

Life Group Leader's Guide

For the week of Sept. 17, 2017

Quick Review:

This series focuses on our Vision Statement. Here it is:

To be a creative, grace-filled, outward-focused church full of joyful people who are deeply committed to one another.

Mark showed several video clips illustrating creativity. What is/was your reaction to those videos? Did any especially stand out to you?

What's the value of a church that seeks to be creative?

What is OUR role and responsibility to promote and encourage change in order to reach people?

My Story:

1. What was, or is, your favorite type of toy or childhood pastime? Legos? Coloring? Dolls or action figures? Do you remember one in particular that was special to you?
2. If you could have any creative gift or skill, what would it be? At your current age and stage of life, how could you use this gift to bring God glory and build His kingdom?
3. If you had to name the part of God's 6 days of creation that you thought was the most-creative, what would you name? (maybe a specific animal or part of the world)

Digging Deeper:

1. We are going to read a couple of verses and then tie them in to Genesis 1:1 and 1:27. Read Psalm 139:14-16, Isaiah 64:8, and Ephesians 2:10.
 - What evidence do you see in these three verses that God is still as intentional with "our" creation as He was with Adam and Eve?
 - Now add in the verses from Genesis 1. If man was designed in God's image, and if God is the creative one, are we also made to be creative? Explain.
 - Leaders: Help your group members identify as seeing themselves as creative or not. Then ask your group to identify ways that creativity is actually present. For example, a "numbers guy" may not think of his ability to see and communicate a solution as creativity.
 - What would you say to someone who says they just aren't creative?
 - Is there more than one type of creativity? Do we limit our view of creativity by putting it in the box of the arts?
 - What part of creating has God left to us?
2. Read 1 Timothy 4:11-16*. What encouragement does Paul give to Timothy regarding the gifts he has been given?
 - Paul says that Timothy's gifts came through prophecy and the laying on of hands by the Elders. Why do you think Paul also told him to practice (or *give your complete attention to* – NLT, or *cultivate* – MSG)?
 - Should our gifts be "easy" for us to discover and use?
 - Do you have something that you think you could be really skilled at but that you haven't taken the time to nurture?
3. Read Romans 12 (Nat is going to focus on this passage, next week.) taking note of the things that Paul tells us **to do**, and **not to do**. Now reread verses 1 & 2.

- How is living as a “living sacrifice*” a non-conformist view? And how does the renewing of our minds help us live this way?
- Verses 3-8 discuss how we are to use our gifts as “one body in Christ.” Although many Bibles will have a topic heading between verses 8 & 9, this is one thought. What influence should verses 9-21 have on verses 3-8? In other words, why did Paul write these thoughts together?
- *Leaders, you may have some in your group who don’t fully understand the concept of “living sacrifice” or “one body in Christ.” It may be helpful to change up the wording or have a brief discussion on one or both of these things. *The Message* version may be helpful.

“So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going to work, and walking around-life - and place it before God as an offering”
Romans 12:1 from *The Message*.

And beginning in v. 4: In this way we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around. The body we’re talking about is Christ’s body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as part of his body.

- Why is it important to get input from others to confirm our gifting?
- Leaders, the topic of spiritual gifts, talents, skills, etc. could take an entire evening, probably several weeks. If this is something you want to pursue, we want to help resource you. Please contact Julie (jflorom@firstfreelincoln.org) and she can get into your hands some resources to use. For the purpose of your group discussion, it may be enough to allow your group to discuss the following:
 - What is your understanding of spiritual gifts? How do they differ from skills or being naturally talented in an area? (By definition, a spiritual gift is given by God at the point of salvation for the purpose of building up the church.)
 - *The way we use gifted or gift generally falls into the category of natural talents that God, out of his bounty, gives to Christians and non-Christians alike; whereas spiritual gifts are possessed by Christians, with the purpose of building and strengthening fellow Christians and extending the influence of the church to an unbelieving world. Spiritual gifts are only for those indwelt by the Holy Spirit.*

-Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials*

Taking it Home

1. In what ways is creativity a regular part of your life? If your answer is “not many,” how can your group encourage you to allow creativity to creep into your job, your family relationships, or your Christian experience?
2. Have you discovered how God has wired you to contribute as part of one body in Christ? If you have, share how God has designed you for good works, for service to others, for worship of God. If you have not, give this some thought and prayer this week. The church needs everyone working together as God has designed us. Take a look at the serving inventory on the website to help you in your thinking: <http://firstfreelincoln.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Serving-Survey.pdf>
3. Let’s take some time to focus on God’s creativity and worship Him through that. Watch as a group the following video about a simple fish. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1PID91sEW8>