

2025

PRE-CAMP BIBLE STUDIES

“As you sent me
into the world,
I have sent them
into the world.”

John 17:18

1

One God/One Mission



IMPACT
MISSION CAMPS

2025 THEME: ONE GOD/ONE MISSION

What is the message of Christianity, and what are the implications of that message for followers of Jesus? The theme of our Impact Summer Camp this year is One God/One Mission, focusing on Jesus' prayer in John 17:18 –

“As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.”

This is a five-part Bible Study series to use in preparation for Impact Summer Camp. The sessions will cover:

1. **One God** – Pray the “Shema” and remember our family roots
2. **One Lord** – Discuss the “Romans Road”, confess that Jesus is Lord
3. **One Spirit** – The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the grave is in us
4. **One Body** – Though we are one, we have unique gifts and callings
5. **One Mission** – As Jesus was a “sent one,” so are we

Needed Materials

- **Session 1:** whiteboard and erasable marker; notecards and pens for students to write the Shema prayer on, or printed copies of the prayer that students can take home
- **Session 2:** painter’s tape for hopscotch course; handouts printed for small group discussion
- **Session 3:** whiteboard and erasable marker; handouts printed for small group discussion
- **Session 4:** butcher paper and markers; whiteboard and erasable marker
- **Session 5:** batons or another object to pass in a relay race; whiteboard and erasable marker



About the Author

Ruth Perry serves as the pastor of three small United Methodist churches in Prince Edward County, Virginia. She is a graduate from Gordon College and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and lives in Appomattox with her husband and three teenagers. Ruth was a theater and choir kid and loves movies, reading, and rooting for her kids' in their activities.

SESSION 1: ONE GOD

Have Deuteronomy 6:4–9 displayed on a posterboard or whiteboard.

Suggested Opening Activity

Invite students to name famous families and what makes them famous. Are they athletes, entertainers, criminals, a political dynasty? See how many well-known families they can come up and make a list on a whiteboard.

Or lead your group in the song “Father Abraham”, with motions!

Bible Study

We’re going to talk about a special family today—God’s family. The Bible tells us the story of God and our story too. Genesis, the first book in the Bible, begins in chapters 1 and 2 by telling us that God created the world, turning darkness and chaos into goodness and beauty. Humanity in Adam and Eve were the pinnacle of God’s creation, earning God’s declaration that they were “very good” after God had been saying everything else was “good”. In the beginning of the story, everything was good and beautiful and Adam and Eve shared a close relationship with God, with each other, and with God’s creation.

But Genesis chapter 3 tells us that all that goodness and beauty was broken when Eve was deceived by the Serpent to eat from a forbidden tree, and then shared the forbidden fruit with her husband Adam, so that the goodness of God’s creation became marred by rebellion against God’s command. Darkness and chaos returned.

Discuss

What are some ways we see the brokenness of the Fall in the world?
(list on whiteboard)

There is brokenness in our relationship to God, in our relationship to one another, and in our relationship to creation.

In the aftermath of this destruction, God immediately made a promise to Adam and Eve: one day, the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent, even as it struck his heel.

What does that mean, the seed of woman will crush the head of the serpent?

This was a promise from God right in the aftermath of the Fall, that a Messiah would undo the brokenness in the world caused by sin—everything that separates us from God, from each other, and from God’s good creation.

Bible Study

Right away, God enacted a Rescue Plan to save us from sin and death, the results of the Fall. After his promise to one day send a Messiah, his next promise was to the man Abraham, that one day, the family of Abraham would be more than the grains of sand on a beach, or the stars in the sky, and through his family, God would bless the whole world.

This became the family of God: Abraham had Isaac, Isaac had Jacob, Jacob had Joseph; the genealogy eventually comes to David, and after centuries and centuries, to Jesus, God's promised Messiah. Through this family, God would bless the whole world!

To be the family of God meant to stand out in some way from the rest of the families in the world. The family of God would be famous, like the families we thought of at the beginning of this lesson, but not for crime, or sports, or entertainment, or politics, they would be famous for being set-apart as God's family. They would live differently than the rest of their neighbors.

God established this different way of life with His people after saving them from being slaves in Egypt. In Deuteronomy chapter 5, Moses shared the 10 Commandments that God gave him in a face-to-face meeting on Mt. Sinai. The first commandment was to not worship any other Gods. They should have one God alone. This was very different because everyone in the ancient world believed in many gods.

And after sharing the 10 Commandments, in Deuteronomy chapter 6, Moses said:

Hear O' Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress on them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

Over 3,000 years later, Jewish people pray these verses as a daily morning and evening prayer, and it is considered the most essential prayer in all of Judaism. This prayer is called the Shema, because in Hebrew, the first word of the prayer is shema (hear). The first line of the Shema is the final prayer of Yom Kippur, the holiest Jewish holiday, and is prayed at the death bed.

Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.

This is a statement of faith in God and belief in God's faithfulness to his promises. We too worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob...one God, who promised to repair all that was broken in the world at the Fall, through the family of God.

Questions for Reflection

1. In ancient times, people believed in many gods and the Shema prayer was a daily commitment to follow one god alone, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Today, we are still drawn away from our faith in God alone. What are some things we follow instead of God?

2. Have you ever had to memorize something? Was it hard? If you said these verses twice every day, how long do you think it would take you to memorize it?
3. If you recited this prayer twice every day, in the morning and in the evening, how do you think it would impact your life?

Challenge

Write the Shema down on a notecard, put a bookmark in your Bible at Deuteronomy 6:4-9, or take a printed copy home with you and try praying it every morning and evening this week. Pay attention to how the repetition of this prayer impacts you so you can share with us next week.

Closing Prayer

Pray the Shema together!

SESSION 2: ONE LORD

Suggested Opening Activity

Tape out a hopscotch course on the floor and let the students take a turn each hopping through. If your group is small, you could make it a tournament. Create the course with 14 jumps, so that going through once and turning around and hopping back to the beginning equals 28 jumps, for 28 syllables in Romans 10:9. Everyone can chant the verse while people take turns hopping the course.

Review

Did anyone pray the Shema this week? What was your experience like?

Bible Study

Session One was a minimal overview of the Old Testament of the Bible, leaving out so much of the history, hymns, wisdom literature and prophecies of God's family for the period between Genesis chapter 1 and Matthew chapter 1. In its simplest terms, we can summarize the story of the Bible in three words: **Creation, Fall, Rescue Plan**. God is not content to let sin and death have the final word! God is powerful to save, and we see His Rescue Plan throughout the Old and New Testaments.

God had promised Adam and Eve that one day, a seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head, even as it struck his heel. Jesus' crucifixion was a fulfillment of that promise—though Jesus was killed, his death atoned for all of the sins of the world, and he rose from the dead, defeating death. Jesus conquered sin and death through the cross! This ultimate sacrifice fulfilled God's Rescue Plan and salvation is available to the whole world.

In the Bible, Jesus is often called Lord, and it is important to know what Jesus being Lord means. When you say Jesus is Lord, you are acknowledging his authority and affirming his divinity. You are saying that Jesus is God, and that He reigns supreme over everything and his authority extends to every corner of *your life*. Saying "Jesus is Lord" is a pledge of allegiance. Though you will always love your family, your favorite sports team, your preferred political party and your country...saying that "Jesus is Lord" means that this is your primary commitment. You love God "with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." You have one God and one Lord of your life.

Discuss

- Does anyone know what "atone" means?
- How is saying, "Jesus is Lord" a pledge of allegiance?

Small Group Study

Today, let's discuss why Jesus is Lord, and what that means for us and for the world. We'll use five passages from the book of Romans to frame our discussion, known as "The Romans Road."

THE NEED FOR A SAVIOR | Romans 3:23

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Everyone has sinned, and we all fall short of God's standard. We are in need of a Savior.

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to "fall short of the glory of God"?
- Why do you think sin separates us from God?
- How do you see sin's effects in the world around you?

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN | Romans 6:23

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Sin has real consequences, but God offers us the gift of eternal life through Jesus.

Discussion Questions:

- Share an example of how choices have consequences.
- What do you think it means that eternal life is a "gift"?
- How does this verse show God's love and justice?

CHRIST'S SACRIFICE FOR US | Romans 5:8

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Jesus didn't wait for us to be perfect—He loved us at our worst.

Discussion Questions:

- How does this verse show God's love?
- What does it mean that Christ died "while we were still sinners"?
- How can knowing this truth change the way we live?

JESUS IS LORD | Romans 10:9

"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."

Salvation comes through believing and confessing Jesus as Lord.

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to say "Jesus is Lord"?
- Why do both believing and confessing matter?
- How can we live in a way that shows Jesus is our Lord?

THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION | Romans 8:38-39

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Nothing can separate us from God's love once we are in Christ.

Discussion Questions:

- How does this passage give us confidence in our salvation?
- What are some things that make people doubt God's love?
- How can we encourage others who struggle with doubts?

Reflection and Challenge

Gather the whole group together again.

Response: Encourage students to make a personal commitment to Jesus if they haven't yet.

Live it Out: Challenge them to share the Gospel using the Romans Road this week.

Closing Prayer

Close by thanking God for His love and committing to live under the lordship of Jesus.

DISCUSS “THE ROMANS ROAD”

1 THE NEED FOR A SAVIOR | Romans 3:23

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Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to “fall short of the glory of God”?
- Why do you think sin separates us from God?
- How do you see sin’s effects in the world around you?

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Discussion Questions:

- How does this passage give us confidence in our salvation?
- What are some things that make people doubt God’s love?
- How can we encourage others who struggle with doubts?

SESSION 3: ONE SPIRIT

Suggested Opening Activity

Play a game of Simon Says, but the designated leader needs to whisper directions and use small movements, so everyone has to pay close attention and create a quiet atmosphere to hear the leader's instructions. Or sit in a circle and play a few rounds of "Telephone". Let everyone know that you're going to be talking about the Holy Spirit in this session, and listening to the Holy Spirit requires developing a habit of slowing down and paying attention.

Review

What does it mean to say that Jesus is Lord?

Bible Study

Jesus was born by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove at his baptism and he was filled by the Holy Spirit during his years of preaching and healing, and it was by the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus rose from the grave after his crucifixion. This same Spirit that was in Jesus is now in those who follow Jesus.

In some of Jesus' final words to his disciples in the Gospel of John chapter 14:15–21, he said,

¹⁵ "If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

In last week's session, we learned that believing in our heart and declaring with our mouths that Jesus is Lord is how we will be saved. Salvation is a free gift, we don't earn it in any way. It's possible to take a good gift for granted though. If we really let Jesus be Lord of our life, our life should be different than those who haven't chosen to let Jesus be the Lord of their life.

Discuss

- If Jesus is Lord of our life, what will we do according to John 14:15–21?
- What role does the Holy Spirit have in our life with Jesus?

Bible Study

The Holy Spirit is a part of the Trinity, meaning God is one God in three spirits, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This can be one of the hardest things to understand about our faith but it is also one of the most beautiful things to believe. As Trinity, God demonstrates the beauty of co-equal collaboration and the eternal bond of love between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And God invites us to participate in that fellowship of love.

As humans who are used to power dynamics and hierarchies, we might be inclined to think the Father is more God or top God, but Father, Son and Spirit are equally God. And because Jesus left the Spirit with us, that means that God is always with us. The same power that raised Jesus from the grave is now within us.

God's promises were fulfilled when Jesus came as our Savior and Lord. But we can clearly see that all the darkness and chaos of the Fall have not been fully redeemed yet. The work continues through Jesus' disciples. We get to participate in the redemption of the world because the power of the Holy Spirit that is within us.

There are many words used in the Bible to describe the Holy Spirit: Advocate, Comforter, Guide, Intercessor, Truth, Witness, and more. Let's look at a few verses that tell us more about what the Holy Spirit will do for and through us.

You may want to split into smaller groups for these discussion prompts.

THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL EMPOWER YOU

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Discussion Questions:

- What kind of power does the Holy Spirit give to believers?
- Why do we need the Holy Spirit's power to share the gospel?
- What are some ways we can allow the Holy Spirit to work through us in our daily lives?

THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL GUIDE YOU

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come." (John 16:13)

Discussion Questions:

- How does the Holy Spirit guide us in truth?
- Have you ever experienced the Holy Spirit leading you? What was that like?
- How can we become more sensitive to the Holy Spirit's guidance in our daily lives?

THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL CHANGE YOU

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things, there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

Discussion Questions:

- What does the metaphor of fruit mean in this passage?
- Carrying this metaphor further, how could you cultivate these nine qualities in your life, like a gardener cultivates a harvest?
- If your life is marked by these nine traits, what are some ways that this would improve your discipleship to Jesus?

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit is our source of power, our guide, and the source of our goodness. As followers of Christ, we are called to walk in the Spirit daily. Let's commit to seeking His presence, relying on His strength, and allowing Him to shape our lives.

Closing Prayer

- Thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Ask for a deeper awareness of His presence in your lives.
- Pray for boldness, guidance, and fruitfulness as you walk with Him.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

1

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SESSION 4: ONE BODY

Suggested Opening Activity

Have a student lie down on butcher paper to be outlined, then invite everyone to label body parts on the form and add details. If you have a big group, split into smaller teams to outline their own body and make it a contest to see which team can label the most body parts in a set amount of time.

Or lead everyone in the song, “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes”, with motions.

Review

How would you describe the Trinity, and what is the Holy Spirit’s role?

Bible Study

In this series of studies, so far we’ve talked about God’s promises to redeem the brokenness of the world through his special family, which was fulfilled by Jesus on the cross. We can be saved by believing that Jesus is the Son of God, and we will be filled by the Holy Spirit to empower, guide, and mold us more and more into the mind of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Rescue Plan that God initiated after the Fall is still in motion today. We can see that brokenness, darkness and chaos still exist in the world, and things are not “on earth as they are in heaven” yet. God’s Kingdom is both Now and Not Yet – Jesus’ death and resurrection completed the work of salvation, but Jesus has not yet returned to rule as Prince of Peace over his restored and redeemed creation.

The work of redemption continues through Jesus’ disciples now, the Church. The Church is now the embodied presence of Jesus to the world. Jesus left us with the Holy Spirit to empower us, guide us, and shape us into his image as we represent Jesus to the world and as we await his return.

Though God began his Rescue Plan through Abraham’s family, the Jews, the promise that God made to Abraham was that the blessing that would come through his family would be for the whole world. As Jesus died on the cross, the barrier between the Holy of Holies in the temple tore in two, representing the barriers that separate and divide us being removed. The Apostle Paul explains that,

“There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus”. (Galatians 3:28)

One thing is certain now: having adopted all of us into the family of God makes for a diverse, colorful family! Christianity is comprised of all kinds of denominations and traditions, even in our own local community, not to mention the global Church!

At the Last Supper that Jesus shared with his disciples before he was arrested and crucified, he prayed,

²⁰ *"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."*
(John 17:20–23)

Discuss

- Jesus prayed for us – “those who will believe in me through their message” – that we would be one. Why is unity important for the Church?
- What does unity look like in a local church that is comprised of diverse people, and in the global Church, that is comprised of different cultures, theologies, practices, etc.?
- What happens when a Church fails to be unified?

Small Group Study

You can split into smaller groups for this portion of the study.

The Apostle Paul loved to use the metaphor of a body to describe the family of God. This is a beautiful way of capturing the real embodiment of Christ that the Church is for the world. We continue to *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your strength”*, from the ancient Shema prayer, by giving ourselves to Jesus to be his heart, voice, hands and feet in our family, community, and the world.

There are several examples of Paul using this metaphor. In 1 Corinthians 12:12–13, he wrote:

“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”

In Romans 14:4–5, Paul wrote:

“For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

And in Ephesians 4:11–16, Paul wrote:

¹¹So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip his people for works of service, so that

the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Discuss

- The Church, as the Body of Christ, has many parts. What are the parts that Paul lists in Ephesians 4? Can you think of any other “parts” that you see doing the work of the Church?
- Why did Christ give these “parts” to the Body/Church? What is the purpose of the Body/Church?
- What happens to a person whose gifts are not recognized, equipped and utilized? How does that impact the vitality and health of the Church?
- If we do not mature in our faith, what could happen to us?

Challenge

Think about your youth group as a faith community, and your part in your youth group, and how you in particular can help your youth group to grow and build itself up in love.

Closing Prayer

Pray for unity, for love and devotion to each other, and for each person to use their gifts to help build up your youth group.

SESSION 5: ONE MISSION

Have John 17:18 posted:

“As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.”

Suggested Opening Activity

Divide your youth group into teams for a relay race back and forth across your meeting room, or in a large open space; have a baton or some other object for the racers to pass to each other.

Discuss

- What made the winning team successful?
- How does a team race differ from a solo race?
- Ask your youth to finish this sentence: “Teamwork makes the _____ work.”

Review

What does Paul’s body metaphor mean for how the Church should operate?

Bible Study

This five-part study began in the first two chapters of the Bible, Genesis 1 and 2 in the Garden of Eden. The last two chapters of the Bible, Revelation 21 and 22, bring us to a new Eden, a restored and redeemed New Creation.

21 Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’ ⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!”

22 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and

his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

The story of the Bible begins with creation and ends with new creation. God's original dream for humanity will be restored—we will experience goodness and beauty, and we will experience a close relationship with God, with each other, and with God's creation. This is what God desired for us all along, before sin and death messed it all up. God is powerful to save. We can live as people who have hope, believing that God will be faithful to fulfill this promise, just as he has been fulfilling all of his promises.

We are still experiencing the pain and suffering of living in a broken world. God's Rescue Plan is not complete. As the embodied presence of Jesus Christ in the world today, empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Church continues the redemption and healing of the world.

When Jesus began his public ministry, he explained his mission in his hometown synagogue. The Gospel of Luke tells the story in Luke 4:16–21.

¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

There's an important reference in this passage to the year of the Lord's favor. This is something God established for his people centuries before. In our first session, we said that God instituted 10 Commandments to set his chosen family apart from the other nations of the world. Well, there are over six hundred commands given through the Old Testament that expand on the way the God's family ought to live.

A majority of those commands are about how they should treat the most vulnerable people in their community—the widow and orphan, the poor, and the foreigner. God instituted special requirements to protect and provide for those on the margins of society, because God loves everyone, and it is not God's will that any should suffer.

God commanded his people to recognize a Sabbath every seven days, and he commanded a Sabbath year, every seven years. And after seven Sabbath years, they were commanded to observe a year of Jubilee, or "the year of the Lord's favor."

During Jubilee, all debts would be forgiven, slaves would be freed, land would be returned to its original owners. It was a year of liberation from oppression. God's people would remember that God loved them and had provided enough for all of them. Even the land and animals

were granted rest during Jubilee. Like many of God's commands, his people broke them. They never once observed a year of Jubilee in all of the centuries of their existence.

Jesus' proclamation in the Nazareth synagogue was that he would bring Jubilee. Jesus' earthly ministry emphasized care for "the lost, the least, and the last" around him.

Discuss

- What was the year of the Lord's favor, or Jubilee, about?
- Why did God send Jesus into the world, according to the Isaiah prophecy?
- Why does God show particular care for the most vulnerable people in the world?

Bible Study

"For God so love the world that he sent his only Son, so that any that believe in him could be saved" (John 3:16). God sent Jesus, and Jesus willingly came. Think of all that Jesus sacrificed to be the Messiah. He left his throne in heaven to be a vulnerable baby and live a human life in a broken world. Jesus and his family fled to Egypt as refugees because of the threat of Herod; they returned to Nazareth where Jesus was raised in obscurity as a common carpenter.

Jesus' earthly ministry was only three years and was grueling, as he preached and healed all throughout Galilee. When he began heading towards Jerusalem, he knew with every step, that he was walking to his cross. He predicted his death and yet he was willingly moving towards it, knowing that God had a plan. Jesus loved us, and was willing to go to the cross for us.

Jesus prayed before he was arrested, in John 17:18,

"As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world."

God's Rescue Plan continues through Jesus' disciples today. We too are sent ones, but must go willingly like Jesus showed us through his example.

As the Body of Christ, with many parts, we each have a unique perspective on the brokenness of the world around us, and different passions and giftings to address that brokenness. The songwriter Leonard Cohen wrote that, "There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in." Often, it is the wounds we carry that give us wisdom and insight into the brokenness of the world. In this way, God can work all things for good, as we use the wisdom of our wounds to heal others.

God's Rescue Plan is about more than a ticket to heaven. It is about restoring and redeeming all that has been stolen by sin and death. It is about liberation and healing in this life. As God's sent ones, we can be a part of that Rescue Plan, as we seek healing in our own lives, and in the lives of those we encounter.

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, he gave what we call The Great Commission to his followers in Matthew 28:18-20.

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,

baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Discuss

- Jesus wasn't just sent—He sends us. What does that mean?
- Jesus focused his earthly ministry primarily on “the least, the lost and the last;” can you think of an example of that from the Gospels? And can you contrast it to Jesus' encounter with a rich and powerful person? Who responded most readily to Jesus' invitation to follow him?
- How does God use our own brokenness to bring healing to others?

Reflection

Last week, we discussed that we each have unique gifts and callings in the Body of Christ. That means that we will represent Jesus in different ways to the world around us. And it is often through our brokenness that we have the most to offer others. Can you identify an area in your life that you have been hurt by the darkness and chaos of the Fall, and where God has or is Rescuing you?

Brainstorm practical ways youth can be “sent” into their world (home, school, sports, social media, etc.), being sensitive to the different ways we are wired.

Encourage personal reflection: Where is God sending me right now?

Challenge

This week, pray each day that God would give you an opportunity to love and serve someone else (e.g., encourage a friend, stand up for the truth, help someone in need).

Closing Prayer

- Thank God for sending Jesus and for sending us.
- Thank God that his Rescue Plan is not just for an afterlife, but for this life too.
- Ask for courage, wisdom, and love to live out His mission.