



Group Experience

Message Series: He Will Be Called

Week: 1

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6)

“Wonderful Counselor” is one of the four names here describing the character of Jesus. But because we hear this every Christmas it may have lost some of its meaning. Hebrew, (the original language this verse was written in), actually describes an adviser, guide or counselor that is amazing beyond understanding or description. Today we hope to rediscover the meaning of this verse as we spend time with our “Wonderful Counselor.”

- **Read the following verses: John 14:16-20; John 16: 7-15**

When Jesus left the earth, He sent his Spirit (a.k.a. The Holy Spirit) to continue as our Wonderful Counselor. So how do we receive this guidance, this advice, this counsel? God speaks to us different ways but most can be grouped into these 4 categories.

- The Bible
- Through our experiences
- Through others
- Through a still small voice (1 Kings 19:11-13)
- **Describe some of the ways God has spoken to you.**
- **Read these verses: Matthew 18:20; Luke 5:31-32; Isa 61:1**

Leader Note:

The following group experience may be something different than what your group is used to. The time of silence in this experience can be awkward. Encourage your group to resist the urge to interrupt the silence and allow God to speak.

Transition into the following experience with something like this: “Jesus, the Wonderful Counselor, is here...ready, waiting and available to you. We are going take some time and give Him the opportunity to make us aware of our those things he wants/needs to change in us and ask Him begin to make those changes in us.

- **Give each group member a copy of the Participant Guide (pg. 2) and request that they sit silently for 10 min while they ask God the 3 questions on the Participant Guide:**

- ▶ Jesus, what one thing do you wish to change in me today?
(Depression, hopelessness, stress, materialism, financial issues, family tension, anger, loneliness, addiction, your marriage, relationships, intimacy, fear, etc.)
- ▶ Jesus, What is keeping me from changing? (Be open to whatever He says)
- ▶ Jesus, what one thing can I do today to begin changing?

(These questions are available as a handout. You'll find them on the Participant Guide on page 2.)

- **After the 10 min. ask your group: “What did you hear from God?”**

Leader Note:

Read this statement: Imagine what your life could look like next year if you took time to ask Jesus these 3 questions each week.

Ask this question: If you allow God to change one small element of your life each week for an entire year, how different will you be?

- **End with prayer for the changes God wants to make in the members of your group.** (Suggestion :join hands and praying in a circle)





Group Experience

Participant Guide

Jesus, what one thing do you wish to change in me today? (Depression, hopelessness, stress, materialism, financial issues, family tension, anger, loneliness, addiction, your marriage, relationships, intimacy, fear, etc.)

Jesus, What is keeping me from changing? (Be open to whatever He says)

Jesus, what one thing can I do today to begin changing?





Small Group Experience

And all the believers met together constantly and shared everything they had. They sold their possessions and shared the proceeds with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity – all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved. Acts 2:44-47

Just like those first groups of Christ followers, an essential part of Small Groups today is “doing life together.” God uses the shared experiences of every group to strengthen their relationships and allow them to become a true community.

For your group, that may look like getting together to watch a Saturday afternoon football game, helping to clean out someone’s garage, eating dinner, taking a road trip, or simply hanging out. During the holidays it might be spending time as a group helping others, feeding the hungry or just getting together so someone else doesn’t have spend the holiday alone.

Honestly, it can be difficult to find time to “do life together,” so it’s important to be intentional about it. With that in mind, in place of providing discussion questions, we’d like to challenge you and your Small Group to plan at least 3 separate times this month to “do life together.” Below you’ll find several of our suggestions for doing this, but certainly don’t feel limited to these ideas.

Idea 1

Plan a Christmas Party with your LifeGroup. If you need some additional “inspiration” there are several party ideas listed on page two.

Idea 2

Find a neighbor or acquaintance of someone in your group that needs help, such as yard work, house work, food, babysitting or trash pickup. Arrange for your group to spend part of a day with them, meeting their needs. Make it a point to invite them over for a meal or go eat a meal with them. Talk about finding a way for your group to play an ongoing part of meeting this persons needs.

Idea 3

Go caroling in your neighborhood and at each home leave a printed invitation to church and maybe a gift. The gift could be something simple such as a Christmas ornament or a plate of cookies.



Small Group Experience

Christmas Party Ideas



20 Holiday Questions

The Goal is to find out who in your group has done something on the list. (Great game or ice breaker)

1. Never has had a "White Christmas"_____
2. Has celebrated Christmas in another country_____
3. Returned a gift s/he received last Christmas_____
4. Has seen a real, live reindeer_____
5. Believed in Santa Claus until s/he was 10 years old)_____
6. Loves the Christmas song "What child is this?"_____
7. Has been to Bethlehem_____
8. Went Christmas caroling last year_____
9. Has peaked at a present before Christmas_____
10. Still gets his/her own stocking filled each year_____
11. Has all his/her Christmas shopping done_____
12. Hasn't done any of his/her Christmas shopping yet_____
13. Has never seen "It's a Wonderful Life"_____
14. Has seen "It's a Wonderful Life" too many times_____
15. Has "regifted" a Christmas present_____
16. Knows all the reindeers names_____
17. Has never made snowman_____
18. Knows what s/he is getting for Christmas this year_____
19. Has made "figgy pudding" at least once_____
20. Doesn't like eggnog_____

Sock Guessing Game

Take a **NEW** pair of thick thermal socks. Then put objects you see or use around Christmas time into the socks. Make sure you put the same things in each sock. Things like holly, scotch tape, ornaments, pine cones, etc. Make sure you put about 20 to 25 different objects in. Tie a ribbon or rope around the opening to make sure nobody peeks. Give everyone a piece of paper and pass the socks around at your party and tell them how many objects there are in the sock and have them write down all they can feel. Two socks just make the game go a little faster. The person that guesses the most objects correctly is the winner.

Gift Wrap Game

What you will need : Gift items, wrapping paper, tape, CD Player

Wrap each gift item in several layers of paper then give your group a gift and tell them when you turn on the music to pass the gift , (like in the game hot potato) when you turn off the music who ever has the gift gets to take off ONE layer of paper, continue this until the last layer of paper is taken off ,and whoever has the gift unwrapped gets to keep it.

Wrapped Gift Game

Requires a small wrapped gift and a pair of dice. The gift should be wrapped in a solid box.

Wrap the gift with paper, then masking tape, paper, masking tape, paper (the more layers, the harder the game). Players, as many as there are to play, sit in a circle. Each player takes a turn at rolling 2 dice, first person to roll doubles, get to start unwrapping the gift, the catch, they have to wear a pair of oven mitts, gloves, etc). Players cannot use teeth. Immediately players continue to take turns to roll the dice, next player to roll doubles take the mitts and a turn at unwrapping the gift. Play continues until the gift is unwrapped, the player to unwrap the last piece of paper gets the gift.

Gift Wrap Game—Version 2

Number of players: about 10-30

Type: Can be a stunt, if the group is very large, or the entire party may play

Winner: The person who FINISHES unwrapping the present

How to play: A gift is placed in the center of the group. A basket with dice is passed around. When a person rolls double sixes, they run up to the gift, don the hat, scarf and gloves (goggles if you want too!) and begin unwrapping as fast as they can. (The more items they need to put on the less they'll be able to unwrap) The dice continue to be passed and as soon as someone else rolls double sixes, they take their turn at the present. Play continues until the present is completely unwrapped.

Items needed: Dice, Basket, Hat, Gloves, Scarf, one very well wrapped present. It helps to have several layers of wrapping paper and even boxes within boxes to keep make the game more challenging.

