

BUILDING BLOCKS

ESSENTIAL HABITS THAT BUILD A CHURCH





RIGHT NOW, WE'RE BUILDING A CHURCH. AND...WE ARE BUILDING A CHURCH.

We're in the middle of construction as we make physical updates to our church building. We're building a church.

And as followers of Jesus, we are always actively creating a community where God's people live out God's mission on earth. We are building a church!

The book of Acts gives us a glimpse of the early church. We can learn so much from how they treated one another, how they worshipped God, and how they interacted with the world around them. They had regular habits and practices that built God's church.

During this time of construction, we want to take seriously God's call to build the church. We want to build a community that follows Jesus and lives out God's mission on earth. Join me as we study the lives of early believers and see how the church was first established. Some of these building blocks might seem familiar, and others might surprise you.

Either way, each of these practices was used by the early church. Let's use these 10 building blocks today to follow God's call to keep building God's church!

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Senior Minister



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HOW TO USE THESE BUILDING BLOCKS:

This series is what we call an alignment – when we study the same thing in our worship service, in our devotional lives, and in small groups.

Each week, you'll be introduced to a new building block – a habit the early church used to build God's church. We want to use these habits today to keep faithfully building God's church. On the cover page for each week, you'll see these 3 things:

BUILDING MATERIAL:

This will tell you the building block we'll be studying, and it'll include a brief definition of that habit.

BLUEPRINT:

This is a description of how the early church used this building block. The blueprint will also list places throughout scripture where this habit is used. The Bible is our blueprint and guide for building the church.

CONSTRUCTION ZONE:

You'll be given a question or action step so you can use this building block. These next steps will be expanded further in each construction zone section for the week.

Here's how to use the Building Blocks:

WORSHIP WEEKLY

Make it a goal to attend church every week of this series. If you're traveling, be sure to watch online. Worshipping together is a foundational experience for God's people. Let's commit to coming together for worship as much as we can!

DAILY DEVOTIONS

It's only through God that the church gets built, so we need to go to God every day. Set aside some time each day to quiet your spirit, read your Bible, and reflect on Jesus.

JOIN A GROUP!

Following Jesus isn't a solo endeavor. The church isn't built by one person, but by groups of people working together as the body of Christ. Find some people to do this study with so you can help each other as together we build the church up.

EXPLORE THE



The whole point of this series is to put what we've learned into action! In this section, you'll find space to put into action what you've learned, and you'll be given a few specific challenges to complete on your own, with your small group, or with your household. Construction zones can be messy and imperfect. That's okay! Use these pages to try out each building block even if sometimes it feels a little clumsy or unfamiliar.

You'll be instructed to go to the construction zone a few times – during your daily devotions and during your group study. This is so you'll spend plenty of time practicing using each building block and putting it into action.

HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGE



It's helpful to build new habits and practices with the people you see most. Each construction zone includes a household challenge. This is a perfect activity for you to complete with whoever you may live with – your roommates, spouse, kids, or parents.



HOW TO LEAD A GROUP:

Below you will find the elements included in the group study. It is very important to recognize that these elements do not form a blueprint for your time. Instead, think of them as a toolbox.

As a leader, you are encouraged to read ahead and consider the context of your group and the amount of time you have to choose elements to create the best experience possible. For some elements, it will be essential to allow for group discussion. This may require breaking into very small groups so everyone can talk.

Here are the elements included in the group study:

OPEN:

An icebreaker question to get conversation flowing as you prepare to discuss the building block together.

VIDEO:

The video teaching will be about 10-15 minutes each week. You'll hear more about the building block, what the Bible says about it, and how we can use it.

VIDEO RESPONSE QUESTIONS:

Give your group time to interact and respond to the teaching they just heard. There are questions written to guide you, but the important thing is that the group interacts with the ideas they just heard.

STUDY:

You'll spend time in scripture seeing how the building block was used throughout the life of the church.



This section is designed to have more than enough material for your group to interact with. Pick a few questions to discuss together – you won't make it through all of them. The goal is for your group to begin to work out how they will use this building block in their lives.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Prayer is foundational to our lives as we follow Jesus. Go to God in prayer at the end of every study to open yourself up to God's leading in your lives.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

This section is completely optional. This material is here in case your group moves through the study quickly or if you would like to spend extended time studying the building block in scripture.

Every group meets for different amounts of time. Here are a few sample schedules to fit your needs.

(Total Time)	45 min	1 hr	1.5 hr
Open	5 min	7 min	10 min
Video	10-15 min	10-15	10-15 min
Video Questions	5 min	8 min	15 min
Study	10 min	15 min	20-25 min
Construction Zone	10-15 min	15 min	25 min
Closing Prayer	5 min	5 min	5 min

STORYTELLING

BUILDING MATERIAL:

Storytelling – telling the story of God’s work in the world and in your life

BLUEPRINT:

The early church knew God’s story, they knew their place in God’s story, and they told God’s story wherever they went

Acts 2:38-39; Acts 3:18-21; Acts 5; Acts 7; Acts 17:24-31

CONSTRUCTION ZONE:

We are called to do the same. Do you know God’s story and your place in God’s story? How can you keep hearing God’s story? Where are you telling God’s story?

DAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 1: STORYTELLING

MONDAY: ACTS 4:7-12

The church is built on Jesus, and salvation is found under no one else. We want to build the church and our lives on Jesus. Take time to pray that God will lead you through this time of foundation building. Pray that God will build this church on Jesus alone.

TUESDAY: MATTHEW 7:24-27

Jesus calls us to build our lives on the foundation of his teaching. We’re called to hear the good news of Jesus and live it out! It’s so easy to build our lives around other things instead. If someone were to look at your life, what would they say your foundation is? Think through your priorities, values, and actions. What is the current foundation of your life?

WEDNESDAY: ACTS 17:22-31

The story of the good news of Jesus is the story of all of humanity. Look at verses 24-27. How would you summarize this story? Write down any key phrases that jump out to you below. Try telling the story in your own words. Do you have questions about God’s story? Who can you talk to about these questions?

THURSDAY: LUKE 22:14-23 & 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26

God's story isn't something we passively read to one another; we are called to participate in this story. Communion is a storytelling practice. We reenact the story of Jesus every time we take the meal of communion together. We're reminded of Jesus' sacrifice, of his love, and of his plans to restore the world. Meditate on the story of Jesus today.

FRIDAY: ACTS 4:18-20, 32-35

The disciples told the story constantly! If we're going to use the building block of Storytelling, we've got to find regular rhythms for hearing God's story and telling God's story. Visit the Construction Zone on page 12 to work on using this building block. Pick a few questions or exercises to work through.



OPEN:

Did your parents or teachers read to you as a kid? What was your favorite story to hear?

WATCH THE TEACHING VIDEO AT
WWW.FCC-JC.ORG/BLOCKS.

VIDEO RESPONSE:

- What stood out to you from the video?
- What is the story of God?
- Where are you in the story of God?
- How do we build the church through storytelling?

STUDY:

Read Acts 5:17-21.

- What instructions were the apostles given when they were freed?
- Look at the last two words of verse 20. How did the angel describe the message they taught?
 - o What does this teach us about God's story?
 - o What kind of impact should God's story have on us?
- The apostles told God's story as soon as it was light out (v. 21). What does this teach us about the importance of God's story?

Read Acts 5:25-32

- According to verse 28, what did the officials order the apostles to do?
- Why did the apostles ignore this order?
- How does Peter summarize the story of God? (v.30-32)

Read Acts 5:40-42

- What were the apostles ordered to do and how did they respond to this?

The apostles knew the story and told the story constantly. We're called to do the same.



If we're going to use the building block of Storytelling we need to start practicing using it! This is true for all the building blocks. So each week, you'll head to the construction zone. There you will find more material than you can cover in this time. But choose a few exercises to work through together to explore how to build with this material. Go to the construction zone on page 12. Then, come back and finish the lesson with the closing prayer below.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Read Acts 3:18-21 aloud.

Then pray that God will use our church to hear God's story, to help us discover our place in God's story, and to empower us to tell others the story of God.

For further study, read the following passages. Write down key phrases about God's story.

Passage	God's Story	Action Steps for Me
	What does this story tell us about God? What did God do? If you're not sure where to start, write down the verbs related to God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit.	What does this passage say about how I participate in the story? What are the people told to do?
EXAMPLE: ACTS 2:32-39	GOD RAISED JESUS TO LIFE. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS POURED OUT ON US. JESUS WAS (R)U(NT)IFIED, MADE LORD AND MESSIAH. JESUS FORGIVES OUR SINS. WE'RE GIVEN THE HOLY SPIRIT.	REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED.
Acts 3:18-21		
Acts 5:30-32, 38-39		
Acts 14:15-17		



To make sure we're building a church with the block of Storytelling, we want to make sure we have a Storytelling practice. Use the prompts below to help you. Don't feel the need to engage with every prompt. Go through the ones that seem most helpful to you or your group and see how God convicts you to start building.



These tools are here to help you build!

1

FOUNDATIONS

In this series, we're looking at the foundation of the church and the foundation of our lives. Look at the blocks below. Inside the blocks, write down the names of things that are currently foundational to your life.

Are these the right building blocks? Pray that God will guide you as you build your life on the foundation of Jesus.

You can build with the block of Storytelling by knowing God's story, knowing your place in God's story, and telling the story. Work through the next few exercises to help you build.

2

KNOW GOD'S STORY

Review what you learned this week. What is the Christian story? Write it below.

We all need a regular rhythm to hear God's story and be reminded of our place in it. We can call this practice Storytime. Do you have a Storytime in your life? Consider the ideas below. Which are a part of your life? Are there ideas you would add?

- reading the Bible regularly
- studying the Bible with others
- hearing the message during church services
- participating in the communion meal and reflecting on Jesus' life, death and resurrection
- reading the Bible with your household
- Your ideas:

3

MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE

Memorizing scripture is a great way to know God's story. Look up these passages that tell God's story: Acts 3:19-21; Acts 5: 30-21; Acts 14:15-17.

Choose one passage to memorize. Write it below to get started.

Where's a place you could hang scripture so you'll see it as a reminder of God's story (your mirror, in your car, at your desk, etc.)?



4

KNOW YOUR PLACE IN GOD'S STORY

One way we described God's story is with these sentences:

Creation is beautiful and broken but God's restoring kingdom comes to earth in the person and work of Jesus. Jesus frees us from our guilt, empowers us to new life, and will return in victory.

We can reframe these sentences to help us see God at work in our life:

I am beautiful and broken, but God's restoring kingdom comes to earth in the person and work of Jesus. Jesus frees me from guilt, empowers me to new life, and will return in victory.

Think about your life story. Where does God show up in it?

- How do I see God's beauty in the world? In me?
- How has God met me in my brokenness? How has God healed me?
- How has God restored me?
- How has Jesus freed me from guilt?
- What new life have I experienced through Jesus?

5

TELL GOD'S STORY

In your group time, you can practice telling stories! Here are a few ideas of stories that you could share:

- The story of how I came to faith in Jesus.
- A story about how you or your family came to call FCC your church home.
- A story about God's help or deliverance through a difficult or challenging time.
- A story of something you are celebrating in life or in your relationship with God.

As we share these stories together, be sure that we are looking for God's work in the story. We share these stories not to glorify ourselves but to remind one another of the many ways that God works in and through our lives.

The early church quite literally told God's story wherever they went. How can you tell the story? Consider the following questions:

- Where do you spend your time? Who do you encounter there? What would it look like for you to proclaim God's story in that setting?
- Who in your life do you need to share God's story with? Write their names below. Pray that God will give you the same boldness of the early church to share the Good News of Jesus.

Do you have a regular rhythm for hearing God's story and telling God's story? What would it look like for you to do this?

HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGE:

If you live with other people, find a way to have a Storytime together this week! Here are a few ideas:

- Read Acts 17:16-34 together.
- Share ways you've seen God at work in your life.
- Memorize a verse together.
- Go to church together and talk about what you learned afterward.

How did it go?

PARTNERING

BUILDING MATERIAL:

Partnering – working together for the sake of the gospel

BLUEPRINT:

The early church served God with partners. Even when partnering got hard, they always went together.

Luke 10:1-4; Acts 8:1-8, 14-17; Acts 9:19-28; Acts 11:22-30; Acts 13; Acts 15; Acts 16:1-5; Acts 18:1-5; 1 Cor 12:12-27; 1 Thess 3:1-10; 2 Timothy 2:2

CONSTRUCTION ZONE:

Who are you serving alongside? Who are you learning from and who are you inviting into service with you?



DAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 2: PARTNERING

MONDAY: ACTS 9:19-28 & ACTS 11:25-30

In Acts 9, Barnabas took Paul (also called Saul) and vouched for him. This enabled Paul to preach the word of God. The next time we see Barnabas and Paul together is when Barnabas goes to get Paul after he's run out of Jerusalem. Barnabas once again makes it possible for Paul to preach the word of God. Who do you need to invite to be on mission with you? Or who can you learn from as you seek to serve God? Who can you team up with?

TUESDAY: ACTS 8:1-8, 14-17

Philip shared the word of God with the people of Samaria. As soon as the apostles heard, they sent more people to join in this effort. Where is our church already on mission? (Look at our serving website at www.fcc-jc.org/serve for a start). Could you be called to join in any of these works? Pray that God will use you to partner with others to do the work of God together. Write down a serving team/area that you might be ready to join.

WEDNESDAY: LUKE 10:1-4

Jesus makes it clear that there is plenty of work to be done. God wants more people to be on mission! But God doesn't send people alone. We're called to be on mission together. What areas of need do you notice around the world? Where do we need more people to serve? Pray that God will send workers into those fields. Pray that no one will do the work alone, but that God will send people in teams.

THURSDAY: 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27

This passage beautifully reminds us that we need each other. Serving God alone would be like a hand trying to walk somewhere by itself or an ear trying to smell. God calls us to be on mission together. Have you ever tried to do something on your own and it didn't work out? Based on this passage, what's the benefit of serving God with others?

FRIDAY: ACTS 11:22-26 & ACTS 16:1-5

Barnabas partners with Paul and trains him to do ministry. Paul partners with Timothy and trains him. We all need a Barnabas in our lives, and we all need a Timothy. We all need someone to learn from and someone to train in ministry. Go to the construction zone on page 22 to explore how you can start partnering with a Barnabas or a Timothy.

**OPEN:**

What's a specific time in your life where you have experienced the benefits of working together rather than working in isolation?

WATCH THE TEACHING VIDEO AT
WWW.FCC-JC.ORG/BLOCKS.

VIDEO RESPONSE:

- What stood out to you from the video?
- Why does God call us to work in teams?
- How does our church encourage people to serve in partnership with one another?
- The speakers said,
"If you're not serving, _____.
If you are serving, _____."

Which of these two is your next step?

STUDY:

Read Acts 18:1-5.

Because Timothy and Silas came with support from the Philippian church, Paul was able to expand his gospel work. He could focus on preaching full-time alongside Priscilla and Aquila and Silas and Timothy.

- How do these partnerships create more gospel opportunities?

Read Acts 19:21-22.

- What are Timothy and Erastus sent to do?
- How does Paul's partnership with them multiply God's mission?

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:1-10.

- Why does Paul send Timothy to Thessalonica?
- How did Paul's partnership with Timothy multiply God's mission?

In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul encourages Timothy to keep teaching and to find other people who can teach. Ministry is incomplete if we don't invite someone else into it.



If we're going to use the building block of Partnering we need to start practicing using it! Go to the construction zone on page 22 to explore how to build with this material. Then, come back and finish the lesson with the closing prayer below.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Read Ephesians 4:14-21 aloud. Then, break into pairs to close in prayer together.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Read Philippians 1:3-6, Romans 16:3-4, Philemon 1:4-7, and Colossians 4:7-11.

Paul partnered with congregations all around the world. How are these partnerships characterized? What did these connections do for Paul?

We're called to partner with other churches, too.

This week, we're sending a team to visit the mission of TCM in Austria. How do partnerships with missionaries and local churches multiply the mission of God?

How can you partner with other churches and missionaries?





To make sure we're building a church with the block of partnering, we want to make sure we have a partnering practice. Use the prompts below to help you. Don't feel the need to engage with every prompt. Go through the ones that seem most helpful to you or your group and see how God convicts you to start building.

This is your toolbox to help you build!



1 PARTNERS IN FOLLOWING

In the Bible, no one follows Jesus alone. We're called to follow Jesus with others. This is where partnering begins. We join up and partner with each other as we follow Jesus. Who do you already follow Jesus with? Your small group? Your family? People in your church? Write their names below. What does it look like to see them as partners following Jesus with you?

If you feel like you're following Jesus by yourself, what step can you take to follow Jesus with others?

2 PARTNERS IN SERVICE

Do you have a vision for how you hope to see God at work in the world? Maybe you're passionate about seeing the hungry fed, the lonely find friendship, or the broken find healing. Take time to dream about how God could work through you.

Now remember that God always invites us to be on mission with others. God's workers never work alone, but rather work in teams. Consider who you can partner with to see these dreams realized. Is the church already working in one of these areas? If not, are there people you can invite to this work with you?

3 EVERYONE NEEDS A BARNABAS & EVERYONE NEEDS A TIMOTHY

Barnabas: someone to learn from, someone who knows more about a certain ministry area than you

Timothy: someone you can invite into service alongside you, someone you can teach how to serve

Finding a Barnabas or Timothy doesn't have to be a complicated, formal process. It can involve showing up to serve and asking questions to someone who's more experienced. It can be as simple as inviting someone to show up with you next time you serve the church or community.

Brainstorm who the Barnabases are in your life and who could be the Timothys.

Barnabases (people I can learn from):

Timothys (people I can invite into service):

What step will you take this week to team up with a Barnabas or a Timothy in your life?



4

PARTNERS AROUND THE WORLD

God calls us to partner with one another and serve God in teams. God also calls us to partner with other churches around the world. How can you partner with other local churches and with Christians around the world?

5

EXPLORE MISSIONS OPPORTUNITIES

Go to www.fcc-jc.org/missions to see a list of missions FCC supports and to take a look at our upcoming mission trips. If you're interested in learning more about our global partnerships, reach out to Nikki Hunt at nhunt@fcc-jc.org.

HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGE:

Find a time for your family to talk together about what it looks like to partner with others as we follow Jesus. Talk about these questions together:

- Who do you look up to?
- How do they inspire and guide you to follow Jesus?
- What have you learned from them?
- Have you ever taught or mentored someone? What was that experience like?
- Who could you pour into today?



DEVOTING

BUILDING MATERIAL:

Devoting- Developing a rhythm of worship & devotion to God

BLUEPRINT:

The early church structured their lives around habits of devotion to God. They prayed, worshipped, studied scripture, and gathered together.

Acts 2:42-47; Acts 3:1; Acts 8:27; Acts 10:7; Acts 12:1-18;
Acts 13:42-44; Colossians 4:2-6

CONSTRUCTION ZONE:

Develop spiritual habits. What are your habits of worship?
How are you patterning your life around devotion to God?

DAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 3: DEVOTING



MONDAY: ACTS 2:42-47 & COLOSSIANS 4:2-6

Devoting means giving your time and attention to a specific person, purpose, or activity. It's a way of carving out space for something and saying it's important! We have daily devotions in this study as a way of devoting specific time to God every day.

Does your schedule reflect devotion to God? We'll explore how to develop the habit of devotion throughout the week. For today, commit (or re-commit) to doing these daily devotions. Adjust your schedule if needed so you can go to God every day through this study.

TUESDAY: LUKE 5:15-16 & MARK 1:35-37

Even Jesus had a habit of prayer! He withdrew so often that it was noticed and recorded in scripture. Do you have a habit of devotion (prayer, reading scripture, etc.) that takes priority over everything else? How can you prioritize your devotion to God above your other priorities?

WEDNESDAY: ACTS 12:1-18

Whenever the early church encountered hardship, they prayed. They prayed through the night while Peter was imprisoned. How do you normally respond to hardship? What would it look like for you to go to God before doing anything else when you face a difficult circumstance?

THURSDAY: PSALM 95:1-7

The Hebrew and Greek words for worship both mean the same thing – to bow down. Worship means bowing down and submitting your life before God consistently. It's a posture we take.

It takes effort to maintain your posture. Pay attention to your posture today. Are you sitting up straight or slouching? Is your head held high or bowed down? What would it look like to consider your posture before God in your daily life? Are you bowing down and yielding your life to God? Or are you pushing back against God's way for your life? Pray that you will submit your life to God through your daily actions.

FRIDAY: ACTS 3:1; ACTS 10:9; ACTS 16:13

Early believers had practices of devotion that were grounded in habits. They had places of worship (the synagogue, Jerusalem), and they had times of worship (the Sabbath, specific hours to pray). If we're going to use the building block of devoting ourselves to God, we need a plan. Head to the construction zone on page 32 to make your plan.

OPEN:

Some people crash into bed, and others have long complicated routines. Some people wake up hours before work to perform a regimented morning routine, and others crawl out of bed directly to work.

Do you have a morning or evening routine? What is it?

WATCH THE TEACHING VIDEO AT
WWW.FCC-JC.ORG/BLOCKS.

VIDEO RESPONSE:

- What stood out to you from the video?
- What relationships are you devoted to? How do you demonstrate this devotion with your habits and time?
- The speaker said, "Worship isn't a feeling. It's a habit." What do you think that means?
- What are the core habits of worship at FCC?

STUDY:

Read Acts 3:1, Acts 10:9, and Luke 5:15-16.

Early followers of Jesus (and Jesus himself!) took time out of their days to pray. They had daily habits of prayer. Notice how these daily habits included small interruptions into their days. Where did each person go to pray in these passages?

Peter and John:

Peter:

Jesus:

- How do you think a location change helped their habit of prayer? Do any of you already use a location change to aid your practice of prayer?
- What would it look like to make sure that your habit of devotion interrupts your day? What are the benefits of this?

Read Acts 13:42-44.

Early Christians not only had a daily practice of prayer, but they had a weekly practice of Sabbath. On this day, they would gather for worship, hear teaching, and Jews would abstain from working.

- Why was it helpful to have a specific day set aside for worshipping God?
- What mission opportunity did that give Paul and Barnabas?
- What impact did this have on the community?

VISIT THE CONSTRUCTION ZONE

If we're going to use the building block of Devoting, we need to start practicing using it! Go to the construction zone on page 32 to explore how to build with this material. Then, come back and finish the lesson with the closing prayer below.

CLOSING PRAYER:

One habit of devoting can be praying the same words every day to center your day and focus on God. Pray these words from Psalm 25:4-5 to wrap up your time together.

*Show me your ways, Lord,
teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long.*

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Today we studied daily and weekly habits of devotion. The Bible also includes examples of annual habits.

Read Leviticus 23.

This chapter includes detailed descriptions on some of the Israelites' festivals. These festivals can show us what it looks like to have annual rhythms that point us toward God in worship.

- What festivals did the Israelites have?
- What was the purpose of each festival?
- How did these festivals demonstrate devotion to God?
- What are ways that you have annual rhythms that draw your attention to God?



To make sure we're building a church with the block of Devoting, we want to make sure we have a Devoting practice. Use the prompts below to help you build habits of devotion to God. Don't feel the need to engage with every prompt. Go through the ones that seem most helpful to you or your group and see how God convicts you to start building.

This is your toolbox to help you build!



1 SCHEDULED RHYTHMS

Take inventory of how you spend your time. If someone were to examine your schedule, what would they say you are devoted to?

Do you like that answer? Are there changes you need to make so your life reflects what and who you want to be devoted to?

2 HABIT ANALYSIS

Habits are repeated behaviors that we do often and regularly. What habits do you currently have? For example, do you exercise a certain amount of times a week at a certain time? Do you have a morning or evening routine? Do you scroll on your phone before going to bed?

3 EXAMINING HABITS IN ACTS

The four habits in Acts 2 are study, gathering, worship, and prayer. Brainstorm ways these practices could become habits in your life. Look at the list below and add any ideas you have. You don't have to commit to each idea, but this exercise will help you figure out how to develop habits of devotion.

Study: read scripture daily at a specific time of day, read a daily devotional, study scripture with friends through a small group, group chat or coffee together

Gathering: go to weekly worship services, join a small group

Worship: read a Psalm daily, listen to worship music, write down your praise to God, participate in communion

Prayer: keep a prayer journal, pray scripture, pray before meals, get together with others to pray

4 LOCATION CHANGES

Some people need a change of location to solidify a habit. Jesus withdrew to solitary places to pray. Peter and John went to the temple. Maybe you need to go somewhere specific for your habit of devotion. What would it look like for you to match a habit with a location change? Consider the following ideas.

- A specific room or chair in your house
- Your car as you commute to work
- Outside in nature

5 ANNUAL HABITS

Not all habits need to be daily. Are there ways you can demonstrate your devotion to God weekly or annually?

Consider Christian holidays like Easter and Christmas. Are there ways you can make sure you use these holidays to focus more deeply on God in worship?



G

GROUP HABITS

Devotion is such an important aspect of the life of the church, but sometimes we think of devotion as something we do quietly or alone. What we see in the church of Acts is that they did acts of devotion together. Singing, reading scripture, and praying were communal acts.

During group time, try practicing some communal devotional practices. Here are a few options, but feel free to come up with your own!

- Spend time praying aloud together – no set order, no set topic, just an intentional time devoted to being with God in prayer.
- Have someone read aloud a Psalm. (Suggestions include Psalm 46, 100, 139)
- Pick a worship song to sing together. It can be a capella, someone can lead with an instrument, or someone can play the song over a speaker.

The purpose of this time is to come before God together, devoting time to being in God's presence. If you enjoy this experience, you can even make it a part of your regular group meetings.

HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGE:

Choose a habit of devotion to incorporate for the rest of this study. Put it on your calendar so you don't forget.

- Praying together before meals
- Going to church together weekly and sitting together
- Having a devotional time before bed
- Sharing prayer requests daily and praying together



HELPING

BUILDING MATERIAL:

Helping – loving others in action

BLUEPRINT:

The early church's posture toward the world was love. They demonstrated this through kindness and service.

Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 3:1-8; Acts 4:32-36; Acts 6:1-6; Acts 9:36-41; Acts 14:8-10; Romans 12:4-8; 1 Peter 4:8-10

CONSTRUCTION ZONE:

How will you use your gifts to serve those around you?
How will you love in action?

DAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 4: HELPING

MONDAY: ACTS 3:1-8; ACTS 14:8-10

When both Peter and Paul encountered people in need, they looked directly at them. They didn't shy away or avoid those who needed healing. Sometimes we look away from the needs around us. Look at the needs in the lives of those around you this week. Don't look away. Write down needs you've noticed today. Pray that God will help you have a posture of love toward these people as you look them in the eye and recognize their humanity.

TUESDAY: ACTS 4:32-36; ROMANS 12:4-8

The believers were so united that when someone was in need they experienced it as everyone's need. They didn't hesitate to help one another. The book of Romans teaches us that we belong to each other. That means our needs belong to one another too! Think about the needs in your community. How might you help meet those needs?

WEDNESDAY: MATTHEW 25:31-46

Jesus calls us to treat people the way we would treat him. Everyone is made in the image of God. That means we're called to love them and to serve them. Write down the names of people you encounter today. Say their names out loud. Each of these people was made in the image of God. What would it look like to serve them the way you would serve Jesus?

ACTS 9:36-41

Tabitha used her gifts and skills to serve others. She loved people so well that they wanted her brought back to life!

Wouldn't it be amazing if you lived in a way that people insisted that you be resurrected when you're gone? Think about your gifts and skills. How has God gifted you? How could these gifts be used to help others?

MATTHEW 14:13-21

Jesus preached to the crowds for so long that they grew hungry! The disciples wanted to send the crowds away, but Jesus wanted to care for their physical needs. We want to be a church that cares for both people's spiritual needs and their physical needs the way Jesus did. Go to the Construction Zone on page 42 to process how God is calling you to help others.

OPEN:

Tell about a time when someone helped you out of a tough spot.

WATCH THE TEACHING VIDEO AT
WWW.FCC-JC.ORG/BLOCKS.
VIDEO RESPONSE:

- What stood out to you from the video?
- Why was it important that the early church made a plan for how to meet the needs of the widows?
- How have you seen Christians organize themselves to help others?

STUDY:

Read Acts 6:1-6.

- How did the Twelve respond to the Hellenistic Jews' complaint?
- In verse 3, they chose seven specific people. They didn't leave the ministry to chance, but they turned the responsibility over to them. Why is this important?
- What did other disciples focus on according to verse 4?

Read 1 Peter 4:8-11.

- According to verse 10, when we use our gifts, we are being faithful stewards of God's grace. What does it mean to be a steward? How do our gifts steward God's grace?
- Name the gifts listed in this passage. What gifts would you add to this list?
- According to verse 11, how are we to serve one another? What happens as a result of our service?

Maybe you've never considered your gifts and skills in this way before. Or maybe you're already actively serving others with your gifts.



Wherever you are, we want to take some time to make sure we're using the building block of helping. Go to the construction zone on page 42 to explore how God might be calling you to help and love those around you. Then, come back and finish the lesson with the closing prayer on the next page.



CLOSING PRAYER:

In Acts 6, the apostles pray over those who are going to minister to the widows. We want to pray over each other as we go into the world helping and serving others.

- Have everyone sit in a circle. Then, have each person pray this over the person sitting to their right:
- "God, set apart _____ to serve others through the power of your love."

Have someone finish the time of prayer by asking God to show the group where to help others this week.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

1 John 3:16-18 & James 2:14-18

- How did Jesus demonstrate love for us?
- How are we called to love others? Practically speaking, what does this look like?
- What happens when we just love with our words? Why does it matter that we love in action?

If we truly love others, our actions will reflect that. Who are some people you love? Do you treat them as if you love them?



To make sure we're building a church with the block of helping, we want to make sure we have a helping practice. Use the prompts below to discover what that could look like for you. Don't feel the need to engage with every prompt. Go through the ones that seem most helpful to you or your group and see how God convicts you to start building.

This is your toolbox to help you build!



1 CONTEXTS FOR LOVE

Helping is love in action. Sometimes we think we love others, but we forget to demonstrate it. Think through the contexts where you interact with others (work, meetings, class, soccer practice, social media, etc.) List 3 key contexts below.

Look at each context and evaluate yourself honestly. How have you acted in loving ways in those interactions? How have you acted in unloving ways?

2

GIFTED FOR LOVE

How has God gifted you? If you're not sure, start with this list of ideas. These are all gifts that are currently used at FCC! Circle the things you might be able to do.

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| - Teaching | - Data management |
| - Decorating | - Data entry |
| - Welcoming people | - Building repair |
| - Hospitality | - Working with technology |
| - Working with kids | - Proof-reading |
| - Event planning | - Graphic design |
| - Cooking | - Photography |
| - Organizing | - Video editing |
| - Praying | - Cooking |
| - Making music | - Transportation |
| - Cleaning | - Budgeting and money management |
| - Remembering people's names | - Making flower arrangements |
| - Leading games | - Knitting |
| - Writing cards | - Lettering |
| - Counseling | |
| - Facilitating conversation | |

This is just a sample of the many gifts used in the church! What other gifts would you add to this list?



3

MOVING INTO ACTION

Sometimes we can spend so much time thinking about how God has gifted us that we never move into action. Helping is love in action. If you're stuck on the question of your gifts, start by observing the needs around you.

What needs do you notice in the community? In the church?

What step could you take to help meet those needs?

Go to the serving page on the FCC website. (fcc-jc.org/serve) Write down the ministries where God might be asking you to serve.

HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGE:

Discuss together:

What are some of the needs you notice around you? Who is someone in your orbit who you could help? Think locally and specifically.

Perhaps the neighbor across the street needs their car washed or their lawn mowed. Maybe your family knows someone who is lonely and could use a visit. Or maybe you know someone who needs a meal brought to them. Pick someone to help and come up with a plan to help them this week.



SHARING

BUILDING MATERIAL:

Sharing – giving our resources to support the mission of God

BLUEPRINT:

The early church saw their resources as something to be shared. They shared resources to support God's mission and bless others.

Acts 2:44-45; Acts 4:32-37; Acts 11:27-30; Acts 16:11-15; Acts 20:32-35; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9; Philippians 4:14-19

CONSTRUCTION ZONE: What has God given you? How can this be used to support God's mission and bless others?

DAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 5: SHARING

MONDAY: ACTS 2:44-45 & ACTS 4:32-37

Both of these passages describe the same phenomenon: The believers were unified so they shared with one another. Sharing demonstrated their unity.

Have you ever participated in a Christian community like this? What would it look like for you to demonstrate unity with other Christians in your church, in your small group or in the world in this way?

TUESDAY: ACTS 20:32-35

This passage contains two beautiful insights. First, Paul explains the point of working. He says, "By this kind of hard work, we must help the weak." We work for the sake of caring for others (also in Ephesians 4:28). Second, we learn a quote from Jesus: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Jesus taught the value of sharing our resources with others. We are blessed when we give away what we've earned.

How does it change your perspective to view your resources as a vehicle for generosity? How are we normally taught to view our resources and money?

WEDNESDAY: ACTS 16:11-15

Paul and Silas relied on hospitality as they traveled to preach God's word. In Acts 16, we see Lydia inviting them into her home. This enabled them to continue their ministry. The work of God depends on hospitality. What would it look like for you to be hospitable to someone? If you don't own a home, are there creative ways you can be hospitable?

THURSDAY: PHILIPPIANS 4:14-19

According to verses 14 and 15, the church shared both in Paul's troubles and they shared in giving and receiving. The church of Philippi supported Paul so he could keep doing ministry. They supplied him with resources so he could keep sharing the good news of Jesus! How can you support others so they can continue sharing the good news of Jesus?

FRIDAY: ACTS 11:27-30

The early church shared generously with other churches. Notice that the famine was going to spread over the entire Roman world – this means it affected those living in Judea, but it also impacted those in Antioch. The Christians in Antioch shared even when they were in need! Pray that God will give our church this spirit of selfless generosity. Head to the construction zone on page 52 to explore how you can share like the early church.

OPEN: What's one surprisingly meaningful gift from your childhood that you remember and why?

WATCH THE VIDEO AT
WWW.FCC-JC.ORG/BLOCKS

VIDEO RESPONSE:

- What stuck out to you from the video?
- How does generosity make ministry possible?
- Do you consider sharing to be a privilege?
- The speaker talked about how we're all called to share no matter what our situation. What did you think of the examples she gave of how to share?



STUDY:

Read Acts 4:32-37.

- What did they share?
- Why were there no needy persons among the early church?
- In verses 35 and 37, where did they bring the money from their sales? Is this significant? Why do you think they did this instead of giving the money to people directly?

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-12.

- In verse 4, what did the Macedonian church plead for?
- What does Paul praise the Corinthians for in verse 10?
- How does Paul describe their gifts in verse 12?



The Bible doesn't shy away from the importance of sharing your resources with others. This can be hard to talk about. Depending on your situation in life, it can be hard to practice too! Go to construction zone on the page 52 to work through what it looks like for you to share with others for the sake of God's mission.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Second Corinthians 9 teaches that you will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion. Today we close our time with a prayer practice rooted in that promise.

You are invited to sit with your hands stretched out and your palms open. Let this represent a posture of openness to sharing however God calls you to share.

Have someone close in prayer that we can be generous on every occasion. Pray that God will be glorified through our generosity.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.

- How are we to give? (v. 6-7)
- In verse 11, why are they enriched?
- What is the result of their generosity? (v. 12-13)
- What does this say about how generosity is connected to the mission of God?



To make sure we're building a church with the block of sharing, we want to make sure we have a sharing practice. Use the prompts below to discover what that could look like for you. Don't feel the need to engage with every prompt. Go through the ones that seem most helpful to you or your group and see how God convicts you to start building.



This is your toolbox to help you build!

1 BLESSED BY SHARING

What have people shared with you? Take time to reflect over your life. When has the sacrificial generosity of others been a unique blessing in your life? Praise God with gratitude for the ways people have been generous to you.

2 SHARING RESOURCES

What resources do you have? (property, finances, time, etc.)

How are you currently using your resources?

What priorities are reflected through how you use your resources?

What would it look like to think of these resources as given to you for the purpose of being shared?

3 GENEROSITY TO GOD'S MISSION

Jesus certainly never shied away from talking about the importance of sharing your wealth. But this can still be a tricky topic to talk about. The New Testament makes it clear that ministry depended on the generosity of those in the church.

What are the main factors that motivate you to support the work of the church with your generosity?

How can your giving to the church reflect Paul's teaching in 2 Corinthians 9?



4

HOSPITALITY

One way we share with others is through hospitality. What would it look like for you to be hospitable?

If you need ideas, consider the list below:

- Host a group in your home
- Take snacks to youth group
- Host an intern or a resident in your home
- Plan a block party for your neighbors

Are there any changes you need to make so you can be hospitable?

HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGE:

Find a way to share for the sake of God's mission this week. Choose an idea from below or come up with your own:

- What's something you have that someone else could benefit from? Give that item to someone who could use it today.
- Our church collects items for Neighbors Table and for Fairmont Elementary. As winter approaches, we're collecting winter coats. Donate gently used or new coats today by bringing them to Entrance A.
- Tithe money to the work of the church.
- Support a missionary financially.
- Sponsor a kid through Compassion International.



DISCIPLING

BUILDING MATERIAL:

Discipling –knowing Jesus and walking toward him together

BLUEPRINT:

The early church learned from Jesus and followed Jesus. They disciplined each other through encouragement and correction.

Matthew 4:18-22; Acts 11:29-24; Acts 14:21-22; Acts 18:24-28; Acts 20:25-32

CONSTRUCTION ZONE:

How will you keep learning from Jesus? Who will you walk alongside as you go in the direction of Jesus?



MONDAY: MATTHEW 4:18-22

Jesus called his disciples by telling them to follow him. Being a disciple of Jesus means we follow him in the way he goes. We look to scripture to see how Jesus lived and we go in that direction. Are you following Jesus? Take time to pray that you'll yield your life to Jesus and that you'll live in the way he instructs us to.

TUESDAY: ACTS 11:19-24 & ACTS 14:21-22

All throughout the book of Acts we see this pattern: Paul and Barnabas teach the good news, people follow Jesus, and Paul and Barnabas stay in relationship with them, continuing to guide them on the path of Jesus. One of the primary ways they guide people toward Jesus is by encouraging them. Who do you need to encourage as they follow Jesus today? Pray for that person right now. Then call them or send them a card to encourage them as they walk with Jesus.



WEDNESDAY: ACTS 18:24-28

Apollos spoke boldly about Jesus, but he needed a little more guidance. Priscilla and Aquila graciously explain a few things to him. Discipleship often involves direction from others. According to verses 27 and 28, what is the result of Apollos accepting this guidance? Are you open to others guiding you on your walk with Jesus? What changes would you need to make to accept this?

THURSDAY: ACTS 20:25-32

Paul here directs the Ephesian elders to care for those they oversee. In verse 28, who does he say they need to keep watch over? Notice that leading others starts with watching yourself. Humbly bring yourself before God in prayer today. Pray that God will guide you before you start trying to disciple someone else.

FRIDAY: ACTS 8:26-31

Philip and the Ethiopian both ask important questions to each other. Write those questions below.

Discipleship involves helping people understand how to follow Jesus and it involves asking someone when we need help following Jesus. Who is pointing you toward Jesus? Are you in any discipling relationships or communities? Go to the construction zone on page 60 to think through how you can be in discipling relationships.

OPEN:

When in your life have you traveled with a very good or a very poor guide? What difference did it make?

WATCH THE VIDEO AT

WWW.FCC-JC.ORG/BLOCKS

VIDEO RESPONSE:

- What stood out to you from the video?
 - What is the process of discipleship according to the video?
-
-
-

- Using this definition of discipleship, have you been disciplined before? Tell us about it.

STUDY:

Read Acts 18:24-28

- How did we see discipleship in action in this text?
- What do you think Apollos' attitude was toward Priscilla and Aquila?
- Why was it important that Apollos was open to correction?
- How was discipleship multiplied in this passage? Notice verses 27 and 28.

Read Luke 9:46-48.

We can get a great glimpse into the discipleship process when we watch how Jesus disciplined the Twelve. They were the very first followers of Jesus. Jesus knew the Twelve and they knew Jesus. Jesus pointed them in the direction they ought to go.

- How do we see Jesus disciple the Twelve?
- Verse 47 says that Jesus knew their thoughts. Jesus also spent a significant amount of time with the disciples since they followed him wherever he went. What else do you think he knew about the disciples?
- How does Jesus respond to the disciples' argument?
- Do you think the disciples listened to Jesus' instructions?



If we're going to use the building block of Discipling we need to start practicing using it! Go to the construction zone on page 62 to explore how to build with this material. Then, come back and finish the lesson with the closing prayer below.



CLOSING PRAYER:

Discipleship is about following Jesus together. Close by reading Psalm 23 as we praise God that we never walk alone.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

- Read Colossians 2:1-8.
- Paul disciplines the early church through his many letters.
- What is Paul's goal? (v. 2)
- What does this say about the goal of discipleship?
- What is Paul concerned about? (v. 4, 8)
- How does this demonstrate the importance of discipleship?
- How does Paul instruct them to live? (v. 6-7)



To make sure we're building a church with the block of discipling, we want to make sure we have a discipling practice. Use the prompts below to help you. Don't feel the need to engage with every prompt. Go through the ones that seem most helpful to you or your group and see how God convicts you to start building.

This is your toolbox to help you build!



1 KNOW OTHERS

Who in your life do you know well? What communities are you already in?

Do you have a community where you can be discipled and disciple others?

If you don't, take a step this week to find a community. Call the church for help or look at our website (www.fcc-jc.org/groups.) It's not too late to join a group doing this study!

2 KNOW JESUS

Do you know Jesus? How are you getting to know Jesus?

What's a habit you could add to your life to continue knowing Jesus?

3 POINT

Who can you encourage this week? Send a letter to a missionary or pastor. Call a friend who's going through a hard time. Pray about who you can encourage and do it.

Who is pointing you to Jesus?

Who do you need to accept correction and guidance from? Do you have any relationships where you are open to hearing their guidance?

Who can you pour into as they walk toward Jesus?

4 WALK TOWARDS JESUS TOGETHER

Do you tend to follow Jesus by yourself or with others? What would it look like to walk toward Jesus with someone else?

The whole point of the church is to be a community of people walking in the way of Jesus together. How are you connected with the church? Are there any changes you need to make?

HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGE:

Let's practice the discipleship process together. Hopefully you already know each other! Now let's get to know Jesus from scripture, point toward Jesus, and walk toward him together.

Read the story of Luke 9:46-48 and 18:15-17.
Discuss these prompts together.

Know Jesus

- What did Jesus do?
- What did Jesus teach?

Point

- How can we live like this?
- Do we need to change anything to live this way?

Walk towards Jesus together

- How can we encourage each other to live like Jesus?

MONDAY: PHILIPPIANS 2:3-11

Jesus is our model for humility. He came to earth as the son of God, and yet, he made himself a servant. Praise God for this perfect model of humility. Write down the action statements of verses 3-5. What would it look like for you to follow these commands? Pray that God will give you a spirit of humility this week.

TUESDAY: ACTS 9:1-15 & PHILIPPIANS 3:3-11

Paul's conversion story humbled him. He was knocked down and blinded. He had to be humbled in order to follow Jesus. Following Jesus requires surrender. We read in Philippians how Paul gave up his achievements and titles so that his identity could be found in Jesus. What are things you brag about or make sure others know about you? Where do you find your identity? What would it look like for you to find your identity in Jesus and to boast in him instead?

WEDNESDAY: ACTS 24:24-26 AND 1 JOHN 1:8-10

Paul proclaimed the good news of Jesus everywhere he went – even to those deciding his fate in prison. Here, he shares his faith with the governor, Felix. Felix and his wife seem to be an engaged audience until Paul talks about self-control, righteousness, and judgment.

Sometimes we want all the good things about Jesus, but we don't want to surrender our lives. Felix doesn't seem to want to make any changes to his behavior. Jesus calls us to surrender our lives to him. We confess our sin, we're forgiven, and we're gifted with a new life in Jesus. What do you need to surrender to Jesus today? Humbly confess your sins and praise God for purifying us from all sin.

HUMILITY

BUILDING MATERIAL: Humility – submitting your life before God and seeking God's glory over your own

BLUEPRINT: The early church was built by people who surrendered their lives to Jesus by laying down their titles, accomplishments and pride. They made Jesus the focus of the world rather than themselves.

Matthew 6:1-18; Luke 18:9-14; Acts 9:1-15; Acts 10:19-26; Acts 16:1-15; Acts 24:24-26; Philippians 2:3-11; Philippians 3:3-11; 1 John 1:8-10

CONSTRUCTION ZONE:

How do you need to surrender to Jesus?

THURSDAY: LUKE 18:9-14

The Pharisee thought he was better than the tax collector and looked down on him. He was too self-righteous to see his own sinfulness. When are you tempted to compare yourself to others? Pray the words of the tax collector today: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Admit that we all need Jesus, and ask God to give you a spirit of humility toward those you encounter today.

FRIDAY: ACTS 10:19-26

Cornelius is a respected leader who humbles himself before Peter. Peter in turn humbles himself by saying, "I am only a man myself." We see here a model for humbling ourselves before one another. As we'll see in next week's lesson, both Cornelius and Peter yielded themselves to one another and to God's teaching for their lives. How are you called to humble yourselves before others? Before God? Go to the construction zone to see what it looks like to live with humility.

OPEN:

Have you ever been blessed by an anonymous gift?

WATCH THE TEACHING VIDEO AT

WWW.FCC-JC.ORG/BLOCKS.

VIDEO RESPONSE:

- What stood out to you from the video?
- How does it impact your view of the Bible to recognize that many of the writings are anonymous? What does this say about the purpose of scripture?

Read Acts 16:1-15.

- Summarize this passage. What happened?
- What do you think is the purpose of recording these things?
- Why do you think the author of this passage didn't identify themselves?

Read Matthew 6:1-18.

- Verse 1 tells us not to practice righteousness in front of others to be seen by them.
 - o Practically speaking, what does this look like?
 - o How does this passage instruct us to give? To pray? To fast?
- When things are done in secret, what does God do (v. 4, 6, 18)?



If we're going to use the building block of Humility we need to start practicing using it! Go to the construction zone on page 70 to explore how to build with this material. Then, come back and finish the lesson with the closing prayer below.

CLOSING PRAYER

We read the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6. This prayer reflects a dependence on God for every need. True humility means we depend on God for everything. Let's pray the Lord's Prayer together aloud to close:

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.*

*And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.*

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Matthew 6:9-13 is known as the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer is full of humility. Let's unpack this together.

Hallowed be your name: God's name deserves glory more than our name and more than anything else

Your kingdom come, you will be done: We desire God's will on earth over our wants and desires.

Give us this day our daily bread: God meets our needs. All we have is from God and not from ourselves.

Forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors: It's humbling to ask God for forgiveness. This means we're admitting that we've fallen short. It's humbling to forgive others. This means we're letting go of how someone has wronged us.

Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory: We're not seeking our kingdom, power, or glory, but God's alone. This goes against what the world tells us to seek.

- Which part of this prayer is most convicting for you today?



To make sure we're building a church with the block of humility, we want to make sure we have a practice of humility. Use the prompts below to discover what that could look like for you. Don't feel the need to engage with every prompt. Go through the ones that seem most helpful to you or your group and see how God convicts you to start building.



The prompts are here to help you build!

Humility means surrendering yourself before God. We can live this out in many different ways:

- We focus on God's glory above our desires, above our reputation, and above our accomplishments.
- We surrender our selfishness and our sins before God to follow the way of Jesus. This can be a hard building block to use! Use the questions below to guide you as you discern how God is calling you to humility.
- We value others above ourselves.

1

HUMILITY MEANS FOCUSING ON GOD'S GLORY OVER YOUR GLORY

How does the world encourage us to focus on our own glory and attention above God?

What would it look like to bring glory to God instead of ourselves?

In Acts 1:21-26 the apostles look for someone to join them so they could continue to have Twelve apostles. What qualification did they look for in this person? Someone who had been with Jesus. That's the qualification for serving God – that we spend time with Jesus. Are you spending time with Jesus? What changes do you need to make to spend time with him today?

Humility means finding our identity in Jesus rather than in our accomplishments. Practically speaking, what steps can we take to find our identity in Jesus?

2

HUMILITY MEANS PUTTING THE NEEDS OF OTHERS AHEAD OF YOURS

Philippians 2 tells us to put the interests of others above ourselves. Whose interests can you put above yours this week? Write their names below.

How can you do good anonymously this week?

3

HUMILITY MEANS SURRENDERING YOUR SINS AND SELFISHNESS TO GOD

Following Jesus requires repenting of our sin and confessing where we've fallen short. In our society, we don't like to admit when we're wrong. Have you ever prayed a prayer of confession? What would it look like to make this a habit?

Take a day and notice when you're tempted to glorify yourself or make yourself look good. Repent of these actions.

How can you act differently? What would it look like to stay quiet the next time you're tempted to brag?

HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGE:

Do something kind for someone anonymously. Talk about it afterward. What did you do? What did it feel like? How can you keep doing good anonymously?



EMBRACING

BUILDING MATERIAL: Embracing – removing barriers to the gospel to welcome all people to know Jesus

BLUEPRINT: God embraces everyone so God's church embraces everyone. The early church was for all people. They removed racial, ethnic, gender, and class barriers so that all people experienced the love of God.

Genesis 12:1-3; Matthew 9:9-13; Acts 2:1-21; Acts 10:27-48; Galatians 3:23-29

CONSTRUCTION ZONE:

What barriers will you remove? Who do you need to intentionally welcome?



GENESIS 12:1-3

God has always been for everyone. When Abram was called to go from his land, God told him that all people would be blessed through God's people. This is still our call today. Pray that God would use churches all around the world to bless all people.

ACTS 2:1-21

This recollection of Pentecost is a beautiful demonstration of God's gospel reaching all people. People from every nation were able to hear the word of God in their native languages. Language and geographic barriers were broken down in verses 4-11. Now look at verses 17-20. Gender barriers and age barriers are dismantled, too! Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

It's easy to create division in this world. Pray that God's spirit would give our church the power to break down barriers so we can continue to witness more people calling on the name of the Lord.

MATTHEW 9:9-13

Tax collectors were hated because they used their position to cheat people out of money. Jesus called Matthew, a known tax collector, to follow him. He ate publicly with Matthew and even went to his house. It's not up to us to decide who follows Jesus or who can serve him. Jesus invites everyone to follow him no matter how much they've sinned. How can we be a community where people are welcomed even when they fall short? Pray that God would make our church a welcoming place for "tax collectors and sinners."

THURSDAY: GALATIANS 3:23-29

Paul scolds the Galatians for excluding the Gentiles. This passage explains that our faith in Jesus gives us the gift of new life. We are all children of God! We're united as a family because of Jesus. Think about the people you typically spend time with at school, work, or in other areas of your life. What would it look like for you to treat everyone you encounter as a child of God?

FRIDAY: ACTS 10:27-48

In this passage, Peter discovers that God doesn't show favoritism but accepts everyone who places faith in him. Peter admits in the beginning of this passage that it was against the law for a Jew to visit a Gentile. By the end of these verses, Peter is staying overnight in a Gentile household. In this time, this was a radical demonstration of embracing all people. What are practical steps we can take to embrace others? Go to the construction zone on page 78 to explore clear steps you can take today.

OPEN:

What's the best party you've ever attended?

WATCH THE TEACHING VIDEO AT
WWW.FCC-JC.ORG/BLOCKS

VIDEO RESPONSE:

- Have you ever felt out of place at a party or event? What happened?
- How are churches called to embrace everyone?
- What does Paul say is the solution to these divisions? How does love conquer division?

STUDY:

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

- What were some of the problems with how the church came together? (v. 17-22)
- According to verse 29, what are they to discern when they eat and drink?
 - This term functions for Paul in two ways. Look back at 23-26. How is it clear that this term functions to describe the sacrificed body of Jesus Christ?
 - Look forward to 30-33. How is it clear that this term also functions to draw their attention to the church?
- What are other areas in church life that both call our attention to God and call our attention to unity?
- What are some of the ways we can examine ourselves before participating in the Lord's Supper?

VISIT THE CONSTRUCTION ZONE

If we're going to use the building block of Embracing we need to start practicing using it! Go to the construction zone on page 78 to explore how to build with this material. Then, come back and finish the lesson with the closing prayer below.

CLOSING PRAYER

1 Corinthians 12 and 13 describe and model the unity and love God calls us to.

Hear the vision of this unity by reading 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 and 1 Corinthians 13:1-6 as your closing prayer.



FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Philemon 1:8-21

Paul writes to Philemon asking him to welcome Onesimus back as a brother in Christ. Onesimus was Philemon's slave who ran away. We see a stark example of Jesus' call to embrace one another. Paul is asking Philemon to embrace someone who wronged him and someone who held a lower status than him. Embracing others means forgiving. Embracing others means treating everyone as brothers and sisters in Jesus.

- On what basis does Paul appeal to Philemon? (v. 9)
- What change in status does Onesimus experience? (v. 16)
- How does Paul tell Philemon to treat Onesimus?
- How does Paul remove barriers that might keep Philemon from embracing Onesimus? (v. 18)



To make sure we're building a church with the block of embracing, we want to make sure we have a practice of embracing. Use the prompts below to guide you. Don't feel the need to engage with every prompt. Go through the ones that seem most helpful to you or your group and see how God convicts you to start building.

The prompts are here to help you build!



1 RELATIONSHIP INVENTORY

Pay attention to the people in your life this week. Who do you naturally gravitate toward? Who do you talk to when you have a spare moment or who do you invite to eat lunch with you?

Think back through your week again. Who are the people around you who you interact with less? Who do you ignore or avoid (whether intentionally or not)? Write those names below.

What would it look like to intentionally reach out to one of those people? What holds you back from doing that?



2 DEFEATING DIVISION

In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul describes how the church's gatherings created division, humiliated people, and did more harm than good. This can happen to church gatherings when we're not intentionally working to remove barriers. Think about different types of church gatherings (small groups, worship services, events, etc.) Consider together: how can we work together to overcome the following barriers:

- Economic
- Age
- Gender
- Social
- What other barriers could the church experience?

Remember this isn't a time to complain about the church, but rather to see how each of us can make the church an embracing place. Let's each do our part to embrace others!

In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul calls the Corinthians to self-examination. He's instructing them to consider if their behaviors are excluding others in the church community. What would it look like if you examined your behaviors before carrying out any church practice to make sure you were including others?



3

CONQUERING CLIQUES

It can be easy to form cliques in any community. Cliques are groups that seem exclusive – groups where it seems like only certain people are welcome or invited. Cliques are destructive to the church.

Consider who you spend time with at church. It's likely that you're drawn to people who are similar to you – the same age, similar interests, similar economic backgrounds, etc. This is a normal social pattern, but it can be unintentionally exclusive.

Your leadership could make the difference to make your community a place of welcome. Who can you invite into your community this week?

4

INCLUDING THE OVERLOOKED

Through these exercises you've pondered your relationships and you've considered the barriers that can exclude people. Now consider: who do you need to embrace as part of the family of God? What step will you take to do so?

Jesus saw the people who others ignored; he sought out the outcast, the lonely and the excluded. The early Church followed Jesus' lead, now we have the unique opportunity to do the same, to seek out those around us who might be overlooked.

**HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGE:**

Invite someone over to your house who you haven't invited before. Share a meal together. Ask them questions about their life. Here are some possible conversation starters:

Where did you grow up? What was that like?

What are your hobbies and interests? What do you like about these things?

Who is in your family?

What did you do this week?

What's something you're looking forward to?



NAMING

BUILDING MATERIAL:

Naming – noticing people and knowing their stories

BLUEPRINT:

The author of Acts intentionally shares names as he writes. He includes details about each person when he can. He shows how each person is a part of God's story.

Psalms 139:1-18; Matthew 1:1-17; Acts 6:5-10; Acts 9:1-22; Acts 12:1-19; Acts 20:1-6; Hebrews 11

CONSTRUCTION ZONE:

Learn people's names and stories. Recognize their uniqueness in God and their contribution to the work of God.



DAILY DEVOTIONS

WEEK 9: NAMING

MONDAY: ACTS 6:5-10

Acts records the names of seven specific individuals chosen to minister to the Hellenistic widows. We first hear of Stephen when he is chosen for this work. Verse 8 provides a description of him: "Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power." What a beautiful epithet!

An epithet is a phrase describing key qualities of someone. What do you wish your epithet would be? How would you want to be described? Now think about 5 people in your life. How would you describe them? Think about their gifts and traits. Write their epithets below.

TUESDAY: PSALM 139:1-18

God knows your name. God knows you. The creator of the universe knows everything about you and loves you! Praise God for knowing and caring about you. Praise God for weaving your life together so that you could be in God's family.

WEDNESDAY: MATTHEW 1:1-17

The gospel of Matthew records Jesus' family tree. This genealogy is full of people with colorful histories. Some were known for their sins and others were known for their good deeds. Some aren't well known at all! But every single one of them is part of God's family tree. You are part of God's family tree, too. Every person who follows Jesus is part of God's family tree. God welcomes us in even when we fall short. Our claim to fame isn't that we did something memorable, but we are proud members of God's family.

Think through the people you notice at church. Every one of them is part of God's family. Whose name do you need to learn this week? Learn someone's name and recognize that they are part of God's family tree.



THURSDAY: ACTS 12:1-19

This short account can seem a bit random, but it highlights how the author of Acts includes every name he knows – no matter their status or the grandness of their action. Rhoda is simply a servant who had faith that the church's prayers were answered and Peter was free. This small act of faithfulness is remembered forever because Luke made sure to record it! Who do you know who has demonstrated faith in God whether in big or small ways? Recall their names and write them below.

FRIDAY: ACTS 20:1-6

We hardly know anything about Sopater, Aristarchus, Gaius, Tychicus*, and Trophimus. The book of Acts only records their names once or twice. These quick mentions tell us something important – they accompanied Paul on his journey. This mattered to the mission of God. They are a part of God's story. We interact with so many people who are a part of God's story. We don't want to miss knowing them and naming them. Go to the Construction Zone on page 88 to see what it could look like for you to use this building block.

**Ethan's heart is broken by Tychicus' inclusion here since Ethan could go on for hours about Tychicus' important contribution to the work of God. To learn about Tychicus, buy Ethan breakfast and prepare for a long lecture about the significance of Tychicus.*

OPEN:

What's your full name? Do you like your name?

WATCH THE TEACHING VIDEO AT
WWW.FCC-JC.ORG/BLOCKS

VIDEO RESPONSE:

- What stood out to you in the video teaching?
- What do we learn about God's love for every individual from all the names that show up in the book of Acts?
- The speaker talked about two different tools you can use to begin learning people's names this week. What is a tool you can use to remember people's names this week?

STUDY:

Read Acts 9:1-22

- How does Ananias respond to the Lord's instructions?
- How does the Lord describe Saul's future ministry? (v. 15)
- What does Saul do as a result of his healing? (v. 20-22)

Read Acts 22:12-16

- How does Paul describe Ananias?
- What does Ananias tell Paul about his future?

Ananias's name is hardly remembered. It would be easy to forget his ministry since it's mentioned so quickly. But Ananias's faithfulness to God mattered. He made it possible for Paul to go into the world preaching to the Gentiles.



It is good for us to recognize and name people like this.

If we're going to use the building block of Naming we need to start practicing using it! Go to the construction zone on page 88 to explore how to build with this material. Then, come back and finish the lesson with the closing prayer below.

CLOSING PRAYER

Ask each person to say the name of someone who encouraged them in their walk with Jesus. Then thank God for each person. Say each name aloud as you pray. Pray the words of Hebrews 12:1-3 to finish your prayer.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Hebrews 11

November 1 is All Saints Day – a holiday where we celebrate followers of Jesus, whether known or unknown. Many Christians take time on this day to acknowledge and be encouraged by the many followers of Jesus who came before us. These people model faithfulness to us.

If it weren't for them, we might not know Jesus today! The early church shared the good news so far that it took hold of communities around the world and reached us here today. Praise God for working through the faithful ones before us so that we could hear of the good news of Jesus today.



To make sure we're building a church with the block of naming, we want to make sure we have a practice of naming. Use the prompts below to help you. Don't feel the need to engage with every prompt. Go through the ones that seem most helpful to you or your group and see how God convicts you to start building.

The prompts are here to help you build!



1 LEARNING NAMES

List the names of people you interact with this week and write down something about them. Challenge yourself – how many names can you learn this week? See if you can fill this page!

As you write the names down, ask yourself: what do I know about each of these people? Do I know their story? Do I know any ways I can pray for them? If not, who's someone on that list who you need to get to know more?



2 SEEING AND CELEBRATING

Who's someone you need to introduce yourself to this week? Whose name do you need to learn?

Remember this is bigger than just memorizing names. This building block is about seeing and celebrating every member of the body of Christ.

What makes you feel seen and celebrated?

How can you make other people feel seen and celebrated?





3

RECOGNIZING FAITHFUL SERVICE

Whose ministry might be overlooked that could be encouraged by a thank you from you? Even if you struggle to remember their name, reach out to thank someone today.

Who has encouraged or helped you in your walk with Jesus? Record as many names as you can and record what they did. How did they encourage you in your faith journey?

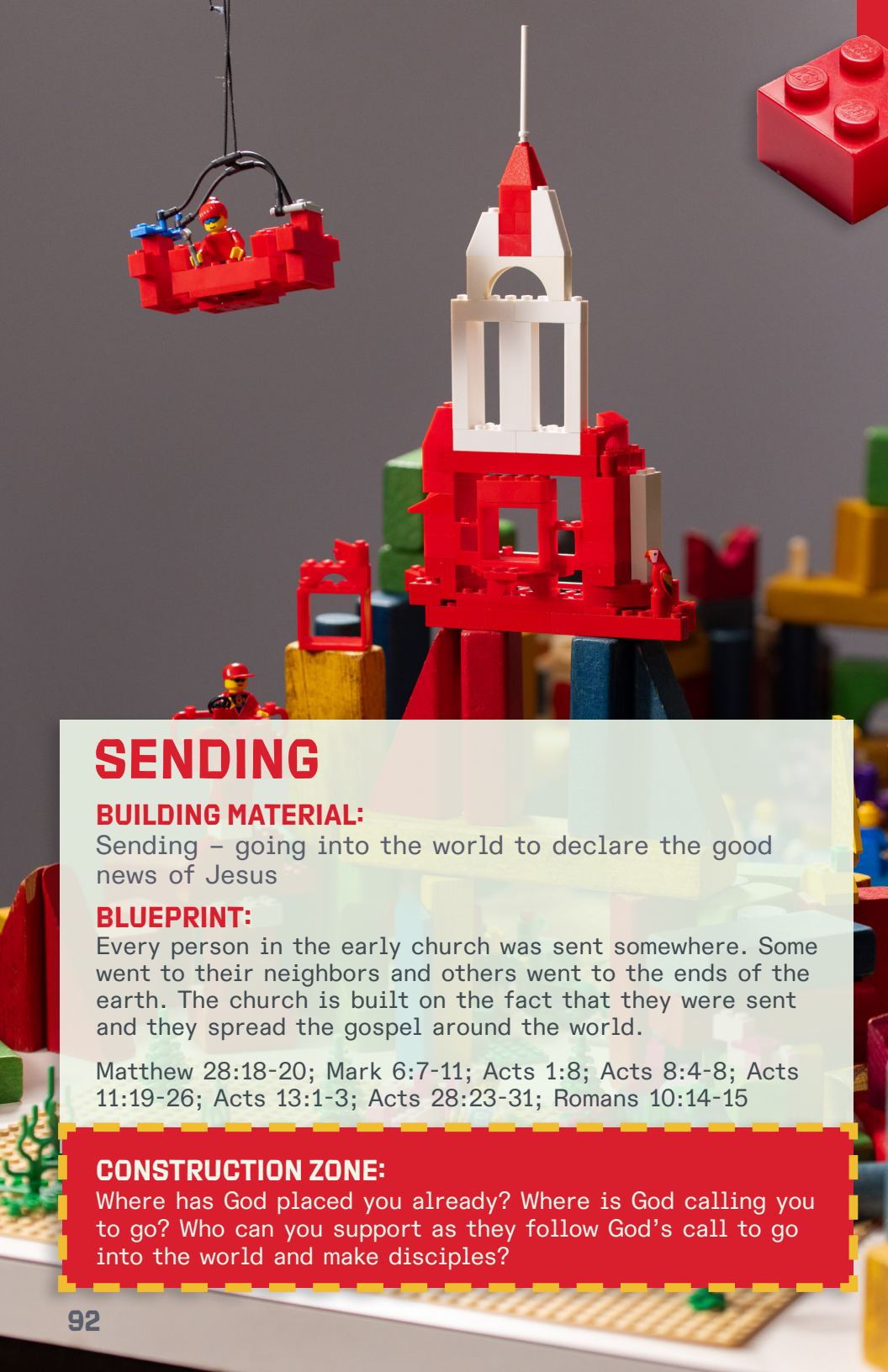
Who do you admire and look up to as they follow Jesus? These can be people you know or people in history. Share with someone how you've witnessed others faithfully serving God. Record the examples of their faithfulness below.

HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGE:

Let's have a friendly competition! Who can learn the most new names this week?

At the end of the week, share what you learned about each person. Did you enjoy learning more people's names? Try to take it a step farther beyond just their names. What do you know about these individuals? Do you know their stories? Do you know their prayer needs?

Pray together for the people you met this week. Thank God for each of these people.



SENDING

BUILDING MATERIAL:

Sending – going into the world to declare the good news of Jesus

BLUEPRINT:

Every person in the early church was sent somewhere. Some went to their neighbors and others went to the ends of the earth. The church is built on the fact that they were sent and they spread the gospel around the world.

Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 6:7-11; Acts 1:8; Acts 8:4-8; Acts 11:19-26; Acts 13:1-3; Acts 28:23-31; Romans 10:14-15

CONSTRUCTION ZONE:

Where has God placed you already? Where is God calling you to go? Who can you support as they follow God's call to go into the world and make disciples?

MONDAY: MATTHEW 28:18-20 & ACTS 1:8

These passages are both referred to as the Great Commission. Both carry a promise and an instruction. The promise is that we're never alone. Jesus is always with us. The instruction is that we're called to go into the world, declaring the gospel. Go to God in prayer today. Thank God for the gift of his presence and ask for the strength to follow his command to go into the world.

TUESDAY: ROMANS 10:14-15

Paul asks a sobering question here. How can someone believe in God unless someone tells them about him? As we read yesterday, all followers of Jesus are commanded to go into the world to tell others about Jesus. Where are you sent? Pray that God would reveal the people in your life who need to hear about Jesus. Pray that God would give you the opportunity to share the good news.

WEDNESDAY: MARK 6:7-11 & ACTS 13:1-3

These habits can seem intimidating and overwhelming if you try to tackle them alone, but we were never intended to do them alone. Scripture tells us that when Jesus sent his first disciples he sent them in pairs. Not only that, but when you look at the early church and their sending stories you find that they almost always travel in pairs. The same should be true for us as we live sent lives. Who is a person or people that can accompany you on the mission God has for you in the places where you live, work, and play?

THURSDAY: ACTS 8:4-8 & ACTS 11:19-24

Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. This is our model for being sent. The early church shared the word of God wherever they ended up. Usually being sent simply meant proclaiming the good news of Jesus wherever the disciples already were. Where has God already sent you? Go to the construction zone on page 98 to explore what being sent looks like for you.

FRIDAY: ACTS 28:23-31

And just like that, the book of Acts comes to an end. We have to rely on tradition to tell us about what eventually happens to Paul, but what we do know from letters and history is that Christians kept practicing the habits we've talked about in this series. They kept storytelling, helping, discipling, and sending. And as they did those things the kingdom of God kept unfolding in marvelous, unexpected, and powerful ways that transformed an empire and human history.

You have no idea what story God has in mind for you, but you can have confidence knowing that you'll be opening yourself up to be used by God if you commit to these practices and allow God to work in and through your life. Start by practicing one, then another, then another; and share the story of what God does along the way. Head to the next steps page on page 102 to make a plan for how you'll start using these building blocks.

OPEN:

Tell a story about a time where you were in the right place at the right time and God did something cool.

WATCH THE VIDEO AT
WWW.FCC-JC.ORG/BLOCKS

VIDEO RESPONSE:

- What stood out to you from the video?
- What does it mean to be a sent people?
- What does it mean to be a sending people?

STUDY:

Read Acts 11:19-26.

- Where did they go?
- What circumstances led them to go there?
- Who did they preach to?
- How did the people respond to the good news?
- How did God work through the circumstances of this passage?

The early church was a sent people. They shared the word of God wherever they went even when their circumstances were dire.

The early church was also a sending people.

Read Acts 13:1-3.

- What were Barnabas and Saul's roles in the early church?
- What did the Holy Spirit call them to?
- How did the church respond to this call?

VISIT THE CONSTRUCTION ZONE

If we're going to use the building block of Sending we need to start practicing using it! Go to the construction zone on page 98 to explore how to build with this material. Then, come back and finish the lesson with the closing prayer below.

CLOSING PRAYER

We've learned so much over the last 10 weeks about how God calls us to build God's church. Jump down to page 102 to choose how you'll get started using these building blocks to build the church. If you have time, share with one another the practices you'll use to start building.

Pray over your next steps together.

God, thank you for inviting us into your work around the world. Strengthen us to build your church. Guide our steps so that we stay on your mission. Give us wisdom and courage as we strive to follow you every day.

In Jesus' name we pray together,

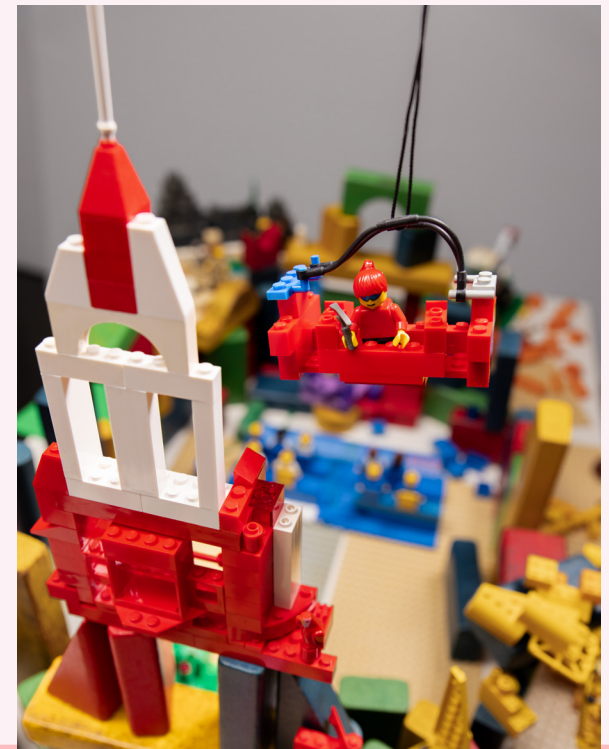
Amen.



FOR FURTHER STUDY

Read Matthew 9:35-38.

- What does it mean that the harvest is plentiful?
- What do you think Jesus means when he says the workers are few? Who are the workers? What do they do?
- Do you regularly pray for God to send more workers?
- How can we as a church support those who are sent into the harvest fields?



To make sure we're building a church with the block of sending, we want to make sure we have a practice of sending. Use the prompts below to help you. Don't feel the need to engage with every prompt. Go through the ones that seem most helpful to you or your group and see how God convicts you to start building.

The prompts are here to help you build!



1 YOUR MISSION FIELD

Where do you go during a typical week? God is sending you there just like God sent Paul to the temple and the marketplace. Throughout the week, keep a list of every place you go (people's homes, work, the gym, book club, etc.)

Do you view these places as your mission field? If not, try reframing your thinking:

- Instead of saying, "I go to work", say, "Jesus has sent me to my workplace."
- Instead of saying, "My kids play soccer", say, "Jesus sent me to this group of families."
- Now, you give it a try! Write down where Jesus has sent you.

2 NOTICING YOUR NEIGHBORS

Who is your neighbor? Most of the time we're sent to our backyard and God is just waiting for us to notice. Take some time during group to begin seeing who God has been sending you to in a new/renewed way.

- Fill out the grid below with 8 names of people who are around you (in your neighborhood, classroom, office, workout class, etc.)
- Then, write down a few things you know about each person.
- Relevant information about each person. (Facts you would know if you talked to the person once or twice.)
- In-Depth information (Facts you would know after meaningfully connecting with someone.)

Person 1:	Person 2:	Person 3:
Person 4:	Your name: -----	Person 5:
Person 6:	Person 7:	Person 8:



- How did you do? How much information were you able to add about the 8 people around you in your world?
- If you couldn't fill out every square, how could you widen your circle to include new people?
- If you couldn't fill out anything other than someone's name, then choose one person to learn one new thing about this week.
- As you look over these names, reflect on these questions:
 - What are these people's needs?
 - What would it look like to represent Jesus to them?

Pause before coming back to the group and pray for the one person you want to be a better neighbor to this week. Ask God to provide a clear opportunity to you.

3 SENDING

Sending is such a cool part of the life of the church, and it is an aspect of ministry that we at FCC are committed to upholding. Did you know that over the last decade, our church has sent dozens of interns and residents who are serving in ministry roles today?

We have people serving in all sorts of roles all around the world. Here are just some of the places we have sent people:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| • Colorado | • Indiana |
| • California | • New Hampshire |
| • Kentucky | • Cote d'Ivoire |
| • Maryland | • Thailand |
| • Tennessee | • Kenya |
| • Utah | • Indonesia |

Here are some of the types of ministry they're doing:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| • Worship ministry | • Connections & next steps |
| • Student ministry | • International missions |
| • Kids ministry | • And more! |
| • Campus ministry | |
| • Chaplaincy | |

Let's devote time to praying over those past interns and residents. Here is how we can pray for them:

- Thank God for the blessing they were to FCC.
- Pray over their current ministry – for blessing and support.
- Pray over them as people – for their lives, their health, their families, and their loved ones.
- Pray for their future ministries.

HOUSEHOLD CHALLENGE:

Take a walk around your neighborhood and pray for your neighbors by name. If you don't know them, pray for opportunities to meet them.

NEXT STEPS

You've made it! We've covered 10 habits over 10 weeks. This can be overwhelming. To make sure we don't stop using our building blocks, consider the chart below. Pick a few blocks to focus on. If you try to do all 10, you probably won't build with any.

BUILDING BLOCK	PRACTICE IN MY LIFE	PRACTICE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH
STORYTELLING	Having a regular devotional time Attending church weekly Taking notes on the sermon Sharing the good news with the people in my life Joining or starting a small group to study the Bible Writing down the ways I've seen God at work in my life	Taking communion together Sharing God's story through weekly sermons Sharing people's stories of how God has worked in their lives
PARTNERING	Inviting someone to serve with you Learning from someone Joining a ministry team Finding your Barnabas or Timothy	Building serving teams Serving and worshipping with other congregations Partnering with Christian workers around the world

BUILDING BLOCK	PRACTICE IN MY LIFE	PRACTICE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH
DEVOTING	Reading your Bible at a specific time everyday Journaling your prayers Praying before each meal	Praying with others Gathering for worship service Participating in communion
HELPING	Identifying your gifts and using them Serving those in need around you Adopting a posture of love toward others	Showing up with food and company with someone who is grieving
SHARING	Opening my home in hospitality Sharing my resources with those in need Giving to the church Supporting missionaries	Giving over 17% of our church budget to missions and outreach Opening our church facility to bless our community
DISCIPLING	Joining a small group Encouraging someone as they follow Jesus Pointing someone toward Jesus Receiving instruction or correction on how to follow Jesus	Serving as a student or kids leader to disciple the next generation

BUILDING BLOCK	PRACTICE IN MY LIFE	PRACTICE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH
HUMILITY	Doing good anonymously Repenting of your sins and turning to God Not bragging or making yourself the center of attention	Making God the center of my worship rather than my own desires and preferences
EMBRACING	Reaching out to people who aren't naturally in my orbit Including others in my community Extending invitations	Welcoming people of all backgrounds into the church Programming in a way that makes everyone feel included
NAMING	Introducing yourself to people at church who you don't yet know Spending time learning people's stories	Telling stories of how God worked through those who came before us
SENDING	Identifying where you are sent Inviting people to church Identifying your mission field	Welcoming and supporting interns and residents Partnering with church plants

Pick one habit to build your life and one habit to build the church. Start simple – pick something you think you can actually commit to either from this chart or from your ideas throughout the study.

I will build my life with these building blocks by:

I will build the church with these building blocks by:

Let's go build!

WORSHIP. SERVE. DISCIPLE. TELL.

FOR EVERYONE.

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