

Small Group Questions

Small groups and individuals can use these questions to engage the content of Sunday sermons.

FAITH ON THE FRONT LINES



August 7 – September 4, 2022

Faith on the Front Lines

For the Christian, a vocation is not just something God calls us to do; it is also the person God calls us to be. When Jesus called his first disciples, it wasn't simply because he needed help with his work. It was so that their lives could be transformed through his friendship and love. So likewise, all of us have been called to follow Christ. That means serving him with our gifts and talents and working for God's justice and healing in a world that so desperately needs it!

*Let each of you lead the life that the Lord has assigned,
to which God called you. – 1 Corinthians 7:17*

Week 1: August 7, 2022

What is Vocation?

Romans 12:1-8

Connect:

What do you think it means to be "called?" Have you ever had a sense of "being called" in your life? To a profession, a geographical area, to volunteer, etc.?

Engage:

God has given us different gifts, talents, and resources to use for God's kingdom. Paul speaks of the diversity and unity of these gifts that all serve our one Lord.

Read Romans 12:1-8

1. What do you think it means to offer your bodies as living sacrifices to God? Why does God want such a sacrifice?
2. How do you think continually offering our lives to God changes us?
3. What do you think is the overall function or purpose of the Church of Christ? How do you contribute your gifts and talents to the mission of the body of Christ?
4. What do you think happens when the Church loses sight of its call? What happens when individual Christians do the same?

Apply

Vocation, the Latin word *vocare*, means "to call." In the Church of Christ, having a vocation means having a call to serve God, be it in the workplace, as a volunteer, or through a call to professional ministry.

How can we help each other flourish as Christians in our vocation?

Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church, and the world.

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Week 2: August 14, 2022

Matthew 25:40: Living Life on the Mobius Strip by Kim Mauer

1 Samuel 16:7: Navigating Life with a Servant's Heart by Nichelle Trigg

Connect:

Share a time when you were on the receiving end of something unexpectedly kind and loving.

Engage:

In our walk of faith, we constantly need to examine our motivations and our actions to see if they align with Jesus' teaching. Jesus followed the teachings of the ancient prophets in being critical of religious folks when their words didn't align with their actions.

Read Mathew 25:31-44

1. How does caring for the needy demonstrate that you are a faithful follower of Christ?
2. Reflecting on Matthew 25:40, why does Jesus equate the lowest of the low with himself? What point is he trying to make? About hurting and marginalized people? About how he sees them?

Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13

3. Social scientists tell us that we attribute success to good-looking, educated, well-spoken, and wealthy people. Yet, in 1 Samuel 16:7, we are told that God looks on the heart. What do you suppose God was looking for in a potential king? In us as disciples?
4. Are these more qualitative characteristics something we are born with or something we can develop?
5. What has helped facilitate your growth in these areas?

Apply

Kim and Nichelle generously share their gifts, talents, and time to improve our local communities. Yet, their faith is often under scrutiny and even attacked by many who are cynical about the Christian faith. Because of this, their witness and work must be consistent with the joy of the faith and commitment to do what is right. It is not easy navigating life with a servant's heart!

How would others see your life as a "true" witness to the Christian faith? How can you be more consistent with what you believe, say, and do?

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Week 3: August 21, 2022

**Proverbs 22:6, Matthew 19:13-14, and Matthew 5:14-16: Lighting the Lamp of God (without matches)
by Rev. Margaret Zedan and Gene O'Rourke**

Connect:

As a kid, who were your most influential mentors? Looking back, how did they live out their values and faith?

Engage:

The Bible emphasizes that raising children to be men and women of high moral character and faith is first priority. Jesus affirmed the value of children when he warmly welcomed and blessed them.

Read Proverbs 22:6 and Matthew 19:13-14

1. Why do you think children were so important to families of faith?
2. What types of teaching, experiences, and mentoring can help a child be trained in the right way?
3. Why do you think the disciples were so hesitant to welcome the kids? Why do you think Jesus makes them a priority?
4. How can our church more warmly welcome children and youth? What are some of the barriers we need to remove?

Read Matthew 5:14-16

5. How can we be more of a beacon of light to the children and youth in the community around us?

Apply

Called by their faith, Gene and Margaret have invested in the lives of thousands of children through Scouting. A common thread for Scout leaders is their love for kids and a belief that the next generation of children and youth are the leaders of tomorrow.

How are you investing in the lives of children and youth in your family, church, and community?

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Week 4: August 28, 2022

Psalm 104:27-30 and Romans 3:10-12: Hope and Humility by James Rile

1 Peter 3:15: Being a Christian in Today's Workplace by Charles Mace

Connect:

Share a time when you were aware of God's abundance in your life.

Engage:

The life of a disciple has its ups and downs. We have seasons when God seems close and all is going well. Yet, as much as we try to be faithful, there are also times when we blow it. How we respond to these situations and seasons often speaks louder than any verbal witness we give to our faith.

Read Psalm 104:27-30 and Romans 3:10-12

1. Psalm 104 talks about our dependence on God's generous provision and the woeful result when God turns away from us. How do you understand God's role in times of abundance and tragedy?
2. What role does gratitude play when you are in a season of abundance? Are you more inclined to attribute your blessings to your hard work, luck, or God?
3. How is your faith strengthened you when you blow it and make mistakes? How do you experience God's forgiveness and grace? What are the long-term effects of the cycle of sin and grace in your life?
4. Our long-term relationships have an up-close and personal view of our faith journey. These folks, be they family, neighbors, church friends, or work colleagues, often see whether our faith is genuine and authentic. How would these folks describe your faith?

Apply

Both James and Charles are leaders in their organizations. When facing challenges, they follow Christ's model of compassion and have hope that God will lead them. Their spiritual superpower is leading in non-threatening ways that make room for shared wisdom, joy, and grace.

In the places where you are called to share your gifts, how can you more readily share your deep well of Christ's love and grace with others?

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Week 5: September 4, 2022

James 2:14-18: We Are Not Called To Be Successful, But Faithful by Jeanie Hamilton

Romans 15:1-6: We Who Are Strong by Melinda Ferguson

Connect:

Giving to others is often easier than being needy. Recall a time when you needed the help and prayers of others.

Engage:

The teachings of Jesus remind us that we must never overlook those who are struggling. As Christians, we cannot be indifferent or hard-hearted. When we see suffering, Jesus calls us to respond with empathy, compassion, and concrete help.

Read James 2:14-18

1. Do you think someone can have faith and be indifferent to another's suffering? How responsive are we required to be?
2. What about boundaries and self-care? What if we are enabling others to stay dependent on us?
3. How can our faith motivate us and give us the strength to help others when we are suffering from compassion fatigue?

Romans 15:1-6

4. Paul speaks of helping the weaker brother and sister. What does he mean when he says we are to "please" our neighbor and not ourselves? How does that strengthen the weaker ones?
5. How does helping others increase and encourage us in our faith?

Apply

Jeanie and Melinda work in the medical field and facilitate a better quality of life for others. Many times, they are working with people who are at significant low points – physically, emotionally, spiritually, and socially. Being faithful is the foundation of any hope for success.

How have you been called to bring healing and a better quality of life to those around you?

Pray

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