

**II. Group discussion** *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better.*

Read Matthew 10:11-31 aloud.

1. Who was Jesus speaking to?

*The twelve apostles, before he sent them out to preach.*

What kind of welcome did he expect that they would find as they talked about him?

What were some of the risks the first followers of Jesus faced?

Are Christians known for being risk-takers or risk averse? How does this compare to Jesus' view of risk?

How could we develop a courageous spirit more like Jesus?

When you face a risky situation, what helps you move ahead in spite of the risks?

2. How did Jesus instruct his followers to respond to opposition?

*See verses 16, 17, 19, 23, 28.*

What kind of opposition have you faced because of your faith?

In what ways does verse 24 connect Christians' persecution with Jesus' suffering. How much do you think this helped?

How do you feel when you hear of believers who suffer for Christ? Do you ever feel guilty for having it so easy?

3. Matthew 10 was spoken to a specific group for a specific time. What was unique and applied only to these disciples?

In what ways could these words apply to Christians in every generation?

If Jesus was sending us into our community to call attention to the kingdom, what instructions do you think he would give us?

In ancient society, it was not unusual to have wandering speakers come to town. How would that go over in our community?

If not street preaching, what might be ways we could get the message into a form that our neighbors would appreciate?

See [www.servantevangelism.com](http://www.servantevangelism.com) for an idea.

4. What might be some dangerous neighborhoods in our community where Christians are afraid to go?

Who is speaking for Jesus in such places?

How could we help children in those neighborhoods?

What is a way we could serve, even though it was a little crazy & risky?

What might help us offset the risks of going into dangerous places with the gospel?

5. Every church wants to recruit prosperous, educated, moral people as members. Who are some people that nobody is inviting to their church?

*Troubled teens, the poor, minority groups, people with a rough past history, people with disabilities, etc.*

How could we reach out to these "less-desirable" people?

*Read the examples below about "Churches taking risks."*

What might happen to our church if a bunch of "less-desirable" people joined us?

*We might look more like the group that followed Jesus around!*

If such people are reluctant to join us in our building, how could we go to them with the love of Jesus?

### III. Other resources

**The point** – If God is for us, who can be against us? Christians have nothing to fear, not even death. So we can serve God boldly!

#### Churches taking risks

*Treasure in Clay Jars* tells the story of nine churches from several denominations who took risks to honor their calling from God. “Most of the congregations we visited took risks by ministering to those society has rejected. Bellevue houses a school for high-school dropouts in the church building. Diane, a woman at Spring Garden, has a ministry with women who have been sexually abused... She has experience a lot of support in the congregation for her ministry, even though the women with whom she works are generally uncomfortable in the church because of their marginalization...

Transfiguration Parish is located in a neighborhood that is predominantly Hispanic Catholic and Hasidic Jewish. One day Sister Marcy, principal of Transfiguration School, looked out her door to see several Jewish men chasing and then attacking an African-American man who had allegedly stolen something from a Jewish fruit market. She came running out as the police arrived, about to arrest the thief. She told the police, ‘If you arrest this man, you also have to arrest the ones who are beating him up.’” (p. 80).

#### Prayer

Pray for the lost

Pull out a local map and pray for specific streets where there is little light

Ask God for courage to take risks for the kingdom.

**Kid-friendly activity.** *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Sing “This Little Light of Mine”

Read Luke 10:25-37 aloud. You might act it out.

Pair up kids with adults. Share about a kid you know who has a rough time behaving at school. Adults share with kids about a struggling kid you knew when you were younger. How could we as God's followers help kids who are having a hard time?

What would be hard about helping a kid who is having a hard time?

## The Church has Left the Building

### Matthew 10 – Taking risks for God

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme for this meeting: **We take risks for the kingdom** by living in ways that non-Christians might consider unusual.

Unfortunately, Christians are sometimes known as timid, weak souls who would rather hide in a church building than be involved in real-world problems. Yet such timidity hardly represents the courageous love in action that Jesus demonstrated. If we want to be engaged in kingdom work, we need to develop eyes to see the problems of a hurting world and the courage to address those problems.

Matthew 10 was Jesus' commission of the apostles, and this journey was not for pansies. He warned them that they would face abuse and hardship, so travel light. May we find courage in these early marching orders!

Leadership tip: Take some risks with your group. Challenge them to be involved in the problems of society, in the name of Jesus.

**I. Relate** *Use a few of these to introduce the theme and “break the ice.” No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage individuals through these questions.*

- ❖ When have you done something risky? How did you come through the experience?
- ❖ What would be the most difficult part about being a missionary in a 3rd-world nation? What would motivate someone to give up the comforts of life for the sake of the kingdom? Offer a prayer of blessing for missionaries living in dangerous places.
- ❖ What would be the most dangerous place to live in our community? How many children do you think live in that neighborhood?

“The Church has Left the Building” is a series of Small Group guides written in support of the Missional Church curriculum by David Wray and Chris Benjamin. It is designed around the concept of adults discussing material in Bible class and then processing it in small group meetings during the same week. These guides, as well as the Missional Church curriculum, are based on the book, *Treasure in Clay Jars*, by Lois Barrett and others.

Training tools and study guides are at [www.collegehills.org](http://www.collegehills.org), then Ministries, then LIFE groups.