

for God so loved the world
that He gave His only be
Son, that whoever believ
in Him should not perish
but have everlasting life.



adult
curriculum



Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma
www.bgco.org

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WELCOME TO MY316!

If you could choose one way to teach everybody in your church how to share Jesus with others, how would you choose to do it? MY316 would be a good option because it helps every church member, even children, to not only share their testimony verbally, but to put it into action as well.

MY316 does this by helping you use what you already know to share Jesus with your friends and family. You know John 3:16 and you know what He has done for you; so, you already know all you need to know to share Jesus with others.

Researchers tell us that John 3:16 is a verse that most people in Oklahoma already know. This makes it a familiar method to share. John 3:16 is the gospel in a nutshell. This makes it a thorough way to share. John 3:16 was originally spoken by Christ Himself. This makes it a powerful way to share! And what better way to share your own story than linking it with the powerful words of our Lord!

So, we hope you will use this valuable resource to equip your people to effectively reach your community for Jesus Christ in a personal and powerful way.

TWO OPTIONS

We have provided you with two options to utilize MY316.

OPTION ONE: We have included complete lesson plans for five sessions that will fit into a normal Sunday School time frame. This will allow your group to work through the MY316 emphasis in detail and to practice the various elements as a group.

OPTION TWO: We have also included a MY316 Highlight plan. This is a 10-12 minute emphasis that you could use at the beginning of your class period each week to encourage your members to get

involved in reaching their friends and family and to “take it personally.”

RESOURCES

Each downloaded session has a lesson plan for the leader and student handouts to help with note taking and assignments.

In addition, optional pieces can be downloaded from www.bgco.org/MY316. You can also call Lindsey Craig at (405) 942-3000 ext. 4313 to order materials.

Also, visit www.MY316.com and read the information and testimonies to see how God is blessing people and how He is using this powerful witnessing tool. You can even add your own thoughts and stories.

For God so loved
the world that He gave
His only begotten Son,
that whoever believes
in Him
should not perish
but have everlasting life.

John 3:16 (NKJV)



Have you taken it personally?
discover the
real meaning OF
John 3:16

WEEK ONE: STORIES

BEFORE THE SESSION BEGINS

- Copy Worksheets (1 per member).
- Gather Pens or Pencils.
- Read through your lesson plan and work through the worksheet for yourself so you can lead others through it.
- Prepare optional posters, handouts or visuals as suggested to highlight the session (see attached page for suggestions).

REMEMBER: This is MY 316. You want your class to take it personally and interject themselves into the story. This means you will need to focus on being a facilitator, not a lecturer. At times you may have to endure the awkwardness of silence as people consider some things they have never looked at before. You can help this process by looking ahead each week and making a personal contact or two with some class members, asking them to be prepared to share in class.

Also be aware that your class should have lost people present as well, so there may be items that they cannot share experientially. Pray that by hearing the stories of others, they may realize that something is missing from their lives. What a blessing if your first “MY316” victories came from those closest to you!

OPENING (10 minutes)

Take a few minutes to open your class with some of your usual procedures (welcome guests, call for prayer requests or reports, announcements, etc.).

INTRODUCTION:

EVERYBODY HAS A STORY (15 minutes)

Everybody has a story and most everybody loves to tell it. It may be a favorite vacation story, a funny or special pet they had, that frantic trip to the hospital maternity ward, and the list could go on and on. The truth is, we all have many of those stories and

we love to tell them over and over in spite of how many times you’ve already heard them.

Verbal Activity: Ask 3-4 class members to share one of these stories, but warn them ahead of time that they only have 1 minute to share the story. Appoint a time keeper!

It’s hard to tell these stories in a limited time, isn’t it? It’s hard to summarize all of the feelings, events and outcomes that succinctly. So, imagine how difficult it might be to summarize your life in a couple of sentences! Certainly you couldn’t recall specific events, dates or characters. But could you, in one short thought, in a brief paragraph of 2-3 sentences, sum up the purpose and plan of your life? Try it.

Worksheet Activity: On the worksheet, ask them to write a brief paragraph of 25 words or less that would sum up their life’s purpose, goal or focus. After a few minutes, ask a few to share what they wrote.

HIS STORY (10 minutes)

Jesus was a master story teller and could say a lot in very little space. His parables are literary masterpieces. Most of these parables were less than a dozen verses. One of the longest, “The Prodigal Son,” was less than a page long, 21 verses, and yet Charles Dickens called it the greatest short story ever written!

In just 33 years on this earth, Jesus lived a full life. *Read John 21:24-25.* John, a personal witness of only three years of that life, says that a library as big as the earth could not contain His story. And since He was here before time, it could truly be said that all of history is HIS story.

But the Master storyteller on more than one occasion summarized His life in a single statement.

Worksheet Activity: Ask various class members to look up the verses listed on the worksheet (Matthew 18:11; Matthew 20:28; Mark 2:17; Luke 4:43; Luke 19:10; John 3:17; John 10:10) and read them aloud to the class. How would you sum up His purpose?

These verses are just a sampling of the statements that Christ made about Himself, which were echoed by many of the men who penned the Scriptures. But of all of those “red letter verses” none is more beloved, more widely known or more descriptive of His life purpose than this:

Read John 3:16 from the NKJV and display your John 3:16 poster. Leave it up during the 5 week emphasis as a reminder and memory tool.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

That’s it! Twenty-five words! The gospel in a nutshell! The reason Christ came to this earth...the summation of His life’s purpose. He showed God’s love by giving up His life so that we could have life! And thanks to that, we can now be a part of His story!

OUR SPIRITUAL HERITAGE (20 minutes)

There is only one way to receive this gift of eternal life. Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV) says it this way:

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Some of us came to the knowledge of this saving grace at a very early age. Some found it much later in life. Some of us struggled to accept it while others found it much easier. It is a very individual decision as unique as our own life stories. And still, through the years we have seen some identifiable similarities in the testimonies of those who have found the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

The first similarity is the power of prayer. Ultimately, it is the power of prayer that brings salvation. That moment when we confess our sins and ask Him to forgive us and be our Savior is the moment that salvation comes to the new believer. But more often than not, long before we said that prayer, there were others praying for us. Some prayed for our protection that we would live long enough to see the day we would utter the sinner’s prayer. Others prayed for our brokenness so we would humble ourselves before God. Still others

prayed for our enlightenment, that we would see and understand His gift of salvation. Some of these people were well known to us, grandparents, parents, siblings, pastors, and youth leaders. Others were silent warriors who we may never know, but they were praying that we would know Him.

Worksheet Activity: Who prayed for you? Using names, initials or symbols, list the people who you knew were praying for your salvation. Ask if anyone would share about someone from their list.

A second similarity was the shared Word. It may have been in a single revival service, a week of camp or a weekly Sunday School class over a long period of time; but more than likely, someone shared the gospel with you. They may have given their own testimony, told a Bible story or shared a tract, but somehow or another, they helped you see that you were a sinner and in need of God’s forgiveness. And while we are grateful for the great evangelistic crusades of preachers like Billy Graham, it is highly likely that the person who shared their faith with you was a parent, a friend or a Sunday School teacher.

Worksheet Activity: Who shared with you? Using names, initials or symbols, list the people who shared their faith with you in one form or another. Ask if anyone would share about someone from their list.

A third similarity was the example of a Christ-like life. It’s one thing to give lip service to the Lord, but another thing to live the Christian life. The world today is not blessed to have personally seen Christ in the flesh, but they are still hungering for His love. And Christ’s plan is for us to be a witness...an example... of that love. And He has empowered us to do just that!

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:8 (NKJV)

Recently an actress was recognized for her portrayal of a real life character whose life was a living

example of Christian service. In an interview she was asked about how this role influenced her life. Her response is a strong reminder that we must “walk the walk” as well as “talk the talk.” She said, “One of my biggest questions was how people use their faith in their religion as a banner and then they don’t do the right thing. But they go, ‘I’m a good Christian, and I go to church, and this is the way you should live your life.’ ...in a live interview we had, I said, ‘One of my largest concerns stepping into this was that whole banner-hold.’ I said, ‘It scared me because I’ve had experiences that haven’t been great. I don’t buy a lot of people who use that as their shield,’ and she [the person she portrayed] was so open and honest and forthright, and I said, ‘Wow, I’ve finally met someone who practices but doesn’t preach.’ ...I now have faith in those who say they represent a faith, whereas before I was like, ‘Do not give me a lecture on how to live my life when I know I’m a pretty decent human being. I might not go to church every day but I know I do the right thing or try to. You’re going to church and you’re still sleeping around on your wife and spending everyone’s money. How are you better than I am?’ So I’ve finally met people that walk the walk and it’s made me happy, really happy.”

Worksheet Activity: Who lived Christ for you? Using names, initials or symbols, list the people who you respected for their walk as a Christian. Ask if anyone would share about someone from their list.

MY316:

PRAYING, SHARING, SERVING (5 minutes)

Jesus was the ultimate example of what we have just discussed. He prayed for us when He walked this earth (John 17) and He still prays for us (Hebrews 7:25). He shared the testimony of the gospel with us in His teachings and He showed us the gospel in His service. Now He invites us to link our story to His and do the same, not in our power but His.

MY316 is a tool to help us hold ourselves and each other accountable to be like Jesus. *(Use the MY316 visual you made here and leave it up during the*

emphasis.) “MY” obviously emphasizes that this is a **personal** commitment. It’s not OUR316 but MY316. And while we will all rejoice in the fruit of this labor, we are still each commanded and expected to do our part (I Corinthians 3:13-15).

Over the next four weeks, we will look at “MY316” from this perspective:

MY3: Who are the three people that God would have me to pray for during the next few weeks? We will discuss prayer, its power and purpose. We will join with you in encouraging each other to pray for the lost and for the opportunity for someone... perhaps you...to share the gospel with them.

MY1: Who is one person with whom God is leading you to share your testimony? We will show you how to share your story in a simple and powerful way by integrating it into John 3:16.

MY6: How can I serve others? Faith without works is dead (James 2:20) and is often more detrimental to the sharing of the gospel than if we had said nothing at all. Jesus commanded us to be a servant to all. We will look at what the Bible says about serving and will come up with creative and innovative ways to serve others and show Christ’s love.

And finally we will wrap up our emphasis by giving you some great material to share with those you lead to the Lord to help answer their questions and grow them in the faith.

CLOSING

Evangelism doesn’t happen by accident and it must become personal and intentional if we are going to win a world that is rapidly heading down the wrong road. “MY316” is not a magic formula, but simply a reminder that to win the world we must pray, share and serve, and we must take it personally.

Ask for the class’ commitment and pray for your class as they accept this responsibility.



WEEK ONE: STORIES – Option 2

Ask for a couple of volunteers to attempt to summarize the essence of their life story in 25 words or less. After they make their attempts, point out that, while Jesus was a master storyteller whose personal history transcends time, He actually summed up the essence of His own story in 25 words. We find it in John 3:16. Read the verse or ask if anyone can quote it. Researchers tell us that this verse is quite possibly the most well known piece of Holy Scripture, quoted by believers and non-believers.

We all have unique life stories and yet, when we examine our spiritual heritages, we often find some common elements in the majority of Christians' spiritual heritages.

- 1) Somebody shared the story of Christ with them.
- 2) Somebody prayed for them.
- 3) Somebody showed them God's love in acts of service.
- 4) And, of course, all of them "will not perish, but have everlasting life."

Knowing this, the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma has launched MY316.com, an emphasis that calls on each of these commonalities in an effort to encourage and train the members of our churches to get personally involved in reaching their lost friends and family members.

(Consider using a poster to illustrate the following and serve as a visual reminder for the next few weeks. A suggested layout can be found in the Lesson 1 materials.)

MY: Take it personally. We are all commanded to be witnesses for Him.

3: Ask God to burden you for 3 lost friends for whom you will pray daily and focus your service.

1: Share your life story and your John 3:16 testimony with at least one of these three and

become involved in the one-on-one discipleship of a new believer.

6: Determine 6 ways you can serve these three people to show them practically the love of God. MY316.com is a clever way to remember this, but it is only a slogan if we don't take it personally and get involved. Over the next 4 weeks, we will give you some suggestions on how you can get involved. For more information go to my316.com.



Have you taken it personally?
discover the real meaning of
John 3:16



Who Prayed?

SESSION ONE: STORIES

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

JOHN 3:16 (NKJV)



Who Shared?

In 25 words or less...

Sum up your life's purpose, goal or focus.



Who Served?

MYP _____
3 P _____
1 S _____
6 S _____

for Go
SO L OV
the wo
that H e
ga ve
only
begott
So

Look it up!

Matthew 18:11

Matthew 20:28

Mark 2:17

Luke 4:43

Luke 19:10

John 3:17

John 10:10

SESSION ONE

POSTER / HANDOUT SUGGESTIONS

John 3:16 Poster

Under the section entitled “His Story” we suggest you make a large poster of the verse from the New King James Version and leave it in a highly visible place through the study. This will keep everyone using the same wording.

You may also consider printing copies on index cards, or distributing blank cards and having everyone write their own copy (we learn by doing), and encourage them to hang this on the bathroom mirror, in the middle of their steering wheel, on their computer screen, or wherever they would see it on a regular basis as a memory tool and a reminder of the MY316 emphasis.

MY316 Visual

As a visual aid for the section entitled “My316: Praying, Sharing, Serving” and as a reminder for the next four weeks, make a visual that will help the class remember the elements of MY316. Be creative!

One suggestion would be to cut out individual letters and numbers from colored butcher paper or construction paper to spell out “MY316.” On four strips of paper, write the words personal, prayer, share and serve. Using four different colors for the letters and matching words would help make the correlations clear. Hang these on the wall as they appear on the worksheet (see at right) and then refer to it each week.

For God so loved
the world that He gave
His only begotten Son,
that whoever believes in Him
should not perish
but have everlasting life.
John 3:16 (NKJV)

MY Personal

3 Pray

1 Share

6 Serve





Have you taken it
personally?
discover the
real meaning OF
John 3:16

WEEK TWO: SHARE

BEFORE THE SESSION BEGINS

- Copy Worksheets (1 per member).
- Gather Pens or Pencils.
- Read through your lesson plan and work through the worksheet for yourself so you can lead others through it.
- Pre-enlist a member to practice doing their personal story in 3 minutes or less and ask them to come prepared to share it. Do the same for your story as well (see Tying It All Together).
- Option: Copy the sample testimonies, transitions and presentation page so class members can read them during that part of the session and keep them as guidelines.

OPENING (10 minutes)

Take a few minutes to open your class with some of your usual procedures (welcome guests, call for prayer requests or reports, announcements, etc.)

INTRODUCTION: A MESSAGE TO DELIVER

(5 minutes)

Verbal Activity: Appoint a timer as in Session 1 and ask your class, "In 30 seconds or less, can you tell me what was some of the best news you ever received and how it was delivered?" Allow 3-4 people to share. Then follow up with the story below.

George Sweeting, in his book "The No-Guilt Guide for Witnessing," tells of a man by the name of John Currier who in 1949 was found guilty of murder and sentenced to life in prison. Later he was transferred and paroled to work on a farm near Nashville, Tennessee.

In 1968, Currier's sentence was terminated, and a letter bearing the good news was sent to him. But John never saw the letter, nor was he told anything about it. Life on that farm was hard and without promise for the future. Yet John kept doing what he was told even after the farmer for whom he worked had died.

Ten years went by. Then a state parole officer learned about Currier's plight, found him, and told him that his sentence had been terminated. He was a free man.

*Sweeting concluded that story by asking, "Would it matter to you if someone sent you an important message -- the most important in your life -- and year after year the urgent message was never delivered?" (Copied from *Our Daily Bread*, November 6, 1994.)*

John Currier obviously saw other people living in freedom. They were setting an example for him on how to live in freedom. But what he needed were the words which would tell him HOW he could be free, and there was only one source for that.

We who have heard the good news and experienced freedom through Christ are responsible to proclaim it to others still enslaved by sin. Are we doing all we can to make sure that people get the message?

IT'S SIMPLY WHAT I KNOW (20 minutes)

In John 9 we find one of the most powerful and convincing testimonies given in the scriptures. It is that of a man, blind from birth, who Jesus healed with a divine mud pack. After his healing, this unschooled, baby believer was called before the religious leaders of the day to give an account of his healing, which he gave willingly and excitedly.

As usual, the religious leaders were attempting to accuse Jesus of wrong-doing so they could label Him a sinner. The formerly blind man heard these accusations and when pressed a second time for his take on what had happened he said,

"Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."

John 9:25 (NKJV)

That's the bottom line of a strong testimony, simply telling what you KNOW to be true and saying it because you believe it!

A famous Bible teacher was once asked, "What is the greatest thought you ever had?" His answer was: "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so." When we KNOW what the Bible tells us and we couple it with what we KNOW has happened to us, sharing our faith testimony becomes much easier.

Joe Friday of Dragnet fame used to challenge his witnesses to be succinct with his famous line, "Just the facts, ma'am, just the facts." That's what people need to hear from us...the facts that we believe. And what are the facts?

1) The Facts of Your Story

Worksheet Activity: On the worksheet ask the class to write down a few factual statements about their experiences of finding Jesus. You can lead them through it with the following three comments to keep them on pace.

In a couple of sentences, write down what your life was like before you knew Christ. Be honest without a lot of details. If you were saved very young, it may have been the typical life of a small-town kid. If you came from a bad situation, it may have been a life filled with emptiness and heartache. Whatever the case, sum it up in a sentence or two.

Then, in 3-4 sentences, describe the "who, when and where" of how you met Jesus. You may find yourself in a conversation where you can be detailed, but if you had to very quickly tell someone when it was and where you were when someone shared the gospel with you that caused you to realize your need for God, what would you say?

Now, in a couple of sentences, using terms that you would use normally, what would you say it is like having Jesus in your heart?

There, you've made Joe Friday proud!

2) The Facts of His Story

But our story, apart from His story, is really powerless to save. There are some important facts we need to know from the scriptures that must be shared as well.

Worksheet Activity: On the worksheet ask the class to write down the factual statements found in these scriptures. Ask for volunteers to look up a scripture and give their answer. Suggested responses are below.

I John 4:7-8: God loves not because He is loving, but because He IS love.

I John 2:2 / 2 Peter 3:9: God doesn't love only good people, He loves the whole world-good and bad.

Romans 5:8 / Isaiah 53:5: God showed His love by sending His Son to die for our sins.

Romans 10:9-10: Believing is an internal knowledge proved by an external action.

John 10:10 / I John 5:12: If we believe in the Son, we will have the abundant and eternal life God promised.

Note that these facts are repeated throughout the Scriptures in numerous places and in a variety of circumstances. But also note that they can all be summed up in that one 25 word statement.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

JOHN 3:16 (NKJV)

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER (15 minutes)

Sharing your testimony effectively means weaving your story and His story together so that others can see that Jesus is relevant to you and how you live. It also means sharing it with confidence. This doesn't mean memorizing it as a canned speech, but it does mean knowing the facts so well that they are second nature, and being prepared so that you will not be tripped up by minor distractions.

1) Begin By Telling Your Own Story

Learn to share your story in 3 minutes or less. Here are a couple of samples of different types of testimonies. Notice they contain clear facts without too many distracting details.

Sample #1: *You know, when I was a little kid, life was pretty simple and uncomplicated because I didn't know much. But the older I got, the more I began to realize that there were some pretty big*

challenges in life and I knew I wasn't really prepared to handle them very well. I knew something was missing in my life. Then when I was at summer camp, a guy was sharing with us about living without fear, having confidence, having a full life. I knew that's what I wanted so I asked one of my counselors how I could know that feeling. They shared with me about how Jesus came to give us that kind of life and that how believing in Him and following His ways would bring that kind of peace. I asked Jesus to forgive me of my sins and to help me change and the difference was immediately evident. I have found a real peace in knowing that He is guiding my life. I don't have all of the answers to life, but I know Who does and that gives me great comfort.

Sample #2: For a lot of years I was kind of a mess. I didn't know what I wanted, so I tried a little of everything, but none of it really made me happy or gave me any real satisfaction. A couple of my co-workers seemed to kind of have it all together, but I think I was too envious to ask them about it. Besides, we didn't exactly run in the same circles. But one day, one of them shared with me at coffee break how they had really struggled early in life. He even mentioned some of the very things I was wrestling with. I asked him how he got over it and he told me it was when he found Jesus and discovered that the secret to a full and meaningful life was in knowing Him. The more he talked, the more I knew that was what I was looking for. A couple of days later after work I asked him how I could know Jesus like that and, right there in the lobby of our building, I asked Jesus to forgive me of my sins and to help me change the way I was living. Since then, I have had a much different outlook on life. I find greater purpose in what I do and I've even found the strength to mend a few of the bridges I burned before I knew Him.

Verbal activity: Share your "under 3 minute" personal story and ask the pre-enlisted person to do the same. Encourage class members to work this week on preparing their own "under 3 minute" story by writing it down and practicing it. Ask them to bring them with them next week. (See MY 316 Homework page.)

2) Transition to His Story

Folks often get hung up on trying to move from their contemporary story to the historical story of the Bible. Having a few "transitional statements"

can make this so much easier. Find a couple that fit you and commit them to memory. Here are a few samples:

Sample #1: *You know, the longer I know the love of Jesus, the more I understand the things He said. Like when He said, "For God so loved the..." Do you realize what that means?*

Sample #2: *One of the things my friend said to me that really stuck with me was actually something Jesus said. He said, "For God so loved the world..." That pretty well sums up the whole thing doesn't it?*

Sample #3: *Back when I was a kid I learned something I didn't understand until I found Jesus. You may have learned it, too. Jesus said it actually. He said, "For God so loved the world..." Have you ever thought about all that's included in that one statement?*

3) Tell His Story

There is no rule that says you have to use a tract or Bible when witnessing; in fact you may find yourself in situations where that is impossible. But, if you have the MY316 tract which has the verse printed on it or a pocket New Testament you can simply say something like, "I carry that verse with me in my heart and my pocket." Some people are visual learners and this may help them, plus you can leave the tract with them. Once you get to the verse, you can use it phrase by phrase to share the story of salvation. Personalize it your own way, but here is a sample of how to use John 3:16 to share.

Sample: *It says, "For God so loved..." You know I never knew how much God loved me until I let my guard down and opened my heart to let Him love me. But the cool part is, He doesn't just love me, He loves you, too. In fact it says that "God so loved the world." Not just church people, not just preachers or missionaries...but the whole world. He loves us even when we are not being good. And He showed that because it says He so loved us "that He gave His only begotten Son." "Gave" is a short word that sums up a lot. When you read the whole story you'll learn that He gave Him to be mocked, beaten, and crucified for our sins. The Bible says that even while we were sinning, He loved us enough to let that happen. And then He says, "That whoever believes in Him." That means whoever truly believes He loves us that much. It means that we know and believe Christ really died for us and that He rose from the*

grave to be our Lord and Savior. To believe He is Lord means to turn away from our sin and the things that defeat us and trust Jesus to save us from our sin. And then comes the coolest part of all, “should not perish but have eternal life.” We don’t deserve His love at all, but for those who believe, He wants to give it to you now and forever. We get to live with Him and experience His love forever.



Have you taken it personally?
discover the **real meaning** OF **John 3:16**

Following John 3:16 as an outline does several things for us.

- It keeps our presentation biblical
- It keeps it familiar
- It invokes the power of the Word
- It keeps us efficiently on task
- It leads to a logical conclusion

It will take practice, but the payoff could be eternal for those with whom we share.

CLOSING (10 minutes)

When the blind man of John 9 shared his story, he also took it to the next level by extending an invitation to his listeners. In verse 27 he asks the Pharisees, “Do you want to become His disciples, too?” If we share the story but never ask our listeners to receive Christ, we’ve missed the point. To simply know the message is not enough; to randomly share the message is better. But to intentionally take our story to someone we believe needs it and ask them to join us on this wonderful journey with Jesus...now that has power!

During the next week you have an assignment. It is spelled out on your “MY316 Homework” sheet.

- 1) Write out your personal story and practice it. Bring your finished testimony with you to small group next week.
- 2) Practice sharing the story of salvation using John 3:16 (NKJV).
- 3) Identify people you know who you believe need to hear your story and His story. Then begin to pray that God will instill in you the burden and create opportunities for you to share one-on-one with one or more of these people.



WEEK TWO: SHARE – Option 2

In John 9 we find one of the most powerful and convincing testimonies given in the scriptures. It is that of a man, blind from birth, who Jesus healed with a divine mud pack. After his healing, this unschooled, baby believer was called before the religious leaders of the day to give an account of his healing, which he gave willingly and excitedly.

As usual, the religious leaders were attempting to accuse Jesus of wrong-doing so they could label Him a sinner. The formerly blind man heard these accusations and when pressed a second time for his take on what had happened he said,

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John 9:25 (NKJV)

That's the bottom line of a strong testimony... simply telling what you KNOW to be true and saying it like...rather because...you believe it!

A famous Bible teacher was once asked, "What is the greatest thought you ever had?" His answer was: "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so." When we KNOW what the Bible tells us and we couple it with what we KNOW has happened to us, sharing our faith testimony becomes much easier.

Our personal story provides a wonderful opening that engages people with the personal and practical nature of salvation. John 3:16 provides the perfect outline for the plan of salvation as it does several things for us.

- It keeps our presentation biblical
- It keeps it familiar
- It invokes the power of the Word
- It keeps us efficiently on task
- It leads to a logical conclusion

It will take practice, but the payoff could be eternal for those with whom we share. Here is a sample testimony from the MY316.com study which

illustrates how a person could share their own story, transition to His story and share the plan of salvation; and all in less than 10 minutes.

For a lot of years I was kind of a mess. I didn't know what I wanted, so I tried a little of everything, but none of it really made me happy or gave me any real satisfaction. A couple of my co-workers seemed to kind of have it all together, but I think I was too envious to ask them about it. Besides, we didn't exactly run in the same circles. But one day, one of them shared with me at coffee break how they had really struggled early in life...he even mentioned some of the very things I was wrestling with. I asked him how he got over it and he told me it was when he found Jesus and discovered that the secret to a full and meaningful life was in knowing Him. The more he talked, the more I knew that was what I was looking for. A couple of days later after work I asked him how I could know Jesus like that and, right there in the lobby of our building, I asked Jesus to forgive me of my sins and to help me change the way I was living. Since then, I have had a much different outlook on life. I find greater purpose in what I do and I've even found the strength to mend a few of the bridges I burned before I knew Him.

And you know, the longer I know the love of Jesus, the more I understand the things He said. Like when He said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life," well, do you realize what that means?

It says, "For God so loved..." you know I never knew how much God loved me until I let my guard down and opened my heart to let Him love me. But the cool part is, He doesn't just love me, He loves you, too. In fact it says that "God so loved the world." Not just church people, not just preachers or missionaries but the whole world. He loves us even when we are not being good. And He showed that because it says He so loved us "that He gave His only begotten Son." "Gave" is a short word that sums up a lot. When you read the whole story you'll learn that He gave Him to be mocked, beaten, and crucified for our sins. The Bible says that even while we were sinning, He loved us enough to let that happen. And then He says, "That whoever believes in Him." That means whoever truly believes He loves us that much. It means that we know and believe Christ really died for us and that He rose from the grave to be our Lord and Savior. To believe He is

Lord means to turn away from our sin and the things that defeat us, and trust Jesus to save us from our sin. And then comes the coolest part of all, “should not perish but have eternal life.” We don’t deserve His love at all, but for those who believe, He wants to give it to you now and forever. We get to live with Him and experience His love forever.

MY316.com can help you become a powerful witness for Christ as it teaches you to share your faith efficiently and effectively.





MY316 HOMEWORK

1) On scratch paper, write out your personal story of your life before Christ, your experience finding Christ and your life after accepting Christ. Refine it and practice saying it several times. Once you have it where you can share it in under 3 minutes, write it in the space below. Then consider bringing it with you to class next week to share with the group.

2) Practice sharing Jesus' story using John 3:16 as your basic outline.

3) On a note card, write the initials, names, or make a symbol indicating those close to you who you believe need to hear your story and the story of Jesus' love for them. Post or carry this list in a place(s) where you will see it

regularly and be reminded to pray that God will create a burden and an opportunity to share one-on-one with at least one of these people.

FINAL NOTE: It may be that this assignment presents a dilemma for you because you are still on the road to finding Christ in your life. If this is the case, please consider the verses you read and discussed in your small group. Think of the personal stories you heard. Realize that God does have a wonderful plan for your life. Invite Him into your heart now. If you need help doing this, call your small group leader or a Christian friend, they would love to share in this experience with you.

SAMPLE TESTIMONIES, TRANSITIONS & PRESENTATION

PERSONAL STORIES

Sample #1: You know, when I was a little kid, life was pretty simple and uncomplicated because I didn't know much. But the older I got, the more I began to realize that there were some pretty big challenges in life and I knew I wasn't really prepared to handle them very well. I knew something was missing in my life. Then when I was at summer camp, a guy was sharing with us about living without fear...having confidence...having a full life. I knew that's what I wanted so I asked one of my counselors how I could know that feeling. They shared with me about how Jesus came to give us that kind of life and that how believing in Him and following His ways would bring that kind of peace. I asked Jesus to forgive me of my sins and help me change and the difference was immediately evident. I have found a real peace in knowing that He is guiding my life. I don't have all of the answers to life, but I know Who does and that gives me great comfort.

Sample #2: For a lot of years I was kind of a mess. I didn't know what I wanted, so I tried a little of everything, but none of it really made me happy or gave me any real satisfaction. A couple of my co-workers seemed to kind of have it all together, but I think I was too envious to ask them about it. Besides, we didn't exactly run in the same circles. But one day, one of them shared with me at coffee break how they had really struggled early in life...he even mentioned some of the very things I was wrestling with. I asked him how he got over it and he told me it was when he found Jesus and discovered that the secret to a full and meaningful life was in knowing Him. The more he talked, the more I knew that was what I was looking for. A couple of days later after work I asked him how I could know Jesus like that and, right there in the lobby of our building I asked Jesus to forgive me of my sins and help me change the way I was living. Since then, I have had a much different outlook on life, I find greater purpose in what I do, and I've even found the strength to mend a few of the bridges I burned before I knew Him.

TRANSITIONS

Sample #1: You know, the longer I know the love of Jesus, the more I understand the things He said. Like when He said, "For God so loved the ..." Do you realize what that means?

Sample #2: One of the things my friend said to me that really stuck with me was actually something Jesus said. He said, "For God so loved the world..." That pretty well sums up the whole thing doesn't it?

Sample #3: Back when I was kid I learned something I didn't understand until I found Jesus. You may have learned it, too. Jesus said it actually. He said, "For God so loved the world..." Have you ever thought about all that's included in that one statement?

GOSPEL PRESENTATION USING JOHN 3:16

It says, "For God so loved..." You know I never knew how much God loved me until I let my guard down and opened my heart to let Him love me. But the cool part is, He doesn't just love me, He loves you, too. In fact it says that "God so loved the world." Not just church people, not just preachers or missionaries...but the whole world. He loves us even when we are not being good. And He showed that because it says He so loved us "that He gave His one and only Son." "Gave" is a short word that sums up a lot. When you read the whole story you'll learn that He gave Him to be mocked, beaten, and crucified for our sins. The Bible says that even while we were sinning, He loved us enough to let that happen. And then He says, "That whoever believes in Him." That means whoever truly believes He loves us that much. It means that we know and believe Christ really died for us and that that He rose from the grave to be our Lord and Savior. To believe He is Lord means to turn away from our sin and the things that defeat us and trust Jesus to save us from our sin. And then comes the coolest part of all, "should not perish but have eternal life." We don't deserve His love at all, but for those who believe, He wants to give it to you now and forever. We will live with Him and His love forever.



WEEK THREE: PRAY

BEFORE THE SESSION BEGINS

- Copy Worksheets (1 per member).
- Gather Pens or Pencils.
- Gather index cards or half sheets of typing paper for the worksheet activity.
- Read through your lesson plan and work through the worksheet for yourself so you can lead others through it.
- Optional: If you do not have copies of the MY316 tract available, consider printing the “model sinner’s prayer” on index cards so class members can have a copy. You will find this in the “CLOSING section.”

OPENING (10 minutes)

Take a few minutes to open your class with your usual procedures (welcome guests, call for prayer requests / reports, announcements, etc.)

INTRODUCTION:

STANDING IN THE NEED (5 minutes)

The old spiritual states, “It’s me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer,” and, most certainly, we all need prayer for daily strength. Additionally, there are times when we need the power of prayer for extraordinarily challenging times. But could it be that we have emphasized the “me” to the exclusion of others? One Christian research group’s findings would suggest so. They stated that five years ago the number one request coming into their prayer lines across America was: pray for my lost family and loved ones that they do not go to hell! It is number eight today. It has been replaced by number one: pray for my physical body, and number two: pray for my financial prosperity.

Often when we practice intercessory prayer in our small groups at church, we shift the “me” to the “we” as we pray for our fellow Christians who are

struggling with health issues, employment problems or other family crises. And while we are commanded to do this, pray for our brothers and sisters, the time we spend on “me” and “we” often precludes us praying for “them”, the lost. The late Adrian Rogers said, “We spend more time praying for the saved who are sick than for the unsaved who are lost, more time trying to keep the saints out of Heaven than the lost out of Hell.”

To pray for the lost is a prime directive for Christians, and it comes with a promise. James 5:16 tells us that the “fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” God has called us to stand in the gap for those who are lost. Charles Spurgeon, once said, “If sinners... perish, let them perish with our arms around their knees. Let no one go [to Hell] unwarned and unprayed for.”

MEANINGFUL SPECIFICS (15 minutes)

Zig Ziglar, in speaking of the road to success, stated, “You cannot make it as a wandering generality. You must become a meaningful specific.” This could be equally applied to success in sharing our faith and to the prayer involved in that effort. General prayer “for the lost of the world” and those who don’t know the Lord is not powerless, but it is rarely effectual in OUR lives...the lives of the pray-ers.

When we become “meaningfully specific” in our prayer life, it increases the fervency of our prayers. Evangelistic prayer concerns which have names, faces, families, relationships, etc. punctuate the urgency of the need for salvation. Reflecting on the earlier Spurgeon quote, we would most likely not lock our arms around the knees of a stranger who might be headed in the wrong direction. But we would readily entangle that loved one who is about to step into the path of certain death. We must learn to love and care more about mankind in general, but there is no better or easier place to initiate that love than in the lives of those we know best.

Worksheet Activity: Lead your class through this exercise, taking time to truly ponder the listings. Using the three categories, ask the class to list those they know well who need a personal relationship with Jesus. They can keep this list as a prayer reminder. Then pass out index cards or half sheets of typing paper and ask the group to record their list again and post these on a wall in the classroom as a weekly prayer reminder. If they prefer to be

discrete, tell them to use initials, first names only, or even a symbol. You will refer to this list again next week, but this could easily become a permanent list to which you can not only add names, but highlight those who come to know the Lord. Call attention to the "FOCUS" instructions as well.

WE ARE THE ANSWER (20 minutes)

Ask for a volunteer to read Luke 10:2.

Depending on the translation you use, Jesus says the fields are white unto harvest, the harvest is plentiful, or the harvest is truly great.

Ask: What is the harvest to which He is referring?

Obviously it is the souls of men and women, boys and girls who need to know the Lord. In John 4:35, Jesus repeats this thought, but He is a little more emphatic when He says, "Open your eyes and see the harvest." In other words, the harvest is right outside your door...you can see it!

Call attention to the names on the wall that have just been posted and/or those on their prayer lists.

This is our harvest. And now comes the important part. Notice that Jesus did not say, "The workers are few, so pray that God will intervene and harvest the field for us." No, He said, "Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send out workers into His field." He's looking for a crew of harvesters and that crew is us! And our tools are not combines and threshers, but, as Revelation 12:11 implies, our tenacious testimony.

That's why when we pray for our lost friends and family, we should expect that we may very well be the method God uses to answer our prayers and we must be prepared to share.

Refer to last week's homework assignment. Be prepared to share your 3 minute testimony and ask if anyone else would share what they have written. When each person has shared, ask them to post their testimony by their prayer lists. Encourage them to not only pray for the people on their lists, but to be willing and open to share their story with these people as God gives the opportunities. Encourage others, whether they read their testimony or not, to post their stories now or next week if they still need to finish writing them out.

CLOSING (10 minutes)

As we contemplate the role of prayer in evangelism, there are two sides to this coin. One is the prayer we pray for those that God has placed on our heart. We should pray without ceasing that our lost friends and family would come to know the saving grace of our Lord. Sometimes we might have a hard time knowing how to voice that prayer. If you need help, Paul summed it up nicely.

Ask for a volunteer to read Colossians 1:9-14.

But there is another prayer of vital importance. That is the prayer by the lost for their salvation. As much as we might "will it" for them, salvation is still a personal matter requiring the confession and profession of each individual. Often times they will have difficulty knowing how to voice that prayer. That's where your assistance is vital. While we know that there are no "magic words or incantations" to invoke salvation, it is important that those praying understand exactly what they are committing to the Lord and what they are asking Him to do. Knowing a "model sinner's prayer" can be very helpful. The "MY316" tract has a good example that you could use:

God, thank You for loving me. I believe Jesus came to show your love, to die on the cross for my sin, and was raised from the dead. I trust Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I commit my life completely to You. Thank you for your forgiveness and free gift of eternal life.

Remind your class of the following:

- 1) If they haven't already done so, encourage them to write out their personal story and practice it. Encourage them to bring their finished testimonies to small group next week and post it with the others.
- 2) Continue practicing their plan of salvation presentation using John 3:16 (NKJV).
- 3) Encourage them to ask God this week to help them focus in on three specific people from their prayer list and ask Him to send laborers into the field to witness to them. Ask Him specifically for the opportunity to share one-on-one with one of these people and begin preparing and watching for that opportunity.



WEEK THREE: PRAY – Option 2

The old spiritual states, “It’s me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer,” and, most certainly, we all need prayer for daily strength. Additionally, there are times when we need the power of prayer for extraordinarily challenging times. But could it be that we have emphasized the “me” to the exclusion of others? One Christian research group’s findings would suggest so. They stated that five years ago the number one request coming into their prayer lines across America was: pray for my lost family and loved ones that they do not go to hell! It is number eight today. It has been replaced by number one: pray for my physical body, and number two: pray for my financial prosperity.

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When we become “meaningfully specific” in our prayer life, it increases the fervency of our prayers. Evangelistic prayer concerns which have names, faces, families, relationships, etc. punctuate the urgency of the need for salvation. Reflecting on the earlier Spurgeon quote, we would most likely not lock our arms around the knees of a stranger who might be headed in the wrong direction. But we would readily entangle that loved one who is about to step into the path of certain death. We must learn to love and care more about mankind in general, but there is no better or easier place to initiate that love than in the lives of those we know best.

MY316 calls on us to get meaningfully specific by asking God to burden us for 3 specific people who we will focus our prayer life on until the day that they pray to receive Christ in their hearts.

As we contemplate the role of prayer in evangelism, there are two sides to this coin. One is the prayer we pray for those that God has placed on our heart. We should pray without ceasing that our lost friends and family would come to know the saving grace of our Lord. Sometimes we might have a hard time knowing how to voice that prayer. If you need help, Paul summed it up nicely. *Ask for a volunteer to read Colossians 1:9-14.*

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How is your evangelistic prayer life? Are you fervent and focused in your prayers or are you a wandering generality? MY316 can help.

SESSION THREE: PRAY

Do you have co-workers or business acquaintances, immediate or extended family members, or friends and neighbors that need a personal relationship with Christ? List them below. Use first names only or initials if you need to be discrete. Keep this list in your Bible or post it where you will be reminded to pray for them.

Work	Family	Friends

FOCUS



As you pray for those you have listed, ask God to begin to lead you to three of these people on whom He would have you fervently focus your service and your prayer life.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____



WEEK FOUR: SERVE

BEFORE THE SESSION BEGINS

- Copy Worksheets (1 per member).
- Copy the Sample Scenarios sheet for the Worksheet activity.
- Gather Pens or Pencils.
- Read through your lesson plan and work through the worksheet for yourself so you can lead others through it.

OPENING (10 minutes)

Take a few minutes to open your class with your usual procedures (welcome guests, call for prayer requests / reports, announcements, etc.)

INTRODUCTION: CHARISMA (10 minutes)

Charisma! It's that endearing quality that draws people: a winsome attitude, a magnetic personality, that certain something that just makes people want to be around you.

Jesus had it. He got 12 men to drop everything and follow Him. In three years He developed a following that created a stir that rattled in the halls of the highest government offices. And look at who He was attracting:

- Infamous tax collector Zaccheus and the pious, respected Nicodemus
- Godly Mary of Bethany and the shameful Samaritan woman
- Struggling cripples and strong Roman centurions
- Children and the aged
- Impetuous Peter and the cautious Thomas
- White collar Matthew and blue collar James and John

Even those that hated Him, like the scribes and Pharisees, couldn't stay away. And why should we

be surprised? Didn't He say, "If I be lifted up I will draw all men to me."?

And what was the source of this wonderful charisma? The answer is in the word itself. "Charisma" comes from the same Greek word "charis" that we translate as "grace." Like moths to a flame, people of all ages and from all walks of life were drawn to the grace of God being lived out in the life of this common, Nazarite carpenter. Whether He was rebuking the religious zealots or pardoning an adulterous woman, whether He was responding to an admiring throng or enduring the scoffing of an angry crowd, in times of tender exchange or riotous assault, His grace was consistent. Never had they seen anyone who lived with such genuine grace!

Likewise, the hallmark of the early church was an uncommon grace (Acts 2:42-47). The sacrificial way that they ministered to one another, the warm fellowship in each other's homes, their strong unity of spirit and the depth of their praise, these were all evidences that something different was happening in this new group called "Christians" or "Christ followers"(Acts. 11:26). And the people liked it! Acts 2:47 says their number grew *daily* because they, the church, had found "favor with all the people."

Isn't it amazing? We often shrink back from sharing the gospel of grace for fear we will offend someone, when the Bible tells us that true grace has just the opposite effect. What is offensive is not gracious living, but inconsistent, half-hearted living. O.S. Hawkins hit the nail on the head when he said,

"Real Christianity is lovely. There is a quality about a Spirit-filled, radiant Christian that draws and attracts others and causes them to enjoy favor with all the people. The truth is that the gospel is not nearly as offensive as some of its proponents!"

GRACE IS A VERB (30 minutes)

Grace was such a powerful evangelistic force in the early church because it had become an action verb rather than just a state of being. True, the early church understood they were living IN grace, but they were also living OUT grace as an action. They were literally "gracing" people with their service. Their grace filled lives were blessing those around them and thus, lifting up Jesus. They were the embodiment of Matthew 5:13-16,

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

True grace-filled living will ignite the fires of evangelism in two ways. First of all, it earns us the right to be heard. As the old saying goes, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." And believe me, people are watching and evaluating. Certainly people recognize when we have been gracious to them personally, but they also notice how we treat others. If we are inconsistent in our daily walk people begin to wonder if they were being loved or just "schmoozed."

But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. Matthew 12:36 (NKJV)

Wow! What a sobering thought! Every idle word! And certainly every idle deed would be implied there as well. But here's some good news:

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. Proverbs 25:11 (NKJV)

Our words, and actions, can not only be a stumbling block, but they can also be a blessing to those with whom we come in contact.

Worksheet Activity: Ask the members to break into smaller groups of 3-4 and choose one of the events or places in the list on the left. After reading the list of "How gracious am I?" questions, ask them to list some specific "grace living" actions they could employ regularly in their chosen place or activity. After a couple of minutes give them the sample scenarios sheet and see if this encourages some additional ideas. Emphasize that grace living is not always a grandiose act of service, but is often expressed in the subtle but powerful things we do and the character we show. After a few minutes return to the larger group and ask the groups to share their responses.

Now, ask your class to look at their prayer lists. Say: As you have prayed over the past week has God brought three of these people into sharper focus? As you have thought today about grace living toward others, have three of these been coming to mind more often than others? If so, circle those names on your lists and begin focusing on how you can show grace to these three.

Ask your class to look at their worksheets and record those names and some specific actions of grace they can perform that would open a door for them or another Christian to point their friend or family member to Jesus. Remind them that evangelism won't happen because we talk about it, but rather because we become intentional about it.

How we live in public is a vital part of our testimony. But it's only a part. True gracious living is more than just being kind and considerate. True gracious living ignites the fires of evangelism when it points people to Jesus. In our daily living do we give God glory? Is it evident to those around us that our happiness or contentment is because of Him? Is our speech peppered with references to His will and His blessings in our life? As "salt of the earth" do we make people thirsty for the grace of God or do we just hope they like us and admire our kindness?

Jesus didn't say, "If you are kind and good, people will get saved." He said, "If I be lifted up I will draw all men to me," John 12:32. For our grace living to ignite the fires of evangelism, it must be about Him, not us. Only the Spirit can draw men to God and only the name of Jesus can bring salvation. But what a blessing we have to be the vehicles that carry that message to a world that needs His grace! And what's more, He promises to bless us when we live in grace toward one another.

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 1 Peter 3:8-9 (NKJV)

CLOSING (5 minutes)

There it is! In 4 weeks we have helped you to define your MY316. You have 3 people to pray for; you are ready and looking for that opportunity to share with 1 (if you haven't already!) and you have 6 ways to serve those for whom you are praying. And you

know how to weave your story with His story to make it personal. Next week we will wrap up by showing you how to enhance that new relationship that will be created when you successfully introduce your friends and family to Jesus Christ.



WEEK FOUR: SERVE – Option 2

Charisma! It's that endearing quality that draws people, a winsome attitude, a magnetic personality, that certain something that just makes people want to be around you.

Jesus had it. He got 12 men to drop everything and follow Him. In three years He developed a following that created a stir that rattled in the halls of the highest government offices. He attracted the rich and poor, famous and infamous, the sick, the powerful, the oppressed and the influential. Even those that hated Him, like the scribes and Pharisees, couldn't stay away.

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MY316 focuses on showing us how to honestly and consistently serve people in such a way that it fuels the fires of evangelism. Look around you for ways to live graciously in your everyday life. Do you "grace" others by the way you live? (Note: The MY316 download includes a sample sheet of Grace Living scenarios you can use if time allows.)

WEEK 4: SAMPLE SCENARIOS FOR DAILY GRACE LIVING

Shopping:

Look around you. On one of your 5 weekly trips to the local WalMart you notice the young female checker that often waits on you has been moved to the seated position by the exit door, no doubt because she's more than 50% through her pregnancy. You remember those days and how you felt. Have you ever asked her how she's feeling? Have you asked if she knows if it's a boy or girl or if she's decided on a name? You noticed that she has that expectant mother glow and is really trying hard to look nice in spite of the weight gain. You noticed, but did you tell her how nice she looks? Wouldn't she be blessed if one day, after you have established that you are really interested in her and her child, you dropped off a little inexpensive baby gift or a \$10 gift card with a little note of encouragement? And after all that, I don't think she would be offended if you asked, "Have you got a good church home for that new baby when it gets here? If not, may I invite you to mine?"

Eating Out:

Look around you. You've eaten at this local restaurant pretty regularly for several years now. That one waitress, the middle aged red-headed lady that calls everyone "Honey," seems she's been there forever. You don't know her name, but, then again, you've never asked. She knows you go to the Baptist church, though, because she asked you about the "Halloween thingy" you were having. Wonder if she has kids or grandkids that were interested? Did you ask? Maybe you could make it a point to eat there tomorrow and bring her a flyer about the "Halloween thingy." That way she'd know you were really listening to her, and so would the people in the next booth that are eavesdropping on your conversation. Restaurants are like that. When you find out her name and that she's helping raise her three grandkids, ask her if you could drop by and visit her daughter some time and invite them to church. She probably won't mind if you take an interest in her family. You might get more information than you bargained for, but that's okay. When she brings your food, ask Bea (that's her name, by the way), if you could include a prayer for her and her grandkids when you say grace. Oh, and

look around you...there aren't many Mercedes in the employee parking lot so leave a good tip.

My Workplace:

Look around you. Seems the workforce at the office is getting younger everyday...couldn't be that you're just getting older. These "kids" sit around the break room talking about "twittering and tweeting and facebooking." Might as well be speaking Greek! They can carry on an "electronic friendship" half way around the globe in milliseconds, but can't get to work on time because they seem helpless to do anything practical like rotate their tires or winterize their cars before the first major freeze. You could show them how, but people their age don't want to listen to people your age.

The company just made you get a new smart phone and, frankly, you can't understand the manual (or at least you're sure you wouldn't have understood it if you had taken the time to read it.) The boss just called and said he'll shoot you a file this weekend and also suggested the new mileage app could really make your expense reports easier to keep. He speaks Greek, too.

You decide to put last week's Sunday School lesson to the test. "...before honor is humility" Prov. 18:12. So you humble yourself and ask twenty-something Tyler if he could show you a couple of things on your new smart phone. During the next few days of break room tutoring sessions, his conversation regularly shifts to your "sweet ride." That's his term for the fact that your 20 year old truck still looks and runs great. Tomorrow you're going to show him how to make his 5 year old import start in the cold weather. Then you'll enlighten him on the concept of regular car maintenance, and after that you plan to introduce him to your church's young adult director. Sweet!

The Neighborhood:

Look around you. Seems like every other month there is a moving van somewhere in the neighborhood. This little corner of the world is growing. Where are they all coming from? Have you asked them?

You're looking out the window at the couple moving in across and two houses down. Looks like about a 3 year old boy and twin somethings in

diapers. Whew! Aren't you glad those days are past for you? Hopefully Jake and Amy Roberson will get over to visit them...they live one block over and this couple looks like they would be the right age for their Sunday School class.

You're glad to see that house finally occupied! It's been a month or more since anyone mowed the lawn! Ouch! Why did you have to say that? "Yes, Lord," you say under your breath, "I know I have a riding mower that would knock that out in an hour or less and, yes, I don't really have to watch the game this afternoon. But what if they don't want me to mow their lawn?" You pause, though you know the answer already. "You're right, ask and they will receive."

Riding up on your mower you ask if they would mind if you helped them move in by mowing their lawn. "Oh that would be great!" they say in unison. "We moved from an apartment and we don't even own a mower yet. It's on our 'to get' list."

As you pull into their backyard you hit the speed dial on your cell phone. "Jake, this is Henry. Turn off the TV and grab your weed eater, we've got a lawn to do. And tell Amy to call my wife, they need to get a casserole in the oven."

Hmmm, the way you feel at this moment, this might be a better way to spend some future Saturdays. There sure have been a lot of moving vans lately.

School Activities:

Look around you. The school auditorium is packed. The lights dim and the annual middle school spring band concert is underway. As usual, the sixth grade band plays first and you're glad since you're a sixth grade parent. Following their stirring presentations of the beginner classics "Skip to My Lou" and "Buffalo Gals" the 6th graders receive their participation ribbons. As they exit the stage to make way for the 7th graders, most of their parents exit the auditorium, too.

"How sad," you think to yourself. "As much as I would like to be at home, it's sad to think the 7th graders won't have a full house to perform to. And what will it look like by the time the best band, the 8th graders take the stage?" So, you determine to persevere to the end.

Near the end, the young man who played the impressive trumpet solo is also awarded the Outstanding Middle School Band Member medal. Judging from the smiles and camera flashes on your row, that is his family sitting next to you.

As the lights come up, you introduce yourself as fellow band parents and congratulate them on their son's fine job and award. As your respective children approach they respond, "You have a 6th grader and you're still here? You are die hard band parents!" "Well," my wife replies, "we wouldn't have gotten to meet the band member of the year if we hadn't stayed." They smile proudly. On the way out, the conversation continues and you tell them about the orchestra at your church and how several of the members are high school students. "If you don't have a church home already, I'm sure our minister of music would be interested in your son being a part of our music program." They smile again.

"It was nice to meet you," they say as they leave. And you know, you feel like they really meant that. It's good to rejoice with those who rejoice...even if you have to sit through a whole evening of middle school bands to do it.

...do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.

Luke 6:35, 38 (NKJV)



SESSION FOUR: SERVE

Daily Acts of Grace

How gracious am I?

Shopping

- Who or what types of people do I see here?
- Do I engage people here and if so, how?

Eating Out

- What is my attitude when I'm here? Am I patient, considerate, pre-occupied, frazzled, etc?

My Workplace

- Do I regularly consider the kind of day others are having? Do I ever ask? Do I listen for clues?

My Neighborhood

- Do my words and actions grace those around me?
- Do my words and actions make this experience better or easier for those around me?

School Activities

- If given the option, would these people "vote me off the island?"

Meeting a Need

Who are the three people that God has placed on my heart to pray for fervently?

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

What are two acts of grace I could perform to meet a specific need for each of them?



WEEK FIVE: FOLLOW UP

BEFORE THE SESSION BEGINS

- Obtain a few copies of the New Believer's material for display. If your resources allow, it would be helpful for each individual or couple to have a copy for their own reference during this session and to use, if needed, for a one-on-one follow-up.
- Read through your lesson plan and familiarize yourself with the New Believer's material.

OPENING (10 minutes)

Take a few minutes to open your class with your usual procedures (welcome guests, call for prayer requests / reports, announcements, etc.).

INTRODUCTION: PASS IT ON (5 minutes)

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.

Matthew 28:19-20 (NKJV)

The Great Commission is our marching orders as Christians! If you have been a Christian for very long you've probably heard more than one sermon preached from this text, and if it wasn't a sermon on missions, then it was probably a sermon on evangelism. But notice that the disciple making process is actually in three parts.

- 1) We make disciples.
To convince someone to willingly follow another person, code or philosophy is to "make them a disciple" of such. When we lead people to Christ, we are not informing them about Christ, we are leading them to commit to follow Him. Understanding what

we are saying in the plan of salvation is not the same thing as them repenting and committing to follow Him. But once they do, once they have become a disciple of Christ, they have initiated the process.

- 2) We are to baptize them.

We know that only one person, usually a church staff member, will actually perform the baptism; just as baptism is a symbol of what God has done in the life of a new believer, it is also a strong symbol of obedience on the part of the believer. Baptizing them is actually another way of saying "leading them into a life of obedience." There will be a lifetime of learning and growing in this area, but those first basic steps are crucial, confessing Him before men as they follow His example through believer's baptism.

- 3) Finally, we are to teach them to observe ALL things.

This means establishing in them a desire and method for lifelong learning by exposing them to the gifts of prayer and the Word of God, and by showing them the joy that comes from sharing their faith.

THE ROLE OF DISCIPLER (10 minutes)

Paul understood what an honor it was to be a discipler of men.

Read Colossians 1:24-29.

Is there any doubt after reading this passage that Paul was committed to making the message clearly and widely known among the believers in these new churches? He was writing from prison and was basically saying, "It's all worth it if it helps you get the Message and brings you to maturity in Christ."

Just like parents and siblings, when established believers bring a new member into the family of God, we have a responsibility to nurture them and to teach them the basics so they can continue to grow to full maturity.

When you personally lead someone to the Lord, it may not be possible for you to be the one who fulfills the role of the long term one-on-one discipler. Issues of geography, gender, age difference, etc., may make this impossible or unadvisable. It may even be that ongoing

discipleship will need to take place in a small group setting. Whatever the circumstances, when you lead someone to the Lord, it is your responsibility to encourage them and do all you can to see that they receive this nurturing from a strong Christian church or individual.

However, if you receive and accept the call from God to serve as a discipler of a new believer, here are a few things to keep in mind.

- 1) Remember that it is the work of God through His Holy Spirit that we are facilitating. It's not about our persuasiveness or our ideas, so pray that the Holy Spirit will create a hunger in the new believer and that He will guide your thoughts during the discipling process.
- 2) Because it is His work, lead the new believer to focus on his/her relationship with Jesus Christ more than simply changing outward behaviors.
- 3) We cannot lead where we have not been. So continue to personally study the Word, remain steadfast in prayer and continue to share your faith with others. Also, read and understand whatever material you are using to disciple the new believer.
- 4) Choose good material that will progressively and understandably lead a new believer through the basics and toward a deeper relationship with Christ. Use material that they can read and handle on their own when the initial accountability time ends.

MY316 NEW BELIEVER'S BOOK **(25 minutes)**

A great resource for leading a one-on-one or small group discipling process is the "MY316 New Believer's Book." It is a 7 lesson study that will help a new believer establish a strong foundation for their new life in Christ.

Distribute copies of the New Believer's Book for the class to follow as you lead them through this overview. At the end of each lesson's description, ask for comments from the class. Prompt responses with questions like:

- *Did anyone share this with you as a new believer?*

- *Why do you think this information is important for the new believer?*
- *What do you feel will happen to a new believer if they miss or gain a good understanding of this concept?*
- *At what point in your Christian walk did you grasp this concept? Would knowing it earlier have helped you?*

LESSON 1

Even if you were to begin a discipling relationship next week, it will be easy for you to start using this resource because it begins with what you have already learned in the MY316 study by sharing your story with others.

There is no more excited witness than the new believer, but if we as seasoned believers have difficulty in knowing what and how to share, imagine how the new believer feels! Lesson 1 re-emphasizes what has happened in their life using John 3:16 and helps them understand how to express that in words of their own.

It is highly likely that a new believer will have even more lost friends than the seasoned church member, so Lesson 1 also helps them begin to focus on who they know that needs to hear their story and begin to examine how they can serve and pray for these people.

LESSON 2

Obedience is the theme of Lesson 2. It starts with baptism which is vitally important in the life of a new believer for a variety of reasons...not the least of which is the fact that it is the first step of obedience to confess Him before men. It is also important to the discipleship process as it links the new believer to a supportive church family. From there, Lesson 2 moves to

- obeying His Word
- helps on studying His Word
- life changes that obedience can bring

LESSON 3

By now the new believer is probably confronting a lot of new issues and inner struggles. Among those is the need to stay connected with God on a personal level, not just vicariously through you or the church. Lesson 3 deals with prayer; not just how to pray, but also it's power, it's comfort and it's place in our lives.

LESSON 4

Lesson 4 teaches the transforming love of Christ and starts the new believer on the path to loving and serving others. It reminds us that love is a three way street: He loves us, we love Him and, by His power, we love others.

This lesson uses a lot of Bible references, so it also enhances the new believer's knowledge of and comfort with the written Word of God. As with all of the lessons, it not only introduces new concepts, but continues to reinforce practices previously taught.

LESSON 5

Hopefully by week 5 you have helped the new believer find a place of belonging in their new church family...a Sunday School class, a small group study, etc. But there is so much more scripturally and pragmatically to the church than a weekly Bible study or fellowship group.

Lesson 5 deals with the church as the bride of Christ and the body of Christ. It also helps the new believer understand the importance and relationship of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper.

LESSON 6

Jesus said, "In the world you will have tribulation..." (John 16:33). By now a new believer often begins to wrestle with the realization that their faith has not insulated them from suffering. They try to rationalize a loving God and a suffering world. They question persecution they may be suffering because of their new faith and lifestyle.

Lesson 6 will give them encouragement for the difficult times.

LESSON 7

Lessons 1-6 were "boot camp." The new believer has received the manual and has been educated as to the expectations of the general and wiles of the enemy. Now it's off to war!

Lesson 7 commissions and deploys the new believer with the understanding that the church does not enjoy a home field advantage. They are being sent as missionaries to redeem a world that has turned away from God.

CLOSING (10 minutes)

As you close this study, ask the group to re-examine the meaning of MY316.

MY: Have you taken it personally? Have you determined how to weave your story into His story? Have you committed yourself to doing whatever God calls you to do to see your lost friends and family members come to know Him?

3: Have you asked God for a focused burden for three people close to you? Are you praying for them daily?

1: Are you asking God expectantly for an opportunity to share one-on-one with one or more of these for whom you have been praying? Are you willing to commit to being a disciple maker?

6: Have you identified and determined to follow through on six specific acts of service you can do to demonstrate God's love to those for whom you are praying? Have you determined that your walk will match your talk?

Ask for any closing comments from the group and then have a time of prayer with and for the group.





WEEK FIVE: FOLLOW UP – Option 2

We've all heard the sad and tragic stories of children who were victims of neglect. Some of the worst chronicle infants, brought home from the hospital and then practically ignored. If, by some miracle they physically survive, they are often too emotionally or socially backward to live a meaningful life. No one has told them what to do, what is expected of them, what their potential is. In some of the worst cases of neglect, they die from what doctors call a "failure to thrive." The laying of a strong foundation for a healthy, happy and whole person is not completed in the birth event. It is the result of a process of nurturing, mentoring and maturing.

The Bible speaks of salvation as being "born again." And as it is with a newborn baby, making a healthy, happy and whole disciple is a process, not an event.

The Great Commission, Matthew 28:19-20, outlines the process for us.

- 1) We make disciples.
To convince someone to willingly follow another person, code or philosophy is to "make them a disciple" of such. When we lead people to Christ, we are not informing them about Christ, we are leading them to commit to follow Him. Understanding what we are saying in the plan of salvation is not the same thing as them repenting and committing to follow Him. But once they do, once they have become a disciple of Christ, they have initiated the process.
- 2) We are to baptize them.
We know that only one person, usually a church staff member, will actually perform the baptism, but just as baptism is a symbol of what God has done in the life of a new believer, it is also a strong symbol of obedience on the part of the believer. Baptizing them is actually another way of saying "leading them into a life of obedience." There will be a lifetime of learning and growing in this area, but those

first basic steps are crucial...confessing Him before men as they follow His example through believer's baptism.

- 3) Finally, we are to teach them to observe ALL things.

This means establishing in them a desire and method for lifelong learning by exposing them to the gifts of prayer and the Word of God, and by showing them the joy that comes from sharing their faith.

Paul was a great evangelist and a master at persuading others to receive the grace and love of Christ. But Paul was also a discipler and understood there was a need to go deeper with the Lord. And Paul understood what an honor it was to be a discipler of men.

Read Colossians 1:24-29.

Is there any doubt after reading this passage that Paul was committed to making the message clearly and widely known among the believers in these new churches? He was writing from prison and was basically saying, "It's all worth it if it helps you get the Message and brings you to maturity in Christ."

Ask your class. "Who were or are your disciplers?" Allow a few to share briefly.

Just like parents and siblings, when established believers bring a new member into the family of God, we have a responsibility to nurture them and to teach them the basics so they can continue to grow to full maturity.

MY316 calls for us to be disciplers. It provides training and the materials in the form of a New Believer's book to nurture new believers. But it still requires godly Christians who will commit to becoming a discipler of new believers.

Is God calling you?