



One Meal • One Day

SKIP A MEAL, CHANGE A CHILD'S WORLD, AND YOURS!

THE WORLD AROUND YOU

A FOUR WEEK YOUTH MINISTRY SERIES



WRITTEN BY
LEAD222

The World Around You is a 4-week series for student ministry programs and small groups. Students will be exposed to scripture that encourages and challenges students' hearts for people around them everyday as well as those in need around the world. Acts 1:8 serves as the key scripture throughout the series. It serves as a geographical understanding of how we act as God's witnesses in this world. Students will have the opportunity to talk about the world around them—their neighbors, their community, and their world. In this study students will also discover that there are *two* sides to sharing one's faith – proclamation and demonstration.

Week 1 YOUR FIELD

To begin the series students must first see the world around them as *a field that is ripe for harvest!* The teaching and small group discussion will discuss Matthew 9:35-38 and speak about the *compassion* Jesus had for people who were in need. Students will be able to identify people in their life who need a *shepherd*...who need Jesus.

Week 2 YOUR NEIGHBOR

What does it mean to love your neighbor? Jesus included loving our neighbor in the greatest commandment (Mark 12:28-31), so it is clearly a priority in a Christian's life. Act's 1:8 speaks about being a witness for God in concentric circle type fashion by starting with those we have a relationship with and then moving outward. This week students will be able to identify real people that they have a relationship with that they can begin to pray for and start loving towards Christ.

Week 3 YOUR COMMUNITY

Having eyes to see your community, or as we will discuss this week—*your culture*—and it's own brokenness and need gives one the ability to know how to serve, pray, and lead. This week we will explore how to be a person who cares for our community and our nation in a way that honors God. We want students to be challenged to dream and activate making a difference in the larger community around them.

Week 4 YOUR WORLD

There so many terrible things that are going on the in world that it's difficult to know what to do. Things like global hunger, poverty, homelessness, and disease leave us overwhelmed. God has called us to make an impact in the world and show his love. Acts 1:8 clearly states that we must care for the *ends of the earth*—we aren't allowed to let that one go. Students must be encouraged to become active agents for God's Kingdom around the world by joining efforts that serve the worlds broken and hurting.

Created by Compassion International & LEAD222 for the purposes of youth ministries around the world and their ongoing discipleship of the next generation.

www.compassioninternational.com

www.lead222.com

THE WORLD AROUND YOU

LEADER INSTRUCTIONS:

This series is structured in a simple format to help you walk through each session with a purposeful balance of teaching students and engaging them in discussion. Below explains the structure and primary sections of each session.

- SUMMARY – Short synopsis of the basic content/ idea of the session and a list of objectives.
- ICEBREAKER DISCUSSION – Discussion starter ideas for each session.
- TEACHING/ DISCUSSION – Main teaching content for the leader, plus the discussion questions for students to engage the content through conversation.
- WEEKLY EXPERIENCE – A practical experience for students to immediately embody the ideas and truths that are being discussed each week.
- CLOSING – a simple suggestion of how to lead a closing prayer time.

IMPORTANT NOTE*

You may need to prepare days in advance for some of the experiences – make sure you read through the study and experiences prior to beginning the series so you can prepare for any arrangements or materials.

All content is written with the expectation that leaders will use it as a guide and add their personal leadership and style to the content. Each group and ministry will experience the content in different ways so you are encouraged to personalize this to your specific group.

We pray God blesses and leads your students in profound ways while experiencing this series. We also pray for you as a leader that God blesses you and guides you as you lead the next generation. Thank you for the way you serving the Kingdom by serving the next generation.

WEEK 1 – YOUR FIELD

SUMMARY

To begin the series students must first see the world around them as *a field that is ripe for harvest!* The teaching and small group discussion will discuss Matthew 9:35-38 and speak about the *compassion* Jesus had for people who were in need. Students will be able to identify people in their life who need a *shepherd*...who need Jesus. Small Group Leaders will need to provide a clear introduction of the series and where the group will be headed for the next 4 weeks.

Objectives:

- Introduce series – use the Series Overview to help provide introduction.
- Help students identify themselves as the workers of the field.
- Help students see those around them as Jesus sees them.
- Identify people that need Jesus in each “circle of life.”

ICEBREAKER DISCUSSION

Tie in *The World Around You* idea to the icebreaker questions.

1. If you could go anywhere in the world where would it be?
2. What is the most exotic (crazy) food you’ve ever eaten?

TEACHING/ DISCUSSION

Few People decide to follow Jesus on their own. For most of us, one or more people are influential in our decision. They may be friends, relatives, even writers of books. They may be people we know well or people we admire at a distance.

Have students share their answer to question one.

Try to limit stories to a couple minutes each so there is plenty of time for the rest of the session’s discussion.

1. When you decided to follow Christ, who was one person who influenced your decision? How did he or she influence you?

Just as someone helped you begin your journey with God, our Lord offers each of us a unique opportunity to play this same role in the lives of others around us. The first thing we must do is see people as Jesus saw them – distressed and downcast, like sheep without a shepherd. We tend to see people as they appear on the outside, unaware of the needs that lie below the surface. We need to look deeper and develop a heart for people in need of a Savior.

35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. **36** When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. **37** Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. **38** Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

- Mathew 9:35-38 (NIV)

2. What did Jesus see and feel as he visited the cities and villages around him?
3. Jesus said that these people ultimately needed a ‘shepherd.’ What do you think he meant by that?
4. What did Jesus mean by his statement, “the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few?”

APPLICATION - CIRCLES OF LIFE

Use the "Circles of Life" image on the handout (next page) for this section. Make copies and give the handout to each student.

Compassion doesn't come naturally for everyone. Jesus wants each of us to develop the kind of compassion for people that he has – to see people the way he sees them.

5. Who are the sheep without a shepherd in your life, the people who need to meet Jesus? Use the "Circles of Life" figure to help you think of people in various areas of your life. Prayerfully write down at least two - four names in each circle.

WEEKLY EXPERIENCE

Encourage students to do one thing that is relationally intentional with someone in their "circles of life" this week. They may spend time hanging out with someone, having a conversation about something deeper than normal, or even invite a friend to church.

Students should come back to the next group session with a story of what relationally intentional act was done.

CLOSING

Have students pray for the people in the circles of life.
Pray for each student.

WEEK 1 - YOUR FIELD: CIRCLES OF LIFE

The diagram consists of four overlapping circles arranged in a diamond shape. Each circle contains a title, a subtitle, and several horizontal lines for writing.

- Family**
(immediate or extended)

- Acquaintances**
(neighbors, classmates, etc...)

- Friends**

- Other**
(work, gym, teammates, hangouts, hobbies)

WEEK 2 – YOUR NEIGHBOR

SUMMARY

What does it mean to love your neighbor? Jesus included loving our neighbor in the greatest commandment (Mark 12:28-31), so it is clearly a priority in a Christian's life. Act's 1:8 speaks of being a witness for God in concentric circle type fashion by starting with those closest to us and then moving outward. In this session students will be able to identify real people in their life that they can begin to pray for and start loving towards Christ.

Objectives:

- Follow up from previous session's Weekly Experience
- Discuss Acts 1:8 & Define who our Jerusalem is.
- Discuss the greatest commandment about our "neighbors"

ICEBREAKER DISCUSSION

1. What is your favorite "local" restaurant? What do you like about it?
(this week's discussion we're talking about our community/ neighborhood)
2. FOLLOW UP FROM "WEEKLY EXPERIENCE"
Have students share their story of how they were relationally intentional with someone who they put in their "Circles of Life."

TEACHING/ DISCUSSION

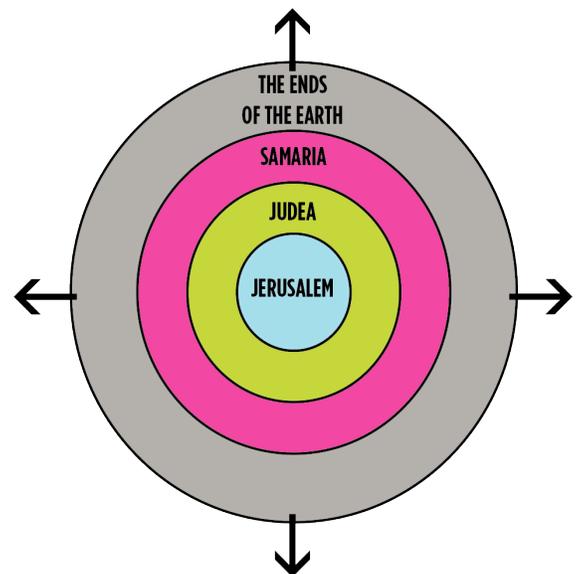
"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 (NIV)

This passage is the foundational scripture for the next three weeks. Acts 1:8 was spoken by Jesus at a critical time of his ministry. These were some of the final words spoken by Jesus that are recorded in scripture. We can easily gather the importance of this statement by the direct action Jesus calls his disciples to.

Have students discuss the scripture.

1. What stands out to you as important in this verse? Why are these words important for us today?
2. What do you think is significant about the places Jesus identified to the disciples?

Explain to students the geographical orientation of the passage as a concentric circle fashion – starting from the closest to them and working outwards all the way to the *ends of the earth*. Show them the image – or draw something similar on a board. *(you can copy/paste the image on another paper and hand out or into a video presentation for easier use)*



Guide the discussion to talk specifically about the “Jerusalem” region.

Jerusalem represented the immediate city that the disciples were residing in at the time. Jesus instructed them to begin spreading the Gospel right there! For the purposes of this small group – let’s identify Jerusalem as something even more personal than just the city we reside in, but let’s identify Jerusalem as our “neighbors” – meaning the people in our life that we have contact with.

JERUSALEM = Your Neighbors

YOUR NEIGHBORS = Family, Friends, Classmates, Co-Workers, Teammates, and Actual Neighbors

3. What does it mean to be God’s witness to your neighbors?

Mark 12:28-31 (NIV)

28 *One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”* 29 *“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’* 31 *The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*

4. How do you interpret Jesus words in relationship of our actions to our neighbors (our Jerusalem)?
5. What would it mean to “love your neighbor as yourself?”
6. Do you think it’s easy or difficult to show love to our “neighbors?” Why or why not?

It is often difficult to show love to those closest to us. Many of us find it easier to show kindness and love to strangers because loving strangers doesn’t require the consistency that loving our neighbor requires. This makes the idea of loving our neighbor a very *intentional* endeavor. We must have a heart of compassion for those we know and love the most. If sharing love only happens in places like “the ends of the earth” then we must wonder if we really are loving as Christ has called us to love.

WEEKLY EXPERIENCE

Acts 1:8 is all about *The World Around You*. Jesus clearly instructed the disciples to begin being his witnesses in Jerusalem.—and we’ve identified Jerusalem as our neighbors. This week we want students to put Acts 1:8 and Mark 12:28-31 into action.

Encourage students to -- BE A WITNESS IN THEIR JERUSALEM BY ACTS OF LOVE.

Similar to last week students must find a way to be intentional with someone. Showing love to others doesn’t always seem like an easy thing to do, but we often make it more complicated than it has to be.

Brainstorm during your group time some simple ideas of how students could show Christ-like love to their “neighbor.”

Example of Ideas:

- Share an intentional encouraging word with a friend, family member, coach, etc.
- Give a gift of appreciation to a friend.
- Take baked goods to your neighbor.
- Secretly mow your neighbors yard, clean up leaves, etc...
- Do an act of service like helping someone with a work project or extra chores for parents.
- Send a card to someone expressing your appreciation.

Prepare students to return the following week with a story of how they showed love to a “neighbor.”

CLOSING

Have a student pray for the “Jerusalem” that is represented in the group.

WEEK 3 – YOUR COMMUNITY

SUMMARY

Having eyes to see your community, or as we will discuss this week—*your culture*—and its own brokenness and need gives one the ability to know how to serve, pray, and lead. This week we will explore how to be a person who cares for our community and our nation in a way that honors God. We want students to be challenged to dream and activate making a difference in the larger community around them.

Objectives:

- Follow up from previous session's Weekly Experience.
- Establish an understanding of Acts 1:8 geographically for our context.
- Encourage and empower students to engage needs in the community.

ICEBREAKER DISCUSSION

1. What is the best thing about our city/town?
2. What is the best thing about our country? (*this weeks discussion will talk about our culture*)
3. What is an area of your city/town/ or country this is not good and needs Gods love?
4. FOLLOW UP FROM "WEEKLY EXPERIENCE"
Have students share their story of how they showed Christ-like love to a "neighbor."

TEACHING/ DISCUSSION

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

Last session we introduced Acts 1:8 and discussed its geographical implications. This week we will focus on the areas of Judea and Samaria. Biblically these areas represented a larger geographical area moving outward from Jerusalem, however the disciples would have been somewhat familiar with the culture of these areas and they would have had the ability to communicate and operate within those regions.

In order to make Acts 1:8 very applicable and easy to put into our own context in the United States let's identify these geographical regions in our own terms for the purposes of this study.

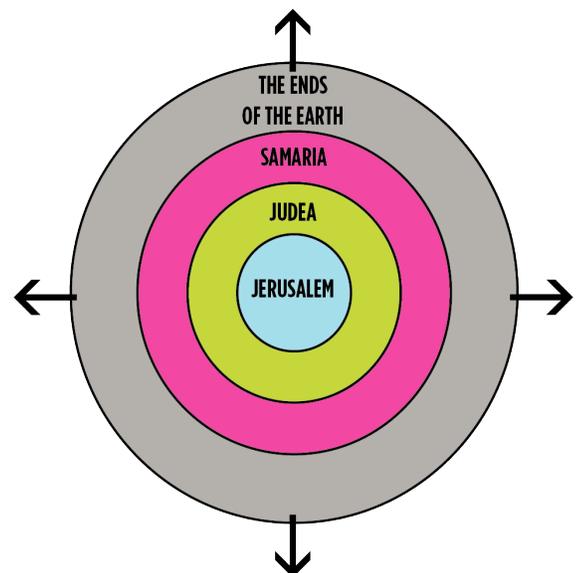
JERUSALEM = OUR NEIGHBORS

JUDEA & SAMARIA = OUR COMMUNITY & CULTURE

THE ENDS OF THE EARTH = THOSE WHO ARE NOT IN OUR CULTURE

So Judea and Samaria would equate to the larger surrounding community, such as the city one lives in. In addition to the city one lives, Judea/Samaria would apply to any people and place that share a similar culture expressed by shared language and values, such as the nation one lives in.

In this session we want students to think about the impact they can or should be making in their COMMUNITY & CULTURE. We want to stretch *The World Around You* for students to think beyond the "circles of life" they've already identified with and even beyond the "Jerusalem neighbors" and to think **bigger**.



Students can be some of the biggest contributors to serving and making an impact in the community and throughout our culture.

Discussion Questions

1. Define what is meant by community. Get feedback. (Examples: school, city, community organizations, civic groups, government, etc...)
2. How can someone be God's witness in their larger community?
3. What does our community need people to care about and have compassion for?
4. What are the challenges students face in actually making a difference in a larger context of the community?

Micah 6:8-9 (NIV)

*"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God. Listen! The Lord is calling to the city..."*

Micah 6:8-9 clearly displays some central qualities of what the Lord requires of us...

- ACT JUSTLY
 - LOVE MERCY
 - WALK HUMBLY
5. What does it mean to act justly?
 6. What does in mean to love mercy?
 7. What does it mean to walk humbly?
 8. Have student discuss what they believe Micah 6:8-9 means in an every day kind of way?
 9. How can we be God's witnesses in our community by acts of justice, mercy, and humility?

WEEKLY EXPERIENCE

Acts 1:8 should cause all of us to deeply consider *The World Around Us*. This week's discussion about the community is one that hopefully inspires students to consider how they can be God's witness throughout the community.

For this week's experience encourage students to find and choose a local ministry/ organization to serve and meet a need.

Examples include:

- A local homeless shelter – schedule a day to go and serve as a group.
- A local food bank or clothing closet – collect a large donation and help stock their pantry/closet.
- Call the your local parks and recreation dept. – ask if your group can help with city clean up/ beautification and schedule a day to serve as a group
- School Project – have students go to the school principal or counselor and express that they'd like to serve a need in the school through a service project
- Church Ministry – work through your church to find a local need and meet it.

Leaders: allow students to lead the organization of this as much as possible. You will have to guide and support along the way. Make sure you prepare early enough to help students make this happen. Often organizations need days/weeks advance to schedule volunteers.

CLOSING

Spend time praying for your community. Pray for some of the things that the group has already discussed as needs.

WEEK 4 - YOUR WORLD

SUMMARY

There are so many terrible things that are happening in the world and it's very difficult to know what to do about it. Things like global hunger, poverty, homelessness, and disease leave us overwhelmed. God has called us to make an impact in the world and show his love. Acts 1:8 clearly states that we must care for the *ends of the earth*—we aren't allowed to let that one go. Students must be encouraged to become active agents for God's Kingdom around the world by joining causes that serve the world's broken and hurting.

Objectives:

- Follow up from previous session's Weekly Experience.
- Review everyone's understanding of Acts 1:8 and discuss having a hope for the World (the ends of the earth).
- Start dreaming about how to be God's Witness.

ICEBREAKER DISCUSSION

1. Share a high point of your week.
2. Where do you imagine as the "ends of the earth?" (this is a fun opinion question to see where and why people identify different places like: Antarctica, the jungles of the Amazon, or in the mountains of Pakistan).
3. FOLLOW UP FROM "WEEKLY EXPERIENCE"
Have students share their story about needs they identified in the community by talking to someone or by personal observation.

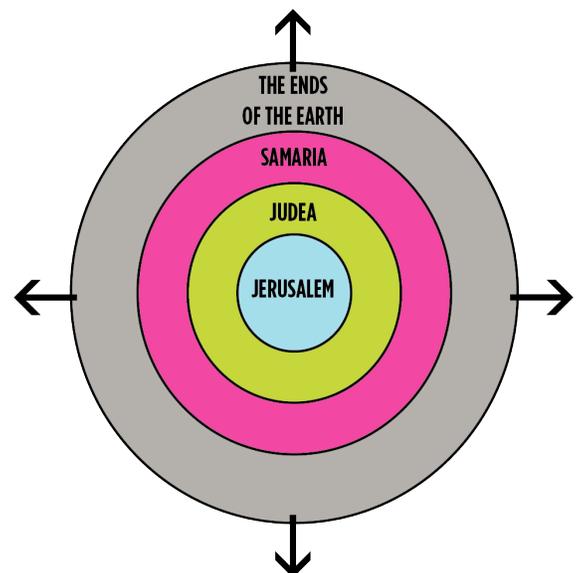
TEACHING/ DISCUSSION

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

1. What does trying to be God's witness from an Acts 1:8 perspective mean to you?
2. Revisit Matthew 9:35-38 (from week 1) does this scripture say more to you now than it did? How so? How does compassion for people relate to being God's witnesses?
3. Why do you think it's important for believers to care about all 3 or 4 areas that Jesus identified as Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the Earth? This study has identified as Your Neighbors, Your Community, and Your World

Our final ring in the geographical orientation of this passage is what Jesus called, "the ends of the earth." He told the disciples to actually go and be his witness all the way to the ends of the earth. It creates an unending mission for the disciples of Jesus to pursue.

4. What do you think "the ends of the earth" means in today's world?
5. What are some of the biggest needs that exist in today's world?
6. Is Christ (the Gospel) the only hope for the biggest needs of the world? If so, how? If not, why?
7. How can followers of Jesus fulfill this mission – "to be His witness to the ends of the earth?"



Essentially, Acts 1:8 is more about being God's witness and less about geography. When students consider the world around them they must learn how to be a witness for God's kingdom through *word and deed* (proclamation and demonstration).

James 2:14-24 (NIV)

14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? **15** Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. **16** If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? **17** In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. **18** But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. **19** You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. **20** You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? **21** Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? **22** You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. **23** And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. **24** You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

8. Discuss this passage – what does it tell us about how our faith requires action?
9. What does this passage teach us about actually serving the poor or needy?

This series has directed students to be a witness primarily in the following ways:

- Have compassion for people who need a shepherd - who need Jesus (Matt 9:35-38).
- See people the way Jesus sees them. (Matt 9:35-38).
- Love your neighbor (Mark 12:28-31).
- Act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly (Micah 6:8-9).

Being God's witness to the world around us will embody many things, but it starts with seeing the world as Jesus sees it...with compassion...compassion for the hurting and helpless. We must to *care* about the world and then as James says...do something about it! The ministry of Jesus was first a ministry of compassion – he healed people, helped the poor, and cared for the outcasts. The gospels are full of stories of Jesus ministering to people through acts of compassion. Jesus would teach people about the kingdom of God *AFTER* he had served them.

10. Why do you think Jesus use acts of compassion to reach people?
11. Why do you think he served people first?
12. What are things students can do to serve on a global scale?

WEEKLY EXPERIENCE

To end this series we want your group to tackle a real need in the world in a significant way. Compassion International is a ministry that has focused its efforts to be God's witness in the world by providing holistic (physical, spiritual, relational, educational) care for children, releasing them from poverty in Jesus name. Compassion International does many things, but most passionately targets serving children around the world. Currently Compassion serves over 1.3 million children around the world who live in abject poverty by providing food, health care, education, shelter, and Christian training.

Your group can partner with Compassion and do one of the following projects.

- 1.) Host a Sunday with Compassion - students can share compassions story with the whole church in an effort to connect kids with sponsors. (Sponsor a Compassion Child for \$38 per month) www.compassionsunday.com
- 2.) Serve undernourished children through – One Meal One Day (www.onemealoneday.org)
- 3.) Serve children in Malaria stricken areas through - Bite Back (www.biteback.net)
- 4.) Pick your own project as a group at www.createcompassion.com create

SPONSORING A CHILD

Several youth ministries around the country sponsor children as a group or invite students to get their family involved and sponsor a child on a monthly basis. As you exchange letters, send photos, and offer encouragement in Jesus name, your love will bring hope to a child that will last a lifetime.

Find out more at www.compassion.com or www.compassionsunday.com/

ONE MEAL ONE DAY

One Meal One Day is an annual event that unites thousands of students and leaders to skip a meal, experience hunger and give funds so that children in poverty can receive nutritious food they desperately need. This is a very practical way to get students engaged and serving a global need by acts of compassion.

Find out more at www.onemealoneday.com

BITE BACK

Bite Back is a student led campaign that gives students the ability to provide potential life saving malaria intervention to children who desperately need it. It's a simple and fun way to fight poverty with your friends.

Find out more at www.biteback.net

CREATE COMPASSION

Create Compassion is an entire campaign committed to walking beside students as they create a better world. Students can pick a cause (water, education, medical care etc.) and join a project that is changing the statistics of poverty for the better.

Find out more at www.createcompassion.org

CLOSING

Spend time praying for the ends of the earth. You may choose to talk specifically about praying for major global needs such as poverty, hunger, disease, war, or slavery.



Thank you for sharing this study with your students. We hope it was a meaningful and helpful resource for you and your group. If we can serve you in any way as you disciple your group to care for the hurting poor or helpless we would love to help. Just contact us at CreateCompassion@compassion.com.

Thanks again for everything you are doing to disciple this generation.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: TIM MANNIN

Tim Mannin is a husband, father, church planter, 15-year youth ministry veteran, writer, and most importantly a Christ-follower. Tim serves as the Servant Leadership Director and a youth ministry coach for Lead222 (lead222.com). He is also the pastor of Oklahoma City Community Church (okccommunitychurch.com). Tim often writes student leadership and discipleship content for Lead222. He and his family live in Oklahoma City.