

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.*

1. We have spent 11 weeks discussing how the church's mission is bigger than what occurs in the church building. How would you describe God's mission? What is God's dream for the world?
The mission of God is loving relationships – to restore all of creation to harmony with himself and with one another. See Isaiah 65:17-25.

What role does the church play in God's dreams? What role could we play?

The church is called and sent community of love who serves the mission of God by demonstrating renewed lives, by practicing genuine relationships, and by serving others unselfishly.

What do you think God might do if the church failed to serve the mission? Do you think he would find another way to reclaim his kids?

Read Matthew 28:18-20 aloud.

2. What is the setting for this passage? Who is speaking, who is listening, and what is the occasion?

What does Jesus say about his authority? What gives him the confidence to make such a bold claim?

A dead man can say anything he wants because he has nothing to fear, especially if he just came back to life.

Who is a leader you know who commands respect in a way that people feel safe when he or she is around? How well does such a leader motivate you?

3. Based on this authority, what orders does Jesus give his followers? What are the action verbs in 19-20?

How well are we doing around the world?

Depends on which statistics you view, but most indicate Christianity is growing worldwide but losing ground in America.

How well is our congregation doing with Jesus' instructions? Which is our strength – going, making disciples, baptizing, or teaching?

4. What does Jesus promise in verse 20?

What obstacles keep you from joining Jesus serving in the world?

What gives you more confidence and motivation to serve – Jesus' resurrection authority or his promise of continued presence?

5. What is God's mission for your life?

How does the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20) influence your sense of mission?

If you wanted to bring your life in line with God's mission, how would you figure out God's dreams for you?

6. Who are some people God loves that we could reach in a better way? Who lives in our community but never attends our church?
There are multiple unchurched groups in every community – racial minorities, people with handicaps or family problems, people who think they would not fit (too poor, too dumb, too sinful, too messed up, etc.)

If people are reluctant to attend our church, what is a way we could take the church to them? How could we be Jesus around them?

7. In what ways does a church building support Jesus' instructions?

What are some ways that a church building can distract us?

Field of Dreams is a great movie, but a terrible outreach strategy – "If you build it, they will come." What happens too often is you build it and then your leaders' best energy goes to maintaining it.

What are we doing to get the church (us) out of the building and into the world? In what ways are we going?

III. Other resources

The point – God’s kingdom will not fail (Matt. 16:18). He loves the world and he will constantly work to bring more people back into loving relationship with himself. Our greatest honor and most satisfying work is to join him in realizing his dreams.

Prayer

Pray for God’s kingdom to succeed. And pray that we will love God’s kingdom more than we love our personal agendas. Ask for wisdom and courage to discern the best ways to serve God today. Pray about the future of your group. Pray for new people to join.

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.*

Assign each kid a mission.
Give someone a hug. Go get some soap. Do 10 jumping jacks. Etc.

When a leader gives you a mission, what should you do?

Read Matthew 28:18-20 aloud.

What authority did Jesus have as he spoke?

What mission did he give his followers?

What are some ways we are doing that today?

What are some ways that kids can follow Jesus’ mission?

The Church has Left the Building

Matt. 28 – Mission Accomplished? Not yet

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme for this meeting: **Responding faithfully to the on-going call of God’s mission.**

The final class outline called participants to recognize that God’s mission is not yet finished. The church is not yet living up to our calling, and the world has not yet learned to honor Jesus. While the church undoubtedly does a lot of good, we have not lived out God’s dreams for the kingdom. And it will take an act of God to change us into the people he calls us to be.

This discussion focuses on the great commission in Matthew 28, and it calls the group to consider how we are doing.

Leadership tip: The end of a study offers a good time to evaluate. You can use a covenant to guide that discussion, or you can ask how everyone is doing. Most participants do not have a strong opinion on the next topic, but they will have feelings about how the group is doing. If you discuss curriculum, have at least one option in mind before raising the question.

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.*

- ❖ If you were dressed the way you feel, what would you be wearing?
- ❖ What has been the most helpful thing about this study?
- ❖ When is a time you felt good about the church? When is a time you think we failed to honor God’s calling?

“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, then Ministries, then LIFE groups.