



Week 3: Coaching Guide

4th Essential: WE WILL CHASE THE STRAYS

- **Our Goal:** That every person who has strayed from Christ will be valued, noticed, and pursued. (e.g.: strayed from their relational environment, from the weekend service, from a volunteer role, etc.)

Leading [learn to facilitate your group more effectively]

- **Accomplishing the goals of Essential #4 during the group meeting...**
 1. Chasing the strays always begins as an organized activity for a group family but eventually becomes organic and a personal value for everyone in the group.
 2. We encourage all of our groups to meet around a meal (love feast) every week because this is the model of the first church. Acts 2:46-47 says the early church “broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.” When groups meet around a meal, it becomes a way to honor the Lord together through communion at their love feast, and it is an easy way to see who is missing before you begin. Paul encourages the church in Corinthians to share meals and eat together: “So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together” (1 Cor. 11:33). Please read 1 Cor. 11:17-34 to go deeper into this idea of sharing meals and waiting on one another.
 - Whether you have a meal or not, always start a meeting by asking, “Who is missing?” Work with your group to contact them. Create this heart and culture in your group!
 3. It is appropriate for group members to follow the Lord’s leading and move to another group. Part of chasing the strays is seeing the transition all the way through with the other group leader so that a brother or sister does not become disconnected in the process.

Shepherding [know the sheep, feed the sheep, lead the sheep, protect the sheep]

- **Accomplishing the goals of Essential #4 outside the group meeting...**
 1. Our church sends an email to our group leadership every week to let you know who was missing from your group during our weekend service. This email is sent on Mondays. However, chasing the strays means noticing for yourself who is absent and letting them know they were missed! The email should serve as a reminder in the unusual instance that you forgot, and it is a way to double check and make sure you didn’t miss anyone.
 2. As leaders at Western Hills, we understand our role on Sunday mornings is to help create a relational environment and connect the unconnected and the disconnected (strays). We cooperate in this objective together by serving on the Connections Team.
 3. As those we shepherd mature, they need places to volunteer and minister in order to continue to grow. We will help connect them and encourage them in faithfulness.

Developing [grow as a disciple yourself]

Read Ezekial 34:1-6. The prophet is prophesying against Israel’s leaders because they have not shepherded their flocks well. Just as there were shepherds in Israel, the New Testament tell us that there are shepherds in the church. As shepherds at Western Hills, we are accountable to God for the way we care for our sheep.

In John 21, Jesus admonished Peter three times to take care of His sheep. Taking care of our sheep starts with knowing where they are!

Have you been a good shepherd to your sheep by chasing the strays? Do you love your sheep and notice when they are absent? Do you go out of your way to let them know they are valued, noticed, and pursued?

Lord, help us be the shepherds you have called us to be!



Week 3 (November 15-21): Lesson Guide

Open In Prayer

Welcome/Introductions

Ask the group to recall the guidelines for discussion that we use to create a safe environment.

Ask someone to retell last week's story from Luke 4:31-37 (Jesus is Holy).

Ask someone on your team to read the Hook Question – Ask, “Other than the gift God has given you through faith in Jesus, have you ever received a gift or favor from someone that you did not earn, but that was given because of your relationship with them?”

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

As the grandson of King Saul, Mephibosheth (Muh-fib-oh-sheth) was born into a situation of privilege which changed dramatically when the Philistine army attacked Israel. Saul, Jonathan (Saul's son), and two of his brothers were killed in the battle on Mt. Gilboa (1 Sam 31:1–6). When news of the catastrophe reached the Israelite palace, the five-year-old Mephibosheth was snatched up by his nurse. In a panic scramble for safety, she fell, dropping Mephibosheth, whose legs or ankles were broken. The lack of adequate medical attention meant that, from that moment on, he was completely crippled (2 Sam 4:4).

Mephibosheth's uncle, Ish-bosheth (Saul's only surviving son), who had been made Israel's puppet king (2:8–10), was murdered. Mephibosheth, although apparently next in succession, appears not to have been considered. A short time later, David was established on the throne of Israel.

When David summoned him to Jerusalem, Mephibosheth was naturally apprehensive, probably fearing that David might want to eliminate all possible rivals (see 19:28). However, David intended to show kindness to Mephibosheth. David's kindness was not based on Mephibosheth's merit – he was a cripple, an outcast, and a member of a rivaling royal family! David's kindness was based on his friendship with Jonathan. In life, Jonathan and David were the best of friends. Mephibosheth was a member of Saul's household and was Jonathan's son. David honored Mephibosheth not because of what he had done, but because of his association with Saul's household and with Jonathan. This is where our story begins...

Tell the story from 2 Samuel 9:1-13

Rebuild the story – (Group members retell the story based on what they remember)

Read 2 Samuel 9:1-13 – (Ask the group to read these verses)

Discuss these questions:

Head Questions:

- Check your understanding – why did Mephibosheth receive the favor of King David?
- What do you like about this story, and is there anything you dislike?
- How do you relate to this story?

Heart Questions:
Slow down & wait!

- How has God related to you like King David related to Mephibosheth?
- Who are the Mephibosheths in your life?

Hand Question:
Everyone share...

- Is there anyone else in your life God wants you to be a David to?

Ask for a volunteer to retell the story one last time. Ask for a volunteer to tell the story next week.

Prayer Requests (ask someone in the group to take notes so you can email the requests to the group)

Pray (don't feel the need to mention every request in prayer again, just pray for the group and send the email)