the following questions together:

Wondering Questions

In the second video, we hear three leaders discuss the challenges of "welcoming the stranger."

- As you listened to their conversation, what came up for you?
- What hurdles do you or your congregation face as you welcome groups who are different from your dominant culture?

5. Check-out and Closing Prayer (7 min)

Follow earlier suggestions for check-out (confirm time and location for next session, share Make It Yours opportunities), especially inviting group members to share **one word** about the time they've spent together today.

If time permits, offer this question for check-out: *How has the group blessed you today?*

Close with prayer, welcoming prayer requests from each person, which the group leader or a volunteer gathers and offers up. Pray spontaneously, choose your favorite prayer, or try the prayer below – the *Prayer for the Human Family* from the Book of Common Prayer.

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

6. Make It Yours: At-Home Engagement Opportunities

- For a deeper dive, encourage your group to review and reflect on Session 5 in the Participant Guidebook before your next gathering.
- Invite participants to learn more about the Way of Love spiritual practice [Go](#). Ask them to consider how they can cross boundaries, listen deeply, and live like Jesus this week.