

SHOCK THE WORLD GROUP GUIDE



Find the preaching series by the same name at <https://mountaincc.org/sermons>

What Are Groups?

Why do we do groups?

We believe that the Church isn't just a place—it's a people. At Mountain, groups are where that concept truly comes to life. We do groups because we believe that transformation happens in circles, not just rows. In groups, we open God's Word, open our hearts, and open our lives to one another. It's where we're reminded that we're not alone in our questions or struggles, and that God uses community to shape us into who He created us to be. Whether you're brand new to faith or ready to go deeper, this is your place to grow. Because when we let God work in us through others, He equips us to be part of something unstoppable—His mission to bring good to the world.

How does this work?

The agenda for each session is pretty simple. We're going to start by gathering with others and easing into some discussion. We will then explore the Bible by reading scripture together. Our groups will be following along with the sermon series on the weekend, so make sure you're connecting on the weekend! Finally, there are questions to guide the group in reflecting. Making time to pray at the beginning, during, and/or at the end of the session is welcomed and encouraged as well!

A quick word about the guide - Each week incorporates some "At-Home Practice." These are meant to be helpful tools as we grow towards Jesus together. If you're able to incorporate some of these things into your rhythms during the week, great! If not, still come to groups and participate. Groups are not about perfection or about sharing what we already know. So if you're new to this all - great! You're in the right place. I hope this experience will help you connect with God and others on a deeper level. If you're overwhelmed by the material, no problem! There are no grades in groups, and it's not a place to come and achieve. All you need to do is bring whatever version of yourself you are on a particular day, and be open to what God has for you. And guess what? Your questions and insights will most certainly help and challenge everyone else in the group. If groups are part of your normal rhythm, then you're in the right place too. Be helpful and be welcoming to those who are new. And also keep yourself open to God's leading. It doesn't matter if you've read the Bible 100 times or you're opening it up for the first time., all Scripture is God-breathed and alive - so there's something new and fresh that God has for you.

A quick word about this Shock The World Study - We will be learning about our church's vision for the next five years over the course of this fall. Our weekend services will be designed with strong biblical teaching as well as challenges for all of us to do together as a community and as individuals. In our groups during the week, we will include some biblical learning, but we will also be experiencing what we are learning on the weekend. To use a school metaphor, we'll want to think about the weekend like the lecture; groups as the lab. Instead of talking about prayer, we will be praying. Instead of talking about eating together, we're going to eat together. Our hope is that we're able to take steps forward in our journey with Jesus as we learn Jesus-shaped information in Jesus-shaped relationships through Jesus-shaped experiences.

Group covenant

This experience will be the best it can be for everyone if we trust one another. So each person commits to helping create an environment that allows for honesty and openness. That means everyone is asked to enter into an agreement of confidentiality, not sharing with outsiders what is said during group discussions and prayer times. Additionally, we commit to making every effort to be present for every group gathering and be mindful of these Group Guidelines:

- Remember that Jesus is our teacher and we're here to learn from him.
- Respect one another's opinions, even those who are different from our own.
- Take a posture of seeking to understand when we are confused or disagree with what someone says - to listen well, be slow to speak, and ask questions with curiosity.
- Take turns sharing and listening.
- Engage in weekly worship services and engage with the material in this booklet so you are fully prepared.

I agree to attend group meetings and keep all things shared by my group members confidential at all times.

SIGNATURE

Week 1 | GROUP ORIENTATION DAY

Let's Get Started!

Over the next several weeks, we will be journeying with God and one another. So let's take some time getting to know each other.

Answer the following questions:

1. What is your favorite song to belt out in the shower or blast in the car?
2. If you could be an expert in one thing (no effort required), what would it be and why?
3. Do you have any unique talents or random skills? If so, what is it?

Fun Option To This:

Write the answers to these three questions on a card anonymously. Place them all in the center of the table. Take turns reading the cards and trying to guess who wrote that card.

Overview of the Semester

Your group leader will lead you through what to expect over the next few weeks.

Together as a Group:

- **What are you hoping God might do in your life this season?**
- **What's something you're hoping for during our time together as a group?**
- **What's one thing you need to *let go of* to be fully present here?**
- **What makes it hard to trust people? What helps you feel safe? Worded another way - what would be helpful for us to know as we start journeying together.**

ACTIVITY: Shock The World Challenge

Your group leader received a poster for your group that will represent your Shock The World journey together. Each group member will get a lightning bolt sticker for you to write one word that represents how you can “shock the world” this year. After you’ve thought about your word, place your lightning bolt sticker on the poster and write your word next to it. When everyone is done, you can read them all aloud together. You can pull this out each week and put it at the center of your group table.

Read Hebrews 10:19-25 to finish the group time together.

“So, friends, we can now—without hesitation—walk right up to God, into “the Holy Place.” Jesus has cleared the way by the blood of his sacrifice, acting as our priest before God. The “curtain” into God’s presence is his body. So let’s do it—full of belief, confident that we’re presentable inside and out. Let’s keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. He always keeps his word. Let’s see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshiping together as some do but spurring each other on, especially as we see the big Day approaching.”

Going Deeper:

If you wish to do further learning from we discussed today, watch the [Love People / The Mountain Walk - Part 2 / Ben Cachiarias](#) on YouTube or read “Life Together” by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Week 2 | This Is Us/You

At Home Practice:

In preparation for the next group conversation and to practice connecting with God through Scripture, work through these activities:

- ☐ Day 1 - Read Matthew 5:1-12. Circle or highlight the ways in which the way of the Kingdom of God is shocking.
- ☐ Day 2 - Watch The BibleProject's [The Story of the Bible](#) video (*can be found on YouTube*) to hear the LARGER story that we are all a part of. What surprised you or gave you a new perspective?
- ☐ Day 3 - Listen to Matthew 5-7 (The Sermon on the Mount) in audio form. The Public Reading of Scripture app is a great tool in order to listen to it.
- ☐ Day 4 - Reflect on the Group Discussion Questions for this week. Reflect on where God has placed you -- your work, hobbies, heritage, life stage, or passions. Where might you be able to “become all things to all people” this week? Write down one specific way you can move towards someone with care and curiosity.
- ☐ Day 5 - Attend a Mountain service to hear this week’s message on this subject. Think about “What is God saying to me?” and “What am I going to do about it?” in response to this message.

Helpful tip: Get a notebook or journal that you can use to write notes for reflective questions and group discussion notes.

Let's Get Started:

What's one time you saw someone do something so unexpected—so good or bold—that it made you stop and take notice?

Big Idea:

We will "shock the world" by showing a stunning picture of the real Jesus which draws all people into a Jesus-shaped community that truly B.L.E.S.S.es, fueled by developing and deploying Jesus-shaped leaders.

Sermon Notes:

Read Mark 1:40-45 & John 8:2-11

Mark 1:40-45

40 A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."

41 Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" **42** Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

43 Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: **44** "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." **45** Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

John 8:2-11

2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. **3** The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group **4** and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. **5** In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" **6** They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. **7** When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." **8** Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. **10** Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

11 "No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Together as a Group:

- From this weekend's message, what was inspiring or challenging to you and how are you processing that? If not everyone in your group had a chance to hear this week's message, have someone explain the heart of this weekend's message in a few sentences.

- How does seeing Jesus as “shocking” change your view of faith or mission?
- Think about the scriptures we just read: Can you think of a time when Jesus met you in a place of shame, isolation, or uncleanness and brought you healing or dignity? How do you tend to respond to your own failure or the failures of others? How might Jesus’ response challenge or change that?
- Paul writes to the Corinthians (2 Cor 5:20) saying that we are Christ’s ambassadors in the world. What does being Christ’s ambassador look like in your daily life? Talk about what your “average” week looks like and who you come across.
- Brainstorm together as a group about what it could look like to live into this vision together!

Going Deeper:

If you wish to do further study and reading on the verses that we discussed today, watch the [Jesus Said 2,000 Words That Changed Human History](#) from the BibleProject or read “The Deeply Formed Life” by Rich Villodas

Week 3 | Jesus-Shaped Community

At Home Practice:

In preparation for the next group conversation and to practice connecting with God through Scripture, work through these activities:

- ☐ Day 1 - Read Matthew 5-7 slowly. Where in your life do you find it hardest to live out Jesus' teaching, and how might practicing this in community (rather than alone) change that? Underline or highlight any parts that are hard for you.
- ☐ Day 2 - Look back at the parts that you underlined or highlighted yesterday in Matthew 5-7. Journal about why these feel difficult. Ask God to open your eyes and your heart to the way that He is challenging you to grow in this season of your life.
- ☐ Day 3 - Pray through areas where you are currently facing resistance--whether from others, your own insecurities, or spiritual challenges. Ask God for courage, wisdom, and grace to keep moving forward through the open doors He's placed in front of you.
- ☐ Day 4 - Attend a Mountain service to hear this week's message on this subject. Think about "What is God saying to me?" and "What am I going to do about it?" in response to this message.
- ☐ Day 5 - Reflect on the Group Discussion Questions. Add any questions that you had about the reading from this week - whether it be about reading the Bible in general or specific things from this week's sermon that was unclear or confusing. You can share those questions when you meet as a group and see if you can discover and learn together.

Helpful tip: Get a notebook or journal that you can use to write notes for reflective questions and group discussion notes.

Let's Get Started:

Share a time when you felt truly loved or accepted by a community.

Big Idea:

We will "shock the world" by showing a stunning picture of the real Jesus which draws all people into a Jesus-shaped community that truly B.L.E.S.S.es, fueled by developing and deploying Jesus-shaped leaders.

Sermon Notes:

Read Acts 2:44-47 and Romans 12

Acts 2:44-47

The Fellowship of the Believers

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. **43** Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. **44** All the believers were together and had everything in common. **45** They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. **46** Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, **47** praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Romans 12

A Living Sacrifice

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. **2** Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Humble Service in the Body of Christ

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. **4** For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, **5** so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. **6** We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; **7** if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; **8** if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Love in Action

9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. **10** Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. **11** Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. **12** Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. **13** Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. **15** Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. **16** Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. **17** Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. **18** If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. **19** Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

20 On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Together as a Group:

- **What does it mean to be a Jesus-shaped community? What are the key characteristics?**
- Jesus shocked people by who he served and how he served them. He ate with the outcasts of society. He touched and healed people who were sick. He took lowly positions of service despite being a king himself...and then he said to go and do likewise. **What would it look like for me/us to serve others in a way that is shocking to the world?**
- Look back at Romans 12 and how Paul describes a loving Christian community. **Which of these do you see most in the Mountain community? Which ones are the most challenging for you and for us?**
- **How can our group help each other grow in these qualities?**
- **What barriers might keep us from fully living as a Jesus-shaped community. How can we address them?**

- **Talk about one way that you want to commit to grow to be more loving to your group.**
- **As a group, talk about ways that you can serve or bless someone this week. This could be all of you doing something together or everyone doing the same thing this week in your context.**

Going Deeper:

If you wish to do further study and reading on the verses that we discussed today, watch the [What Happened at Pentecost and Why It's Important](#) from the BibleProject or read “Made For People” by Justin Whitmel Earley

Week 4 | B - Begin With Prayer

B.L.E.S.S.

At Home Practice:

In preparation for the next group conversation and to practice connecting with God through Scripture, work through these activities:

- ☐ Day 1 - Read Luke 5:15-16. Many of us would say that Jesus was the most important man to walk the earth, and yet, He made time and space to spend time with God. Even as his ministry grew, even as the needs increased, “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” **Reflect on this: What does this teach us about making space to pray and connect with God, even when life is busy? How do you need to reorient your schedule in order to withdraw and be with Jesus (daily, weekly, etc.)**
- ☐ Day 2 - Read Matthew 6:9-13. The majority of the battle is creating space to connect with God regularly. The next question is - what do I do when I make the space? Simply put, prayer is “the real you and the real God having a real conversation.” Sometimes, having a guide can be helpful though. When his disciples asked him to teach them how to pray, he taught them the Lord’s prayer. **Take time to pray slowly through the Lord’s prayer, pausing at each phrase to let it shape your words for how to talk with God today.**
- ☐ Day 3 - Get outside and take a prayer walk. You can do this through your neighborhood, your town, or your school or workplace. As you walk, silently pray for the people represented in the homes, offices, or desks that you pass.
- ☐ Day 4 - Read John 15:4-5. Jesus invites us to “abide in him”, which means, to dwell or to be in a relationship with a deep, ongoing connection. Set a timer for ten minutes, and turn your phone off and sit quietly with God. You can sit somewhere with your feet on the ground and your palms on your lap facing up as a way to posture your body to receive what God has for you. Ask God to shape your heart or simply pray, “God, I’m here, ready to be with you.”
- ☐ Day 5 - Attend a Mountain service to hear this week’s message on this subject. Think about “What is God saying to me?” and “What am I going to do about it?” in response to this message. If you’re ready for a challenge, grab a card from the B.L.E.S.S. Wall, and implement that challenge into your life. Talk with your group about it over the next several weeks.

Let's Get Started:

If you could have a coffee with anyone in the world and pray with them, who would it be?

Big Idea:

Prayer is the starting point of living a missional life. Before Jesus acted, He prayed. If we want to bless others, we must begin by inviting God into the process.

Sermon Notes:

Read Colossians 4:2-6

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. **3** And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. **4** Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. **5** Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. **6** Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Together as a Group:

EXPERIENCE: We will have a time of being led in prayer and worship together as a community. Afterwards, we will meet in our small groups to talk about the experience.

- **Let's talk about prayer - how have you been able to cultivate a life of prayer?**
- **What are some of the challenges you experience when it comes to praying? How do you think you need to overcome those challenges - whether it's an action or the way you think about prayer? Share with your group.**
- **How about praying with others? Have you had experience praying with others? What has that experience been like with joining in with others or being prayed for? How comfortable do you feel praying aloud, and how can you become more comfortable praying with others?**
- **How can we commit as a group to cultivating a life of abiding in Jesus and praying for others?**

Going Deeper:

If you wish to do further study and reading on the verses that we discussed today, watch the ["If You're Struggling With What To Pray About. Watch This"](#) from the BibleProject or read "Get Your Life Back" by John Eldredge

Week 5 | L - Listen

B.L.E.S.S.

At Home Practice:

In preparation for the next group conversation and to practice connecting with God through Scripture, work through these activities:

- ☐ Day 1 - Practice listening prayer. Read John 10:27. Sit quietly for 10 minutes with a notebook open. Ask God: "What do you want me to hear today?" Write down any impressions, thoughts, verses, or reminders that come to mind.
- ☐ Day 2 - Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-13. Paul reminds us that the body of Christ is made up of many different parts, and yet all are unified in Christ. **Reflect: How might listening to someone with a different story or background help me see more of God's kingdom?**
- ☐ Day 3 - Read Proverbs 20:5. **Reflect: What does it look like for me to slow down, ask questions, and really listen in order to understand someone's story and needs?**
- ☐ Day 4 - Ask a friend, family member, or coworker how their week is going and ask good follow up questions. If you don't know what to ask, look at some prompting questions from mountaincc.org/bless to get some ideas. Intentionally spend more time listening than talking. Notice what you learn when you give them space.
- ☐ Day 5 - Attend a Mountain service to hear this week's message on this subject. Think about "What is God saying to me?" and "What am I going to do about it?" in response to this message. If you're ready for a challenge, grab a card from the B.L.E.S.S. Wall, and implement that challenge into your life. Talk with your group about it over the next several weeks.

Helpful tip: Get a notebook or journal that you can use to write notes for reflective questions and group discussion notes.

Let's Get Started:

What's the funniest or strangest thing that you've overheard in public?

Big Idea:

Listening is one of the most loving things we can do. Jesus listened deeply to people and calls us to do the same.

Sermon Notes:

Read John 10:27 and James 1:19

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

- John 10:27

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

- James 1:19

Together as a Group:

EXPERIENCE: Practice listening with someone different than you — either a different gender, generation, or race. Pair up and spend time asking and answering questions. Afterwards, we'll return to our groups to share about the experience.

Prompting Questions for Conversation

The goal is to listen well and learn from someone who is different than you. Listen actively to learn, not to respond. Avoid jumping in to share parts of your own story in what you hear, but give space to the other person to truly hear them.

- **Start off with a Would You Rather question. Use this one or make up your own:**
 - **Would you rather travel to space or explore the deep ocean?**
 - **The listener must follow up with one question “Why” or “Tell me more” (Not with their own answer)**
- **What is something that makes you feel connected to others and your purpose?**
- **When do you feel most misunderstood by others?**
- **What’s something you wish more people would take the time to really listen to in your story?**
- **What’s one joy or strength that you bring to the table that others can learn from?**

Debrief as a small group afterwards.

Break into groups of 3-4 in your small group to talk about each other's experiences. Be sure to protect the confidentiality of what was shared with you. It's okay to say things like "I was with someone of a different gender, different generation, different race, and I learned from his or her experience that they experience the world differently from me."

- **What did you notice about yourself as you focused on listening to hear rather than listening to respond?**
- **How might intentional listening change the way we build community and relationships outside of this group?**

Going Deeper:

If you wish to do further study and reading on the verses that we discussed today, watch the [Be The Bee #164 | The Ministry of Listening](#) on YouTube or read "The Listening Life: Embracing Attentiveness in a World of Distraction" by Adam S. McHugh

Week 6 | E - Eat

B.L.E.S.S.

At Home Practice:

In preparation for the next group conversation and to practice connecting with God through Scripture, work through these activities:

- ☐ Day 1 - Read Luke 5:27-32. Why do you think Jesus often shared meals with people who were on the margins? Who in your life might God be inviting you to sit at the table with?
- ☐ Day 2 - Read Revelation 3:20. You, too, are also someone who Jesus has brought close. He's invited you to the table. If you are eating a meal alone this week, imagine Jesus eating with you. If you eat all of your meals with people, take a few moments alone to pray and thank God before your meal. Spend time this week thanking Jesus for the way He shares life with you.
- ☐ Day 3 - If you do not have a regular rhythm of eating with others, eat a meal with others every day this week. **If you are single and/or work remotely, think creatively of how you can do this. You may want to schedule one meal this week or consider using FaceTime to call and share a meal with someone. The point is to share a table with others in some what of a regular rhythm.*
- ☐ Day 4 - Make a list of 5-10 people that you have never eaten with before that you can plan on inviting to grab coffee or a meal with. The challenge will come later. For today, pray and write down any names God brings to mind to have you step out of your comfort zone to invite someone new to the table. *Helpful tip: Keep a running list in your journal of people you've shared meals with and what you learned about them.*
- ☐ Day 5 - Attend a Mountain service to hear this week's message on this subject. Think about "What is God saying to me?" and "What am I going to do about it?" in response to this message. If you're ready for a challenge, grab a card from the B.L.E.S.S. Wall, and implement that challenge into your life. Talk with your group about it over the next several weeks.

Helpful tip: Get a notebook or journal that you can use to write notes for reflective questions and group discussion notes.

Let's Get Started:

What's your go-to comfort food?

Big Idea:

Meals are more than food--they are a way to practice hospitality, break down barriers, build trust, and create space for God's Kingdom to break in.

Sermon Notes:

Read Luke 5:27–32 and Acts 2:42–47

Luke 5:27-32

27 After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. “Follow me,” Jesus said to him, **28** and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

29 Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. **30** But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

31 Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. **32** I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Acts 2:42-47

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. **43** Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. **44** All the believers were together and had everything in common. **45** They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. **46** Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, **47** praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Together as a Group:

EXPERIENCE: Today, we’re going to eat together, but we’re going to do this as a way of practicing what it would be like to eat with someone you’ve never eaten with before. Mix up the seating so you’re eating with people you don’t normally sit with. You’ll be given some prompts to start the conversation. Do this for 30 minutes

Prompting Questions for Meal

The goal is to connect and learn from someone who is different from you. Something happens when you share a meal and a table with someone. So we want to be people who are prayerful and good listeners. We want to help make people feel comfortable and ask good questions to get to know them more.

- **Start off with a Would You Rather question. Use this one or make up your own:**
 - Would you rather only be able to eat pizza for the rest of your life OR never be able to eat pizza again?
 - Would you rather have spaghetti noodles for hair OR maple syrup for sweat?

- Would you rather eat everything with chopsticks (forever) OR eat everything with your hands (forever)?
- Would you rather always have dessert before dinner OR never get dessert again?
- Would you rather give up salty snacks forever OR give up sweet snacks forever?
- **Some conversations starters**
 - What's the strangest or most adventurous thing you've ever eaten?
 - If you could invite anyone--living, fictional, or historical--to share a meal with you, who would it be and why?
 - What's a meal you've shared that you'll never forget—and why? (Could be because of the food, the people, or the moment itself.)
 - When you think about meals growing up, what's one food or tradition that feels meaningful to you?

Debrief as a small group afterwards.

Break into groups of 3-4 in your small group to talk about each other's experiences. Be sure to not protect the confidentiality of what was shared with you. It's okay to say things like "I was with someone of a different gender, different generation, different race, and I learned from his or her experience that they experience the world differently from me."

- **How did it feel to share food, fun, and intentional conversation with someone new?**
- **Share with the group the names of new people you could eat with. Why are they coming to mind?**
- **What's one step you can take this week to eat with someone outside of this group? Here's a tip: Your first step might not be an invitation to eat. You may need to get their name first or start by introducing yourself and starting with small talk.**

Going Deeper:

If you wish to do further study and reading on the verses that we discussed today, read "The Common Rule" by Justin Whitmel Earley

CHANGE IN LOCATION NEXT WEEK: ALL GROUPS WILL MEET AT THE MOUNTAIN ROAD CAMPUS IN THE NEW LIFE CENTER AUDITORIUM FROM 6:30-8:30 PM

Find the preaching series by the same name at <https://mountaincc.org/sermons>

Week 7 | S - Serve

B.L.E.S.S.

At Home Practice:

In preparation for the next group conversation and to practice connecting with God through Scripture, work through these activities:

- ☐ Day 1 - Pay attention to who you come in contact with during the week. Is there anyone you see regularly during the week? In other words - where does God have you positioned already?
- ☐ Day 2 - Read John 13:1-17 and Philippians 2:1-11. Looking at Jesus' example, what is God's heart towards serving others? How might pride or busyness or fear be getting in the way of serving others. **Pray:** *God, help me to have a heart like yours to serve all people.*
- ☐ Day 3 - Who is someone in your life that models servant leadership really well? Write them a note or send them a text thanking them for their example. Tell them what you see and how that inspires you to do the same.
- ☐ Day 4 - Read Isaiah 58:6-10. What kind of serving does God desire from people who follow him? Where do you see needs in your community that line up with this passage? Write down some ideas of how you can meet those needs or research organizations you can partner with that help people.
- ☐ Day 5 - Attend a Mountain service to hear this week's message on this subject. Think about "What is God saying to me?" and "What am I going to do about it?" in response to this message. If you're ready for a challenge, grab a card from the B.L.E.S.S. Wall, and implement that challenge into your life. Talk with your group about it over the next several weeks.

Helpful tip: Get a notebook or journal that you can use to write notes for reflective questions and group discussion notes.

Big Idea:

Jesus calls His followers to embody His love in practical, surprising ways--serving out of the overflow of His grace and love. We are ambassadors of His kingdom wherever we live, work, play, and go.

Sermon Notes:

Read Mark 10:42-45 and 2 Corinthians 5:17-20

Mark 10:42-45

42 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. **43** Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, **44** and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. **45** For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

2 Corinthians 5:17-20

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! **18** All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: **19** that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. **20** We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Together as a Group:

EXPERIENCE: Missional Living Gathering - What is missional living? Then, we will brainstorm and dream of how we can live into our calling and mission field

Missional Living Notes:

Journaling Prompts

- **Jesus often shocked people by how He served. What's an example that stands out to you? If you are new to reading the Bible, you'll have some people in your group that will share some cool stories. Take note of them and go and read them this week.**
- **Think about the circles you spend time in regularly (home, work, hobbies, activities). Which of those has the potential to be a "mission field"? (A mission field is a place where you can bring the presence of God and influence of the Kingdom of God)**
- **What holds you back from seeing yourself as a missionary in your everyday life?**
- **Imagine if your group collectively shocked your community with unexpected kindness or service -- what might that look like?**

Going Deeper:

If you wish to do further study and reading on the verses that we discussed today, watch the "The Gospel of the Kingdom" from the BibleProject or read "The Creative Minority" by Jon Tyson

Week 8 | S - Share Your Story

B.L.E.S.S.

At Home Practice:

In preparation for the next group conversation and experience of Sharing Your Story, work through these activities to help you prepare:

- ☐ Day 1 - Read Acts 26:1-23. Why do you think it is important for us to share our stories? What stands out to you about how Paul told his story?
- ☐ Day 2 - **Writing Your Story** | If you are a follower of Jesus, write what your life was like before following Jesus. If you are still exploring what you believe, write about what life was like before joining this group.
 - What were you looking for?
 - What struggles or questions defined that season of your life?
- ☐ Day 3 - **Writing Your Story** | If you are a follower of Jesus, write about how you encountered Jesus. If you are still exploring what you believe, write about what your experience has been during this group so far.
 - What were the moments, people, or events that influenced you?
 - What has been surprising, challenging, or encouraging?
- ☐ Day 4 - **Writing Your Story** | If you are a follower of Jesus, write what your life was like since following Jesus. If you are still exploring what you believe, write about what life looks like now as a result of this group.
 - What has changed?
 - Where do you still feel God at work in your life?
 - What is one area of hope or transformation that you want to pursue?
- ☐ Day 5 - Attend a Mountain service to hear this week's message on this subject. Think about "What is God saying to me?" and "What am I going to do about it?" in response to this message. If you're ready for a challenge, grab a card from the B.L.E.S.S. Wall, and implement that challenge into your life. Talk with your group about it over the next several weeks.
- ☐ Day 6 - **Writing Your Story** | Depending on how long you wrote, try to get your story down to 5-10 minutes long. If it's helpful, read through a common theme that you see in your story (i.e. I was looking for acceptance in all of the wrong

places. Now I know I am accepted by Jesus. Other examples: looking for love, looking for success, looking for belonging, etc.). All of the details of your story are important! Remember that we are sharing our stories so someone can see and hear of God's power and love. We get to help others hear that when we can tell a story with a consistent train of thought. Pray about what details are important to share in your story and what details are important details but not needed in a 5-10 minute telling of your story.

Helpful tip: Get a notebook or journal that you can use to write notes for reflective questions and group discussion notes.

Let's Get Started:

If your life was a movie, what genre would it be (comedy, adventure, drama, etc.)?
BONUS: Which actor would play you?

Big Idea:

Everyone has a story! Everyone! God can use your story to bless others and point them toward Him - no matter where you are in your walk with Jesus.

Sermon Notes:

Read Acts 26:1-23

1 Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.”

So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: **2** “King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, **3** and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

4 “The Jewish people all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. **5** They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that I conformed to the strictest sect of our religion, living as a Pharisee. **6** And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our ancestors that I am on trial today. **7** This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. King Agrippa, it is because of this hope that these Jews are accusing me. **8** Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

9 “I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. **10** And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord’s people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. **11** Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.

12 “On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. **13** About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. **14** We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’

15 “Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’

“ ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. **16** ‘Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. **17** I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them **18** to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

19 “So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. **20** First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds. **21** That is why some Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. **22** But God has helped me to this very day; so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen— **23** that the Messiah would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would bring the message of light to his own people and to the Gentiles.”

Together as a Group:

- After reading Acts 26:1-23 as a group, go back and underline his “Before”, circle his “encounter with Jesus”, and box or highlight his “After/Since”

EXPERIENCE: We will be breaking into groups of 3-4 within your small group to share your story. This will have required some homework to have been done beforehand, so that group time can be sharing and debriefing the experience.

After Sharing Stories:

- What was it like to write and share your story this week?
- What was it like to hear the stories of others?
- How could you see God use your story in your mission field?

Week 9 | Shocking The World Around The World

A Note About This Week:

All of us have been called to "shock the world" by showing a stunning picture of the real Jesus which draws all people into a Jesus-shaped community that truly B.L.E.S.S.es, fueled by developing and deploying Jesus-shaped leaders. During GIC Week, we will have missionaries visit all of our campus group gatherings to connect with Mountain's Global Missionaries. It is designed for every Mountain Group, including home groups, to pause from their regular rhythm and build relationships, hear stories of what God is doing around the world, and to take a next step in partnering with our Global Missionaries. We will have over 25 Global Partners together with us for idea sharing, storytelling, brainstorming and encouragement. We will start by sharing a meal with missionaries to get a chance to connect on a personal level followed by a panel conversation of what the life of a missionary is like and what God's doing around the world. So, come to your campus ready to eat, learn, connect and mobilize.

How does this fit into Shock The World and Global Impact Celebration?

Global Impact Celebration (GIC) has always been about widening our lens to see what God is doing across the globe and calling our church to join Him in it.

- **Shock the World** calls us to show a stunning picture of the real Jesus. GIC Groups Night gives every person in a Group the chance to witness that picture lived out through our global mission partners and then consider how to embody it in their neighborhoods, workplaces, and networks.
- **Shock the World** is fueled by developing and deploying Jesus-shaped leaders. Groups Night is leadership training in disguise—it awakens people to their role as everyday missionaries and prompts them to think beyond comfort and convenience.
- **Shock the World** envisions a community that truly B.L.E.S.S.es. Groups Night equips Groups to practice those rhythms (Begin with prayer, Listen, Eat, Serve, Share) not just locally but globally—connecting their table to God's global table.

In short, GIC Week Groups Gatherings are where the global story and the local mission intersect. It helps every group live out the reality that we are called to *shock the world* by reflecting Jesus' beauty in ways that stretch across the street and around the globe.

Group Schedule:

Time	Agenda Item
45 Minutes	Meal with a Missionary - A global missionary will join your group to share a meal. This will be a time of getting to know one another
30 minutes	Missionary Panel on stage
35 minutes	Group Discussion Time
10 minutes	What is my next step?

Reflection Questions After The Panel

Take some time with the people around the table talking through these questions:

What was something that you thought was interesting or compelling from what the missionaries shared tonight?

Where am I positioned in life right now to be a missionary?

List the following to think through your positioning in life: where you live, who you see on a regular basis, what activities you participate in, where you occupy most of your time in a week.

What opportunities are around me to Shock The World - either in my current positioning or from opportunities to serve with a ministry or organization?

What is God saying to me? How am I going to respond?

Global Partner Notes

Use this page to take notes on missionaries that you interacted with or grabbed your interest. Make sure you get to know the missionary at your table, talk with the missionaries at their displays, and hear all of the missionaries during the panel.

Organization: Point of Contact What is their focus: Website/Contact: Notes:	Organization: Point of Contact What is their focus: Website/Contact: Notes:
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Week 10 | Commissioning Week & Celebration

Together as a Group:

- How did it feel to be sent out into your everyday mission field?
- How have you seen God at work in your life (or in our group) this semester? What is one way your perspective on being sent or serving has shifted?
- What's one next step you want to carry into the next season of your life? How can we as a group continue to encourage one another beyond this semester?

Next Steps

- Connect with others in [Campus Groups](#)
- Connect with a [Care Group](#) to help you through life's tough season
- Connect in a [Spiritual Formation](#) group
- Connect with others while get healthy through our [Sports Ministry](#)
- Serve our community with regularity through [Second Saturday Serve](#) and [The Epicenter](#)
- If you're a young adult, check out [Young Adult Nights and Volleyball](#)
 - Older adults, invest in young adults and [serve!](#)

Find the preaching series by the same name at <https://mountaincc.org/sermons>