



Small Group Leader Guide

Luke 10:1-2 | Spiritual Teamwork

Note:

This is a standalone Bible study for your small group. Unlike our standard Small Group Curriculum, it is not associated with the weekend's preaching content. This material is provided for your group as a resource to be used during times between preaching series or church-wide campaigns. May it bless you and your group in your community development and faith walk in following Jesus!

Prepare: Things to do before your small group gets together

- **Think** about where you are seeing God at work in your relationships. Who is going through a situation where they need God's intervention? Who are you interacting with who needs a relationship with Jesus Christ? Who is searching for spiritual truth? **Pray, thanking God** for putting you in a place where you can represent Him and share Him with others. **Ask God** to guide you in your study of the Scriptures, so you can help your group see the need for being personally involved in sharing Jesus
- **Read** the following Scriptures: Luke 10. **Explore** the details presented about the Jesus' instructions to the 72 disciples. **Personalize** the principles revealed in the Scriptures. **Invite** God to lead you in your preparation, guiding you to develop a small group experience that will speak to the needs of every person who participates. **Submit** your heart to God's conviction, that you may be exhorted to experience anew the timely activity of God's Holy Spirit in your life.
- **Preview** this material and engage with God's Spirit as He guides your study.
- **Pray** for your small group members by name, asking God to use you to be a teacher of influence for each person in your group, for the glory and cause of Jesus. **Seek** God's wisdom in leading your small group to apply God's word to their lives. **Commit** yourself to the Lord, that you would live what you teach.

To The Point – What to impart to your small group

Key Scripture: He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

Objectives: Through your time exploring this passage, your small group members will:

- Review** details of Jesus' words to the disciples being sent to the places He is going.
- Explore** the implications of His instructions.

Apply the principles shared and engage in the work of God's advancing Kingdom.

Encounter: A suggested plan for your small group experience

Conversation Starter: Famous Pairs

Ask Name some well-known or famous couples (or pairs, or duos). What made them famous as a couple?

Allow participants to respond. Examples include: Abbot & Costello, Batman & Robin, Fred Astaire & Ginger Rogers, Abraham & Sarah, Ruth & Naomi, Thelma & Louise, Brad Pitt & Angelina Jolie, Hall & Oates, Starsky & Hutch, Captain & Tenille, Sherlock & Watson.

Say It's interesting to see what happens when you pair people up for the opportunities at hand. In the cases of those we've named. Sometimes, one of the two (or both) was successful before they ever paired up, but they became even more well known as a duo. In many others, though, the two are only known exactly because they are a duo. In our time together, we're going to explore the instructions that Jesus is giving to 72 disciples that he is sending out in pairs as advance teams to the places he will go. In this, we'll see some important truths about our place in Kingdom work, our partnerships that God is preparing, and also some key insights into prayers that precede our efforts.

Open in prayer for your time together.

People will Respond to God (Luke 10:1-2)

Read Luke 10:1-2

Say Sometimes, it is easy to look at a tiny cross section of what is going on in the world and get the wrong idea that God is not at work, that our efforts to advance the gospel is futile, and that the world is getting worse and all we can do now is try to ride it out to the bumpy end.

Ask What are some things you see today, either in the headlines or in your surroundings that might make you feel like this?

Allow participants to respond. Some responses may include: Conflict in the Middle East. Domestic political turmoil. School shootings. Unaccompanied minors being smuggled across US borders. Violence against children.

Say Yet, Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful." An incredible reality is that God's Spirit is unhindered. He is unrelenting in his forward advance to save souls, redeeming what is seemingly impossibly lost, and restoring what is irreparably broken. Listen to just some of what Jesus says about Himself and His work:

- John 10:14, 17
- John 12: 23-24
- John 12:32

(note: you may want to write these Scriptures on Post-It notes prior to your gathering, and ask volunteers to read these passages out loud to the group).

Ask Where are you seeing God at work, drawing people to Jesus?

Allow participants to respond. Encourage people to identify specific observations where Jesus is saving people. If your group has difficulty identifying specific examples, you can point out things like: our summer missions teams going to Mexico, Dominican Republic, Wales, Costa Rica, Poland, Israel, Tanzania and the Philippines. You can refer to any recent My Story, baptisms, child dedications, or a sermon that has been impacting. You can point to the church's outreach to local elementary schools, Park Fest, Student Ministries, VBX, and through partnerships like Neighborhood Ministries, UMOM, and many others.

Say The reality is, God is continually at work in this world! And His Spirit is at work all around you. You will be amazed at the harvest that God is preparing all around us. You have no idea the thoughts that are going on inside the people you're interacting with on a daily basis, who are desperate and seeking Truth, and who will respond to Jesus if we will just take the initiative to tell them!

Ask What are some indicators of spiritual preparation? What are some things that might be "open doors" for you to start a spiritual conversation with a friend, family member, co-worker, neighbor, or acquaintance?

Allow participants to respond. Indicators of Spiritual preparation may include:

- *Your friend commenting on the "plight of the world."*
- *Your friend asking your opinion on how to handle a situation.*
- *Your friend mentioning a trouble he/she is facing.*
- *Your friend asking you to pray, or about your church.*
- *Your friend expressing a thought, idea, or cliché that has biblical roots.*
- *Your friend talking about God, Jesus, or deity.*

Some examples of an "open door" might include:

- *Job loss/start, promotion*
- *Birth, death, marriage, divorce or other life event or milestone.*
- *Disclosure of adversity of self or loved-one (sickness, addiction, etc).*
- *Moving, or needing help with a chore or project.*
- *Responding to indicators of faith (seeing a Bible, cross, or non-Christian icon)*
- *Discussing Christian themes in a movie, TV show, or book or other shared interest.*

Say God has declared it - his harvest is plentiful! Let us remember and proclaim that the gospel of grace in Jesus Christ is indeed good news! It is the power of God to save the perishing! As we faithfully share it, people will respond to him! God's Spirit is faithful, and his Spirit perseveres in calling people to repentance and new life through Jesus alone. Don't slander God by suggesting that we as a church or any of us individually are excluded from God's ability to use us to labor in this incredible harvest of plenty! If you ask God to give you eyes that see the hurting of others, ears that are sensitive to their words of lostness, a heart of compassion broken by their great need, and courage to walk by faith, God will keep you active in His great work!

Those who are responding must be gathered

Say Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus made it clear that **he came to gather people**. He came to restore the relationship that was broken by sin and gather people to be with their Creator forever. Matthew 13 records that Jesus taught extensively using agricultural parables,

with a recurring emphasis that He would one day be gathering up His people (*note: you may want to quickly "survey" the Kingdom parables of Matthew 13 to illustrate*).

And even while we wait for that great final gathering, Jesus has commanded us to be diligent to be about his harvesting work until that time comes to pass.

Have a volunteer read Matt. 28:18-20 to the group.

Ask What does "making disciples" mean to you?

Making disciples is leading people to be followers of Jesus Christ.

How do you make disciples?

This Scripture clearly indicates that the method of making disciples is by teaching people to obey everything Jesus commanded. Baptism is a basic, universal indication of identification of being a follower of Jesus Christ.

According to this passage, who are we supposed to make disciples of?

We are supposed to make disciples of all nations. Literally, ethnos means "all people," indicating the totality of all Gentile, pagan people are object of this effort. There is no one who should be excluded.

Say It's a clear command. Making disciples means to gather followers and maturing them in their faith in Jesus to join in the labor of gathering others.

Ask What is it going to take to accomplish this assignment?

Allow the group to respond. Key aspects for the group to understand include:

- *It will take God! This is a God-sized task that we cannot accomplish without Him.*
- *It will take all of us. We are all included in this command. It was not the assignment of a few, but of all of us! We all must do our part.*

Say It is simply intolerable to say in one breath that God is at work in the people all around you, and in the very next breath make up an excuse to not participate in the harvest! The only possible excuse you could give for not participating is by suggesting that God is not at work. We know that's not the case, so we have no valid excuse not to join Him in His incredible harvest. Yet, this is exactly what is happening because Jesus has declared the laborers are few.

Ask Why do you think this is the case? What excuses, reasons do you give for not participating in the work of the Gospel?

Allow the group to respond.

Say It is important to understand that while Jesus was sending out the 72, anyone who reads Luke's gospel should rightly include themselves in the audience of Christ's message. The expansion that Jesus initiated here is an advance of the gospel to the Gentile communities where Jesus would be going. As such, God's Spirit continues to faithfully call all people to salvation today. It likely wouldn't surprise us to confess, though, that many people rarely or never join the labor force in sharing the gospel or in gathering the harvest of people coming to

Christ. This truth isn't meant to shame you, it is meant to inspire you - you have the chance to join God's great work and be a part of His relentless progress of gathering people to Himself.

Three ways to Participate

Re-read Luke 10:2

Say This verse gives us three ways to join in the work of the harvest.

1. **God wants you to Pray.** Specifically, you should **pray earnestly to Him as the Lord of the Harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.**

Ask What is significant to you about this prayer?

Allow the group to respond.

Say This prompt for prayer reveals that evangelism only takes place on God's initiative, not on man's. And we have already established that God's Spirit is relentlessly advancing, gathering people to Himself. So any lack of evangelism on our part is "on us," not "on God." Conversely, asking God to send out laborers who will gladly take their part of the Gospel advance delegated to them by God is praying in alignment with the character, nature, and will of God. God will answer this prayer! God is not reluctant to call people into the field to labor. In fact, because we have been praying this very prayer in agreement with God's Spirit, we are confident that God is even right now calling some of you to step forward and begin to labor in this incredible opportunity of evangelism.

2. **God wants you to Participate.**

Ask Do you think God would have you pray, or participate? Why?

Allow the group to respond.

Say The question is actually a false dilemma. It is a common fallacy to reduce this verse to an "either/or" proposition, suggesting that "either God wants me to labor, or he wants me to pray." This simply isn't supportable! The reality is, has assigned the Great Commission to each and every one of us. There is nobody excluded from the command to make disciples.

Have a volunteer read Acts 1:8.

Ask How do you personally identify with this Scripture?

Allow the group to respond.

Say Again, Jesus doesn't say, "But everybody else except you will receive power..." or "and everyone else except you will be my witnesses." No, you are included in the "you!"

Have a volunteer read 2 Timothy 4:5

Ask How do you personally identify with this Scripture?

Allow the group to respond.

Say God clearly wants you to recognize the opportunities all around you. He wants you to raise

your eyes from your Bible and see that the field of lost souls being saved is white unto harvest! His harvest is plentiful! You must participate in the harvest!

3. **Finally, God wants you to Partner.** Notice that God intends to send out **laborers** (plural) into the harvest. Recall that Jesus offered this exhortation to 72 disciples who were being sent out in pairs. One of the biggest detailers to obeying God in the great work of evangelism is the mistaken notion that you are going at it alone.

Ask what biblical or practical examples do you have of work being accomplished in pairs?

Allow the group to respond. Biblical examples include: Paul & Timothy, Paul & Barnabas, Paul & Silas, Barnabas & John Mark, Peter & James.

Say Outreach is your great opportunity to partner together in sharing Jesus with others.

Ask Who could you partner with, and how can you partner?

Allow the group to respond.

Say Dads, include your children in your evangelism efforts. Men, partner together and go visit one of your friends who needs the encouragement of God's Holy Spirit. Husband and wife, ladies take a girlfriend with you...the simple point is for you to partner together!

Ask What are the benefits of partnering? What are your apprehensions to partnering?

Allow the group to respond.

Say When you partner, your struggles are halved and your joys are doubled. One person can talk with the other person prays. Together, compelled by God's abiding Spirit, you are reminded of vital Scriptures and are able to more adeptly answer difficult questions. God never intended for any one of you to win the world to Jesus by yourself, because only Jesus can alone win the world to Himself. Even if you are on a solo mission in a personal, private conversation, embrace the reality that God is calling laborers daily to join you, and He is using those He calls to gather the harvest to Himself.

What is one "take-away" for you from this passage?

Allow the group participants to respond.

Say God is working in this world. He is saving people daily, rescuing souls and transforming lives. This incredible harvest must be gathered, and we can respond to the need by praying, participating, and partnering. Even now, Jesus is sending you into your field of His harvest, where the crop is plentiful and people will respond. Obey His Holy Spirit promptly, and join the legacy of faithful men who God has used to gather the harvest.

Let's close in prayer:

Invite the group to pray for one another. **Pray** over any needs or issues that were shared in your time together. **Pray** over the content discussed in your small group, highlighting the aspects that God's Spirit revealed to your group as important. **Confirm** your plans for your next gathering!