

# CHURCH BASH

Fall Kick-Off for Group: August 12-18

**Introduce Guests/Share Life:** *How has this week been going? Good? Bad? Ugly? Things to celebrate?*

**Open in Prayer:** *Include any prayer needs that came up while you were sharing life together.*

**Recall the Guidelines:** *Ask: "What is the purpose of the guidelines?" Answer: To be relational!*

**Share the Vision:** *At group, not only will we engage one another in relational discipleship every week, but we will also practice a method for studying the Bible that you can reproduce and use to disciple others!*

**Hook Question:** Have you ever received an invitation or offer that changed your life? What happened?

**Ask someone from your team to read or tell the following background for the story:**

It is difficult to overstate how hated and despised tax collectors were during Jesus time of ministry on the earth. Tax collectors were employees of the state of Rome, and little was more important to Rome than collecting tax dues. Therefore, a tremendous amount of power and protection was offered to tax collectors.

In the Roman system, the official system was for tax collectors to collect what was owed, take their percentage, and send the proper amount to the Roman government. However, the system made allowances for incredible corruption. Tax collectors could make a hefty profit by abusing the system and taking more than the amount prescribed. By doing so, they lined their pockets with their neighbor's money; and they were protected by the full authority and power of the Roman government.

Try to imagine this personally. We already hate taxes. Imagine a friend of yours was responsible for collecting taxes from you on behalf of the US government. Imagine they came with force and took not only what you owed, but collected far more so they could line their own pockets. Imagine this happened repeatedly and there was nothing you could do to seek justice. How would you feel?

To a Jew, what was the only thing worse than a tax collector? A Jew turned tax collector. The Roman government would hire people of various nationalities for the job. Jews hated tax collectors, but they really despised other Jews who betrayed them and became a tax collector! In today's story, Matthew is a Jew turned tax collector. He would have been despised by his community. What did Jesus do? This is where our story begins...

**Tell the story from Matthew 9:9-13:** *Use different storytellers often. Train disciple-makers.*

**Rebuild the story:** *Group members retell the story based on what they remember.*

**Read Matthew 9:9-13:** *Ask the group to read these verses.*

**Watch the Story (optional, but powerful):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kLCSVjHKQjk>

## Discussion Questions:

Head  
Questions:  
Quicker  
tempo.

- What part of this story caught your attention the most? Why?
- What does this story teach us about people?
- What does this story teach us about God? (Remember, Jesus is God.)
- What do you need to learn to do and grow in from Jesus's example of discipleship in this story?

- How do you need to change based on this story and discussion?

- How does God want you to use what you are learning here to engage someone else in discipleship this week?

**Ask for a volunteer to tell the Bible story next week.**

**Close in prayer.**

Heart Questions:  
Slow down & wait!

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## **Review the Basics:**

What is the purpose of group? By now, there should be no confusion for you as a group leader. Our purpose for group is to make disciples of Jesus. We accomplish this through an intentional leader, a relational environment, and a reproducible process.

### ***Intentional Leader:***

Discipleship begins here. Who will initiate discipleship with others? Who will facilitate the meeting? Who will create a culture where relationships and transparency can exist? Who will cast the vision and lead others to get off the stands and into the game? Who will raise up new leaders? The answer to all these questions is “the intentional leader.”

### ***Relational Environment:***

The intentional leader is responsible for creating the right culture so the relational environment can exist in the group. During the group meeting, this environment is created through practicing the guidelines, practicing communion regularly, and through modeling transparency. Outside the group meeting, this environment is created by important practices such as chasing the strays, sharing life with others, sharing meals together, visiting people in the hospital, meeting real needs, praying for others, taking people meals, etc. The group leader doesn't have to do it all by themselves, but the group leader is responsible for creating the relational environment culture. The group leader is like the point guard on a basketball team; he may not make every play, but he helps set the team up for success on every play.

### ***The Reproducible Process:***

The reproducible process is the method we use for Bible study in every group meeting. This method is called storying. The storying method starts by getting God's Word in a person's head (tell the story, rebuild the story, read the story, etc.). Once the story is in our heads, we can move it to our hearts through questions. There are five basic questions that work for every Bible story, but group leaders can expand on these questions as needed: 1) what did you like or dislike about this story? 2) what does this story teach us about God? 3) about people? 4) who do you relate to in this story? 5) what do you need to change based on this story and discussion?

This method of studying the Bible is something every disciple of Jesus can learn to do. Through this method, disciples of Jesus can become equipped to disciple others with the Word of God as the centerpiece for their discipleship.

## **What's New for 2018?**

We will keep making the main thing the main thing (aka relational discipleship). When it comes to our group meetings, we have a new focus for vision casting that we want every group leader to practice. Group leaders should cast vision for the purpose of group at the beginning of each meeting. We would like for our group leaders to make the following points clear at the onset of each meeting:

“At group, not only will we engage one another in relational discipleship every week, but we will also practice a method for studying the Bible that you can reproduce and use to disciple others!”

This vision forces each person in the group to ask the question, “Who am I discipling?” That is exactly the point. While not every disciple will lead a group, every disciple can make another disciple one person at a time. By being in group, they will not only have the opportunity to grow in discipleship in their own life, but they will also learn a method they can use to meet with others and help them grow in discipleship.

Make this emphasis your primary focus in 2018 meetings. Let’s be bold about the purpose of our groups and our goal to help every believer be a disciple who makes disciples. We make no apologies for using our time in group to equip followers of Christ to lead others in discipleship.

#### **Notes for Clarification on Storying:**

- Storying is not all there is to discipleship. Relational discipleship follows the example of Jesus. We must learn how to not only engage people in the Word, but also in relationship.
- Storying is not the only way to make disciples. It is a very effective way to center discipleship on the Word of God and to teach others to reproduce discipleship. Anyone can do it!
- The goal is to make sure every disciple is part of the storying method in at least one meeting every week so they can center discipleship on God’s Word and learn to reproduce it with others. Once they are practicing storying, there may be other methods to engage them in (i.e. – listening to good preaching, reading great books, getting together for coffee and to just share life together, etc.). It starts with storying, but it doesn’t have to end there!
- Storying has three parts: get God’s Word in their heads through repetition, move it to their hearts with good questions, and live it out with their hands in application.
- Most of the time, the best practice is to follow the curriculum and use a Bible narrative for your story. However, on occasion, you may find the need to use a special story or a passage from an epistle (or somewhere else in the Bible) in your discipleship.
  - The reason following the curriculum can be healthy is that you will benefit from the leadership of our sermon club team as they work together to lead us to cover the whole scope of the Bible in our discipleship.

If you have any more questions, contact Brandon Werner (group pastor) for help!