

Inviting People to Church

Aim: to help Christians to understand why the church is so significant in God's plan of salvation, and encourage them to invite friends along, on any Sunday.

Icebreaker (10 minutes):

- 1) Do you remember the first time you came to your church/a time you visited a different church? What things made the biggest impressions and why?

or

- 2) Each member of the group writes 2-3 favourite things about church down on some small pieces of paper. Put those in a bowl. Split into two teams and play charades - miming the words on paper for their teammates to guess. The team with the most correct answers wins. (Be mindful of whether impressions of people might cause offence!)

Video (20 minutes)

Bible Reflection and Discussion (25 minutes):

- 1) Read John 13:34-35. What is the significance of Jesus calling this instruction a "*command*" rather than a suggestion? In what sense is it a "*new*" command?
- 2) Jesus says, "*As I have loved you, so you must love one another*". In what ways does his love for us set the standard for our relationships in church?
- 3) Verse 35 tells us that love among believers is a sign to the world. How have you seen this 'love as a witness' in your congregation or other church settings?

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- 4) What do these verses teach us about our power to display Christ and what do they imply happens instead when we fail to love one another?
- 5) Can you see the 'church-and' principle being helpful for planting seeds? Practise sharing something about your church in pairs, as if you were talking to a non-Christian friend.
- 6) Do your non-Christian friends know your friends from church? Make a list of people in both contexts who you could introduce to each other and brainstorm some ideas together for how to introduce them.
- 7) How can we encourage one another to invite newcomers to church? What can we do to support each other when people do come.

Dig Deeper (optional):

- 1) Read Psalm 96 out loud. In what ways does your church gathering "*declare the glory of God*" and what difference would it make if we saw inviting people to church as welcoming them into this community of praise?
- 2) Sometimes, like Alex, we can be quick to share our frustrations about church and miss what God is doing there. How does this Psalm challenge the way we can be prone to talking about our church?
- 3) The Psalm talks lots about singing and praise. How can sung worship "*proclaim his salvation*" when people visit?

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Prayer (10 minutes):

- Thank God for his revelation and for meeting us as we gather together as a church.
- Ask for his help in the way that we love each other as church family.
- Ask for opportunities to naturally talk about your faith and about church.
- Pray for a few people you know by name and would like to invite to church.